

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

**MINUTE OF PLANNING COMMITTEE – 6 SEPTEMBER 2018**

49. Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration as set out on pages 353 to 941 of the Book of Reports the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet's authorisation to publicly consult on the Council's Preferred Options for a new Local Plan and for Planning Committee to refer any agreed comments to Cabinet.

In addition to the agreed comments moved and seconded as detailed at (A) and (B) below, the following comment (C) was moved and seconded:

"That Planning Committee have serious concerns over the Local Plan Preferred Options as it considers the Local Plan Review Cabinet Working Group has exceeded its remit. It was set up to carry out the planned 5 yearly review of the Adopted Local Plan 2012/27 and to make recommendations to the Cabinet. Instead, it has exceeded its remit and put forward Preferred Options for a completely new Local Plan.

The Preferred Options recommend scrapping the existing Local Plan that still has 9 years to run yet it is meeting local housing need, has delivered the planned number of new homes and continues to provide the necessary 5 year supply of housing land. It has also withstood legal challenges in respect of rogue developments and proved to be robust.

The proposal for a new 30 year Local Plan 2020/50 is unprecedented and it is felt impractical to accurately forecast that far ahead, the future housing and employment needs of the Borough. The proposal to plan for 15,992 new homes can only be a very rough estimate given the official population forecast only project to 2041 and even the Treasury has difficulty forecasting medium term economic growth.

It is also proposed to stop the established practice of safeguarding sites identified for future development. This would mean the Council abdicating its responsibility to manage the release of sites and allow developers, or "market", to decide which sites should be developed first. It would also mean that all the sites needed for the next 30 years would be made available for development from 2020/21.

Apart from wanting a huge increase in the annual target for both housing building and commercial development, the Preferred Options propose to provide land to meet the future housing and commercial development needs of Merseyside – 6,256 new homes and hundreds of acres for employment use.

The proposed release of up to 1,500 acres from the Greenbelt or Safeguarded land is cause for considerable concern. The need to take such drastic action is a direct consequence of the issues detailed above.

The Planning Committee urge Cabinet to reject 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 2012/27 and make suitable recommendations to update, amend and perhaps extend it for a further 5 or 7 years. "

A vote was taken on the comment (C) at the request of a Member which was recorded as follows:

FOR: Councillors Ashcroft, Mrs Baybutt, Gordon, Mrs M Westley and D Westley **(FIVE)**

AGAINST: Councillors D Evans, S Evans, Hennessy, G Hodson, J Hodson, Mills, Owen, Pritchard **(EIGHT)**

Comment (C) was therefore LOST.

AGREED: That the following agreed comments be referred to Cabinet:-

- A. That Planning Committee wished it to be emphasised that the public consultation on the Preferred Options document will allow members of the public and other stakeholders to put forward suggestions/observations for consideration by Officers and Members before a final draft of the Local Plan is produced.
- B. That consideration be given to holding one additional event to be held outside of Skelmersdale in the South Eastern Parishes.