



AGENDA ITEM: 4(a)

CABINET: 16 May 2013

Report of: Assistant Director Planning

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Forshaw

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SUBJECT: WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN – SUPPLEMENTARY LATE INFORMATION

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the interim views of the Local Plan Inspector on the strategic and land allocation matters of the Local Plan, received by the Council on 15 May 2013, and to provide an update on the development management modifications that have been further discussed with the Inspector.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1 That Cabinet, in considering the recommendation at 2.2 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting, have regard to the updated development management modifications at Appendix A to this supplementary late information, which replaces Appendix D in the original Cabinet Report.

2.2 That Cabinet, in considering the recommendations at 2.2 and 2.3 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting, have regard to the Inspector's letter regarding the strategic and land allocation modifications to the Local Plan (as set out in Appendix B to this supplementary late information).

3.0 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MODIFICATIONS

- 3.1 As explained at paragraph 4.15 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting, Council officers were still discussing some of the development management modifications with the Inspector and so there have been some further amendments to these modifications compared to those provided at Appendix D of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.
- 3.2 The latest development management modifications are set out at Appendix A of this supplementary late information, and they are recommended to Cabinet for endorsement. It is not anticipated that these will be further amended prior to any public consultation on Local Plan modifications.

4.0 STRATEGIC AND LAND ALLOCATION MODIFICATIONS

- 4.1 The Inspector has provided his interim views to the Council on the strategic and land allocation modifications necessary to make the Local Plan sound, and these are provided at Appendix B of this supplementary late information.
- 4.2 While the Inspector's interim views are not quite as hoped or expected, the modifications he asks the Council to explore are relatively modest and, aside from three areas, do not substantively change the thrust of the original submitted policies. It should also be noted that there are a great number of positives in relation to his explicit or implicit (by virtue of a lack of suggested modification) approval of the submitted Local Plan policies.
- 4.3 In particular, the Inspector states "*I have no substantial concerns over the soundness of the housing site allocations in the submitted Local Plan*" (paragraph 9 of his letter) which includes those sites to be released from the Green Belt at Yew Tree Farm in Burscough and Grove Farm in Ormskirk; he endorses the concept of the Plan B and the mechanisms by which it would work (paragraphs 15 and 16); he is largely satisfied with the provisions for affordable housing in Policy RS2 (paragraph 21); he considers that the employment land requirement in the Local Plan is justified (paragraph 25); he has no substantial concerns regarding the rural development opportunity sites (with one minor change to one site) (paragraphs 31-34); and he endorses the Local Plan's approach to Edge Hill University, subject to a consideration of the precise line to which the new Green Belt boundary should be drawn (paragraphs 35 and 36).
- 4.4 In relation to the three areas of modification that the Inspector requests the Council explore and that are more significant, one relates to the matter of Gypsy and Traveller sites and the soundness of Policy RS4, which he has previously contacted the Council with regard to. The Inspector endorses the remedy that the Council have proposed to him already in relation to this concern and which is explained in paragraphs 4.2-4.8 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.
- 4.5 The remaining two areas of modification that are significant relate to housing targets (and therefore housing land supply) and employment land supply. The

latter is fairly straight forward in that, while the Inspector considers the Local Plan employment land target (of 75ha) justified, he considers that our allocated supply of land to meet this target totals only 70ha. Therefore, an additional site(s) should be identified to make up this 5ha shortfall in supply.

- 4.6 A number of alternative / additional employment sites were discussed at the Examination hearings, but officers would not be in a position to recommend one or more of these as an additional employment allocation without further consideration. However, it is anticipated that, subject to Cabinet agreeing the recommendation at 2.2 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting, the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, would be in a position to recommend a specific, additional site allocation for employment development to the Inspector in due course.
- 4.7 In relation to housing, the Inspector has recommended that the housing target for the Local Plan period be increased by approximately 200 dwellings to 4,858 dwellings and that the phasing of delivery of this target is amended so that the Local Plan seeks to deliver 302 dwellings per annum in the first five years of the Plan (2012-2017) and then 335 dwellings per annum in the latter ten years of the Plan (2017-2027).
- 4.8 The Inspector has also supplied an amended trajectory for the housing supply over the Plan period from outstanding permissions / pending applications, the SHLAA / windfall sites and the existing allocations in the Local Plan, from which it can be concluded that these sources of housing land supply can deliver a total of 4,839 dwellings in the Plan period, i.e. a shortfall of only 19 dwellings compared to the new housing target recommended by the Inspector.
- 4.9 However, it is not as simple as to merely compare total anticipated housing supply over the Plan period with the total housing target, as the issue of maintaining a rolling 5-year supply of housing land with a 5% buffer must also be considered. Based on the Inspector's updated housing trajectory, officers have undertaken an initial calculation of what additional housing land supply would be needed (and when) to ensure that a rolling 5-year supply (plus 5% buffer) can be maintained throughout the Plan period and it would appear that a total of at least 100 additional dwellings will be required, with at least 50 dwellings being delivered by the end of March 2018 to ensure the ability to demonstrate a 5-year supply upon adoption of the Local Plan.
- 4.10 The Inspector has agreed with the Council's assessment at the Examination hearings that, if additional housing land supply should be needed, it should be drawn from the existing proposed safeguarded sites (which includes the Plan B sites), and so the decision for the Council will now be which safeguarded site(s) is brought forward for development as an actual housing allocation in the Local Plan to deliver the additional 100 dwellings needed.
- 4.11 As with the additional employment land allocation, the Council will need to consider each safeguarded site carefully and assess the sustainability and deliverability merits of each of the safeguarded sites before selecting a site(s) to propose as an additional allocation to the Inspector. Officers would not be in a

position to recommend one or more of these safeguarded sites as an additional housing allocation without this further consideration. However, it is anticipated that, subject to Cabinet agreeing the recommendation at 2.2 of the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting, the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, would be in a position to recommend a specific, additional site allocation for housing development to the Inspector in due course.

- 4.12 A further matter in the Inspector's letter that Cabinet will wish to note is his comments regarding the Parrs Lane site in Aughton (paragraphs 19 and 20), given the concern that some members of the public have expressed about the site's removal from the Green Belt. Effectively, the Inspector notes that the merits of the two parts of the Parrs Lane site "*appear indistinguishable*" from one another and that a co-ordinated approach to their masterplanning and development would be "*desirable*" if the site was to come forward for development at any point in the Plan period.
- 4.13 Therefore, the Inspector not only confirms the soundness of releasing this land from the Green Belt for safeguarding, he also recommends including both parts of the Parrs Lane site within the Plan B so that, if the site is required for development during the Plan period, it can be masterplanned as a co-ordinated whole. This conclusion must also have implications for how the whole Parrs Lane safeguarded site is assessed in considering which safeguarded site(s) to release as an additional housing allocation now to meet the higher housing target in the Local Plan.
- 4.14 In summary, the Inspector's letter at Appendix B to this supplementary late information provides a welcome steer to the Council on strategic and land allocation modifications to make the Local Plan sound. In addition, none of his recommendations for modification are so significant as to create a serious delay in the preparation of the Local Plan if the Council are able to respond speedily to his recommendations, with public consultation able to take place in the early part of the Summer.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 This is addressed in the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This is addressed in the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This is addressed in the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

This is addressed in the original Cabinet Report for 16 May 2013 Cabinet Meeting.

Appendices

- A. Inspector's Proposed Modifications to the Development Management Policies within the Local Plan (as at 14 May 2013)
- B. Inspector's Letter regarding the strategic and land allocation modifications to the Local Plan (received 15 May 2013)