

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

HELD: Thursday, 27 September 2018

Start: 7.00pm
Finish: 8.15 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: J Bullock (Chairman)
L Savage (Vice-Chairman) T Aldridge
I Ashcroft Cummins
S Currie T Devine
D Evans M Mills
E Pope D Westley
C Wynn Mrs D Stephenson

Officers: Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey, Director of Housing and Inclusion
John Harrison, Director of Development and Regeneration
Peter Richards, Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager
Kay Lovelady, Principal Solicitor
Tom Dickinson, Assistant Solicitor
John Addison, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer

11 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

12 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2, Members noted the termination of membership of the Committee of Councillors S Evans McKenna and Whittington and the appointment of Councillor D Evans, Aldridge and Currie for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

13 **URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There were no items of urgent business.

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

15 **DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

16 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2018 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chair invited Mr Atkinson, who had requested to speak at the meeting in order to outline his concerns to the Committee. Mr Atkinson informed Members that he wished to query the status of the existing Local Plan, in particular around safeguarded land, as he felt there appeared to be discrepancies in the information that had been published by the Council. Mr Atkinson further queried if the existing Local Plan would be superseded by the new Local Plan or would be maintained.

The Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager informed the Committee that the current Local Plan had not been scrapped and the proposals for a new Local Plan incorporate the allocations which are in the current Local Plan, proposals which the Committee was currently being consulted on at this meeting (Minute no 20). It was reported that if, after the Consultation and due process had been followed, the Council adopted a new Local Plan, it would incorporate the allocations in the existing plan. In relation to land that is designated as safeguarded land in the current Local Plan, this is safeguarded for development needs beyond 2027, and so, given the proposals for a new Local Plan involve a Plan period to 2050, it is appropriate that safeguarded land be proposed for allocation for the identified development needs over that longer period.

At this point in the meeting the Chair suggested the Committee move to Agenda item 10 (Minute number 20).

18 RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET (EXTRAORDINARY)- 18 JULY 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet (Extraordinary) meeting held on 18 July 2018 be noted.

19 RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET - 11 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 September 2018 be noted.

**20 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – PROPOSED LOCAL PLAN PREFERRED OPTIONS
CONSULTATION**

The Director of Development and Regeneration presented to Members the proposed Local Plan Preferred Options for Members consideration and the Committee were asked to consider whether any agreed comments should be referred to the Director of Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

It was reported that since September 2016 the Council had been undertaking a Local Plan Review in order to update its current, adopted Local Plan (West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027) to better reflect revised national planning policy and guidance and the evolving sub-regional context surrounding West Lancashire.

It was noted that the proposed Local Plan Preferred Options document that Cabinet had approved for public consultation proposed a draft vision for the Local Plan which reflected the Council's corporate vision to be a Council which was ambitious for West Lancashire.

The Director of Development and Regeneration informed Members that the Preferred Options included 38 policies, including site allocations for specific uses, spread over six broad topic areas:

- Strategic Policies
- Economic Policies
- Residential Policies
- Infrastructure and Services Policies
- Green Infrastructure Policies
- Sustainable Development and Design Policies

It was reported that the scale of development anticipated to be needed in West Lancashire over the next 30 years, it was inevitable that significant release of land for development, including land currently designated as Green Belt, would be required. It was felt that by seeking to release sufficient land for those needs for the full 30 years in one go, the Council would be able to have a more comprehensive and forward-looking Local Plan.

Members were informed that by undertaking a 30 year plan, it was felt it would provide certainty to residents, infrastructure providers, landowners and developers by setting a new Green Belt boundary that, barring a significant increase to the anticipated need for new development, should remain unchanged for at least 20 years.

At this point in the meeting the Chair informed members of the public and Officers that over the past few days the Committee had received a large number of emails from residents outlining a number of concerns; namely:

- The Consultation was too short and the period be extended from 6 weeks to a minimum of 12 weeks
- That all documents be made publicly available as soon as possible.

The following Motion was moved and seconded:

"That the following agreed comments be referred to the Director of Development and Regeneration for consideration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning:

1. That the Council encourage the submission of alternative options to the Preferred Options and that these be given full consideration by the Council in the next stage of the local plan review process i.e. the preparation of the

Publication Version of the Local Plan.

2. That due to the long term strategic nature of the plan and the considerable level of public interest a copy of the Preferred Options document be placed on the Local Plan pages of the Council's website on the 4th October rather than the 12th October and that the end date of the formal consultation exercise be extended from 23rd November to the 13th December."

A vote was taken, the comments were agreed.

The Portfolio holder for Planning stated that the six-week consultation period that had been proposed was the statutory minimum required for a consultation of this type, but was more than happy to accept the recommendation of the Committee, if it gave residents longer to consider the proposals.

Councillor Pope expressed concern that the Local Plan Review Cabinet working Group that had proposed the new Local Plan had appeared to exceed its remit as it was commissioned to do a 5-year review of the existing plan. Councillor Pope raised further concerns around loss of green belt, length of the new plan at 30 years being unprecedented, the removal of safeguarded land and meeting future needs of other Authorities.

The following Motion was moved and seconded:

"This Committee resolves to recommend to Cabinet that it reconsiders its recent decision to proceed to public consultation on the preferred options and, instruct the Local Plan Review Cabinet Working Group to prepare new proposals that are in line with the original remit i.e. to review the existing local plan 2012-2027 and make suitable recommendations to update, amend and possibly extend".

A vote was taken and at the request of a Member, was recorded as follows:

FOR: Councillors Ashcroft, Pope, Mrs Stephenson, D Westley (FOUR)

AGAINST: Councillors Bullock, D Evans, Mills, Devine, Aldridge, Wynn and Cummins (SEVEN)

ABSTENTIONS: Councillor Savage (ONE)

The Motion was LOST.

RESOLVED: That the following agreed comments be referred to the Director of Development and Regeneration for consideration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning:

- A. That the Council encourage the submission of alternative options to the Preferred Options and that these be given full consideration by the Council in the next stage of the local plan review process

i.e. the preparation of the Publication Version of the Local Plan.

- B. That due to the long term strategic nature of the plan and the considerable level of public interest a copy of the Preferred Options document be placed on the Local Plan pages of the Council’s website on the 4th October rather than the 12th October and that the end date of the formal consultation exercise be extended from 23rd November to the 13th December.

21 **CALL IN**

There was no items under this heading.

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Chairman