

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday 23 November 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor P.A. Jackson
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

Daley, W.
Homer, C.
Jones, V.
Oliver, N.

Riddle, J.R.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Davey, J.G.
Dodd, R.R.

Reid, J.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, K.
Hadfield, K.

Henry, L.
Ketley, M.
Naples, R.
Rowlinson, D.
Robson, S.
Sanderson, J.

Director of Human Resources
Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Legal Services Manager
Head of Planning Services
Planning Officer
Principal Planner, Planning Policy
Principal Planner, Planning Policy
Senior Planning Manager, Planning
Policy

Nine members of the press and public were present.

37. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 7 November 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

38. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Jackson and Jones disclosed an interest in item 5 (1) on the agenda (Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan) as members of the working group involved, advising that they would leave the room whilst the meeting was discussed.

39. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Northumberland Local Plan

The report provided a progress update on the Northumberland Local Plan and sought approval of:

- The Northumberland Local Plan - Local Development Scheme (2017-2020);
- The Northumberland Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 to 2021/22; and
- An amended Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy (November 2017) (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was introduced by Councillor Riddle who highlighted the good progress which was being made. The report outlined an accelerated timetable to deliver the Local Plan quickly, hopefully by the Summer of 2020.

Mark Ketley then drew members' attention to the three separate documents which comprised the report, which were independent but interrelated.

The **Local Development Scheme** set out the timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan, beginning with initial consultation in early Spring 2018. The form and nature of the Plan would be different this time in that a Full Local Plan would be prepared from the start (as opposed to the previous two-phased approach of a Core Strategy followed by a Delivery Document), which would condense the timescale to delivery by Summer 2020 and reduce the timescale for achieving full plan coverage by approximately 18 months to 2 years.

Member comments included:-

- The Leader queried whether the timescale for the Local Plan was now the same as that embarked on by Durham County Council and Mr Ketley confirmed this was the case.
- The Leader queried the status of neighbourhood plans with respect to planning decisions. Mr Ketley advised that where these had been made in the last couple of years, the policies within them should carry full weight in the determination of planning applications. However, each individual policy within a neighbourhood plan would need to be assessed to ensure that it had not become out of date or inconsistent with later policy or guidance.
- Councillor Sanderson asked if the costs of the last Local Plan process to Durham County Council were known and queried whether local settlements were more at risk now. Mr Ketley could not comment on Durham's costs. Regarding the position of local settlements, without a Local Plan the starting point was the previous plans in place from the former district and borough councils in Northumberland. They were therefore of some age, though not all policies within them were out of date, and each individual policy would have to be assessed to see how far it aligned with current national planning policy in the NPPF and therefore how much weight should be attached to that policy for decision-making purposes. The Council was in a more vulnerable position than he would like at this point in time due to the absence of an up-to-date or emerging planning policy document, but the two additional documents included with the report would provide extra protection against speculative development approaches.
- Councillor Riddle felt that there had been a high risk that the previous Local Plan would have failed at Examination in Public and the costs would have been considerable. This Plan would have some weight after the initial consultation and would gather more weight as it progressed through the plan-making process.

Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 to 2021/22 - this set out the housing target against which officers would assess supply until the Local Plan was in place. This had been calculated as a requirement of 944 houses per annum. As there was currently a six and a half year supply, the required five year supply could easily be demonstrated.

- The Leader asked whether it was correct that house prices in Northumberland had not kept pace with inflation in the last ten years, and this would indicate that there was an already adequate supply of housing. Officers could not confirm this, though this conclusion would concur with the SHMA.
- The Leader also queried whether it was true that the number of consented plots not yet developed far exceeded a six and a half year supply. Mr Ketley confirmed that this was in the region of 17,000 houses, taking into account actual consents and minded to approve resolutions from the Council's Planning Committees. Mr Robson added that more consents were now coming on board for permissions granted in the last couple of years than had been the case in recent years.

Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy - members were advised that this needed to be updated since its approval by Cabinet in July to take into account the Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites document, made neighbourhood plans and recent appeal decisions.

Councillor Reid presented the report from Scrutiny making reference to the Committee's scepticism regarding the timetable.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the timetable for the preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan be agreed;
2. the draft Local Development Scheme 2017-2020 (attached to the report as Appendix A) be approved for publication and authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, to update the Local Development Scheme annually;
3. the Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 to 2021/22 document (attached to the report as Appendix B):
 - Provides an evidence base for the determination of planning applications;
 - Provides an evidence base for use by other Council Services and external stakeholders; and
 - Makes the Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 to 2021/2022 document be available online and, if requested copies be supplied on CD or as hard copy, to recover the media cost of making these available;
4. the amended Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy (November 2017) (attached to the report as Appendix C) be approved with the additional amendment to the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan;
5. the implementation of the amended Position Statement be agreed with immediate effect, and that the amended Position Statement be published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of all stakeholders in the planning process; and
6. the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

In accordance with MInute No.38 above, Councillors Jackson and Jones left the room whilst the following matter was discussed. Councillor Daley took the Chair.

40. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(1) Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan

The report sought approval to formally 'make' the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan which passed independent examination on 30 June 2017. A local referendum held in the Parish of Ponteland on 28 September 2017 returned

an overwhelming majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council was now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considered that doing so would breach European Union obligations (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Riddle introduced the report highlighting the high level of local support for the Plan.

Councillor Reid reported that Scrutiny had been supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan but had not felt that that they had a real role to play other than to see if the correct process had been followed. The views of the Local Area Council were what was important.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note the referendum outcome of 28 September 2017;
- (b) Cabinet agree to formally 'make' the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- (c) Cabinet approve the decision notice (attached to the report as Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended;
- (d) Cabinet agree that both the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan and the decision notice are published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and for the decision notice to be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision; and
- (e) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be endorsed.

Councillors Jackson and Jones returned. Councillor Jackson in the Chair.

(2) Corporate Plan 2017-21

The report sought Cabinet endorsement to the draft Corporate Plan 2017-21 as the basis for informing the preparation of the forthcoming Medium Term Financial Plan (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

Councillor Oliver introduced the report, highlighting the key themes of the needs of residents and dealing with the significant challenges which faced the Authority. He detailed the operating principles of:-

- Financial prudence
- Resourceful

- Listen to and consider views
- Empowering
- Collaborate

Commitment had been shown to these already through the development of the Local Area Councils, the reform of Arch and the delivery of the devolution deal. He then detailed the five areas of the Corporate Plan.

Councillor Daley fully supported the Plan and commented that this was a living document which would underpin everything the Authority did, specifically in education, where there were significant disparities in performance between different parts of the County. Only by working in partnership could the Authority achieve its objectives.

The Leader referred to the education challenge fund request to the Government. He was hopeful that the Authority would be the only Council outside of London to achieve this status.

Councillor Sanderson commented that it was very important to demonstrate better working with town and parish councils as there was a clear commitment to this from the Administration.

RESOLVED that the draft Corporate Plan 2017-21 be endorsed as the basis for informing the preparation of the forthcoming Medium Term Financial Plan.

(3) Warm Homes Fund

The purpose of the report was to advise Cabinet of Northumberland County Council's successful application to the Warm Homes Fund on behalf of a North East consortium comprising six other Local Authorities and 2 Registered Social Landlords.

The report detailed the benefits available to fuel poor homes throughout the region and the social benefit deliverable through this scheme. The report also highlighted key risks and the mitigation actions to be pursued if approved (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth who highlighted the main points.

Members referred to previous successes in this area and hoped that more people could qualify and therefore benefit from the initiative.

Councillor Sanderson suggested that a communications plan be prepared for circulation to all members so members and the public could be aware of it. He also asked that an update be provided in six months time.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet agree that the County Council may lead the consortium in delivering the proposed Warm Homes Fund scheme;

- (b) Cabinet agree that the County Council may bid for future funding to extend the current proposal past 1 year; and
- (c) a communications plan be prepared for circulation to all members so members and the public, and an update be provided in six months time.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....