

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 22 November 2017 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor J. Reid
(Chairman, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Beynon, J.
Dunn, E.
Gallacher, B.

Gibson, R.
Pattinson, W.
Swithenbank, I.C.F.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Riddle, J.

Planning, Housing and Resilience

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

M. Ketley
D. Rowlinson
J. Sanderson
R. Naples
S. Nicholson

Head of Planning Services
Principal Planner
Senior Planning Manager
Planning Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinator

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors E. Armstrong, E. Cartie and C. Dunbar.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Communities and Place OSC, held on 27 September 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

23. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator presented the latest Forward Plan of key decisions (November 2017 - February 2018). (Forward Plan enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

24. CABINET REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised members of Cabinet decisions regarding issues previously commented on and been subject of report by this Committee. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A1).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

25. SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORTS

The Committee were advised that the following reports would be considered by the Cabinet on 23 November 2017. The Committee were asked to comment on the proposals contained in the reports.

25.1 Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan

This report sought Cabinet approval to formally 'make' the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan 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. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Members noted that the Plan had received the support of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council and felt content that, in future, it should not be necessary for similar plans to be presented to this Committee, if such backing had been given by the relevant LAC. The Committee hoped that this would streamline the process.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised:

- (a) that further Plans which had received Local Area Council support need not be subject to additional consideration by this Committee, and
- (b) subject to (a), the recommendations in the report be supported.

25.2 Northumberland Local Plan

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

- The Northumberland Local Plan - Local Development Scheme (2017-20);
- The Northumberland Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 - 2021/22, and
- An amended Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy (November 2017).

(Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix C).

The Committee were advised of the letter sent to 15 Planning Authorities, including Northumberland, by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, reminding them that they were required to publish a Local Development Scheme under the Local Plan Act 2004, setting out when they expect to reach key milestones in the plan-making process, and the timetable for producing documents to maintain an up-to-date plan. The letter stated that if authorities failed to meet the deadlines set out in that timetable, then they may be subject of “intervention.” Members were advised that officers were confident that the timetable set out in this report and the strong and robust case that they were preparing in response to the letter, would satisfy the Secretary of State that intervention would not be necessary.

In respect of the Northumberland Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Sites document, although members expressed concern that the total residual requirement of new dwellings may, in their view, not be met, they were assured that the figures would be subject of annual review and the document would be updated accordingly.

The Committee also hoped that the government would issue further guidance on dealing with those developers who did not progress planning approvals and therefore not delivering on expected housing numbers, when they sought extensions to those approvals.

Although the Committee expressed regret that the Core Strategy had been withdrawn, they felt that it was important that they did not hinder the progress of the proposed Northumberland Local Plan.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee accepted the recommendations contained in the report.

26. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator presented the Committee’s Work Programme. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The Committee requested that a report on changes to the contractual arrangements on the modernisation of the street lighting project be presented to a future meeting. Reports reviewing grounds maintenance arrangements and the Tree Policy were scheduled to be considered by the Committee at their next meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27. INFORMATION REPORT - POLICY DIGEST

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised the Committee that the Policy Digest gave details of the latest policy briefings, government announcements and ministerial speeches which may be of interest to members. The report could be accessed through the service finder element of County Council's web site at www.northumberland.gov.uk.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chairman _____

Date _____