

LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Friday, 23rd September, 2022 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Daniel Williamson in the Chair;

Councillors Arnie Hankin, David Hennigan (as substitute for Lee Waters), Rachel Madden, Keir Morrison, Matthew Relf, Kevin Rostance, Helen-Ann Smith (as substitute for John Smallridge) and Jason Zadrozny.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors John Smallridge and Lee Waters.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Louise Ellis, David Needham, Neil Oxby, Christine Sarris and Melanie Wheelwright.

In Attendance: Councillor John Wilmott.

LP.6 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

Councillors Rachel Madden and Daniel Williamson declared Non-Registrable Interests in relation to agenda item 4 (Emerging Local Plan Review). Their interest arose from the fact that they had both received lobbying emails from residents in respect of various items of content within the Emerging Local Plan.

LP.7 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Development Panel held on 5 July 2022, be received and approved as a correct record.

LP.8 Emerging Local Plan Review

Panel Members received the report and were asked to consider the options, as set out, regarding the preferred approach for taking the Emerging Local Plan forward.

(In accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillors Rachel Madden and Daniel Williamson had previously declared Non-Registrable interests in respect of this item of business. Their interests were such that they stayed in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.)

A presentation was given to Members by the Council's Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory Services which commenced with a precis of the current position including reference to the following:

- the Council's Development Plan - Ashfield Local Plan Review 2002 and its neighbourhood plans
- the current Government deadline for local authorities to have a plan in place by December 2023
- all legislative and policy requirements for progressing a local plan
- the currently process enabling the Inspector to consider whether a plan is sound (NPPF Paragraph.35)
- the decision to pause the Council's Emerging Local Plan following the former Prime Minister's statement on building on brownfield land
- the Council's ongoing engagement with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- the new Conservative Party Leader's future intentions including potential changes in the way housing need is identified and protection of Green Belt.

Members were then presented with the following four options for taking the Emerging Local Plan forward:

Option A – to continue to pause the emerging Local Plan

Option B – to take forward the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan to a Regulation 19 consultation without significant changes

Option C – to take forward a revised Local Plan reflecting the recent national pronouncements on the Green Belt and housing numbers whilst continuing to emphasise the locational advantages of Ashfield for employment and the skills growth associated with the Plan

Option D – any other options previously considered in relation to the Emerging Local Plan.

The presentation continued and the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory Services outlined all the benefits and potential risks for each option to enable Members to make a considered choice in relation to the Council's next steps for progressing its Emerging Local Plan.

On conclusion of the presentation, Members debated the options and amongst other things, asked questions, made comments and raised concerns in relation to the following:

- the process and reasons leading up to the Council's former Draft Local Plan being withdrawn in 2018 and how the Council's Forward Planning Team had dealt with the change of direction

- the definition of Green Belt and Greenfields and the protection that such designation provided to Districts and their communities
- problems generated by the Council not having a 5-year land supply, its impact on enabling the Authority to plan strategically and its presumption in favour of developers
- preparatory development of the Emerging Local Plan and how all alternatives had been extensively considered by the Local Plan Working Group prior to it being presented to Ashfield residents for comment and response through the consultation process
- the potential benefits of the Government introducing an alternative methodology for setting lower and more attainable housing targets and for Councils to continue to lobby them to that effect.

During the debate a speech was read out from Councillors Dave Shaw and Lee Waters who were unable to be in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to sum up the discussions and suggested that Option C, having fully considered the merits of each option, seemed to be the preferred approach for most of the Panel Members. The alternative views were also acknowledged accordingly.

AGREED

that following consideration of all four options presented, Cabinet be recommended to approve Option C as the preferred approach for taking the Council's Emerging Local Plan forward.

(Following the vote and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.6 [Right to Require Individual Vote to be Recorded], Councillors Arnie Hankin, David Hennigan, Rachel Madden, Matthew Relf, Helen-Ann Smith and Jason Zadrozny requested that their individual votes for the decision be so recorded in the minutes.)

The meeting closed at 11.17 am

Chairman.