

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET - 7 MARCH 2023 FROM THE LOCAL PLAN TASK GROUP HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2023

8 LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION - INSPECTOR'S LETTER - RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

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The Chair welcomed Mr Tim Leader, legal adviser to the Council and invited him to introduce himself and to provide an overview of the issues to be addressed by the Task Group.

Mr Leader introduced himself and outlined the reasons why the Inspector had adjourned the Local Plan Examination Hearing, together with the issues which the Task Group were required to address set out in the Inspector's Letter which had been published with the Agenda for the meeting.

The Chair invited the Task Group to consider each recommendation as set out below:

That Cabinet notes the contents of this report and recommends to Council that the draft Local Plan previously approved by Full Council be amended as follows:

Recommendation 1

The Assistant Director, Planning Policy Manager and Legal Adviser responded to comments and questions from the Task Group and Councillor Morley (Standing Order 34) in relation to:

- Interpretation of the Inspector's Letter and proposal to deleted reference to the term 'A10/Main Rail Line Strategic Growth Corridor.
- Comments made by the Inspector at the Local Plan Examination hearings in relation to strategic growth in West Winch.
- Housing Access Road to be built before additional housing developed – Borough Council working with Norfolk County Council.
- Deadline for response to the Inspector's letter.
- Approval of Levelling up Bill currently working its way through Parliament and potential implications for the Council.
- Potential timescale for adoption of currently Local Plan.
- Sustainable development across the Borough.
- Role and implication of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Designated Neighbourhood areas.

Councillor Kemp drew the Task Group's attention to page 7, paragraph 3. The Planning Policy Manager advised that the number of houses were determined by the Housing Needs Assessment In

response, the Planning Policy Manager advised that the statement was incorrect. The Chair asked the Democratic Services Officer to review the recording and determine what was said by the Planning Policy Manager and circulate a revised set of minutes to the Task Group.

The Task Group supported the recommendation to Cabinet.

Councillor de Whalley voted against recommendation 1.

RESOLVED: That reference to the term 'A10/Main Rail Line Strategic Growth Corridor' is deleted from the Plan.

Recommendation 2

The Assistant Director, Planning Policy Manager and Legal Adviser responded to comments and questions from the Task Group and Councillor Morley (Standing Order 34) in relation to:

- Consultation undertaken with Parish Councils in relation to the settlement hierarchy.
- Evidence required by the Inspector to demonstrate the consultation undertaken with Parish Councils.
- Six week consultation exercise.
- Proposed changes to the Settlement Hierarchy.
- Role of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Categories set out in the Settlement Hierarchy.
- Settlement Hierarchy – objective assessment and criteria set out in the Core Strategy.

Councillor de Whalley asked if the Borough Council could write to Parish Councils affected by the proposed changes. In response, the Policy Planning Manager explained that all parishes would be written to informing of the consultation exercise. The Assistant Director advised that Parish Councils could take part in the consultation and responses would be collated and forwarded to the Inspector.

The Planning Policy Manager reiterated that all the evidence the Inspector had requested would be subject to public consultation, the responses collated and submitted to the Inspector for consideration.

The Planning Policy Manager informed the Task Group that the proposed settlement hierarchy would be part of a topic paper to be submitted to the Inspector by 28 April 2023.

The Task Group supported the recommendation to Cabinet

Councillor de Whalley abstained.

RESOLVED: That the Settlement Hierarchy reverts to that of the Core Strategy (as amended by the Site Allocations and Development

Management Policies Document), subject to a check that it still remains up to date.

Recommendation 3

The Assistant Director, Planning Policy Manager and Legal Adviser responded to comments and questions from the Task Group and Councillor Morley (Standing Order 34) in relation to:

- Development Management Policies set out in the Local Plan.
- Section 2.4 of the Inspector's letter, final paragraph: Inspector's conclusion regarding the different categories of the settlement hierarchy.
- Government calculation on the minimum number of houses required in the current local plan period.
- Role of Neighbourhood Plan

The Assistant Director proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows:

That a criterion-based policy is introduced into the Plan for the assessment of proposals for development in rural settlements. **The Criterion-based policy to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Group.**

Councillor Kemp commented that the Task Group needed to see the criteria to be included in the policy. In response, Mr Leader explained that there was no time to prepare the criteria within the timescale and added that there was a mechanism in place for officers to agree the criteria in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Task Group.

The Task Group supported the amended recommendation as set out below.

Councillor Kemp did not support the recommendation.

Councillor de Whalley abstained.

RESOLVED: That a criterion-based policy is introduced into the Plan for the assessment of proposals for development in rural settlements. The Criterion-based policy to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Group.

Recommendation 4

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contained guidance that must be met to enable a Council to adopt a Local Plan, including the housing requirement. Members were advised that Appendix 3 set out the methodology for calculating housing requirements for designated neighbourhood areas. It was highlighted that existing Neighbourhood

Plans or Neighbourhood Plans in the process of being produced would be judged against the Core Strategy.

The Assistant Director, Planning Policy Manager and Legal Adviser responded to comments and questions from the Task Group and Councillor Morley (Standing Order 34) in relation to:

- Definition of Designated Neighbourhood Area/boundary.
- West Winch proposed housing and Neighbourhood Plan.
- Sustainable Development Strategy.
- Role of Neighbourhood Plan – minimum number of houses to be delivered.
- Windfalls not being included in the housing numbers.
- Current Local Plan period 2021 – 2039.
- Settlement Hierarchy in Member's individual wards.
- Calculation/Methodology used to determine housing requirement.
- Monthly update requested by the Inspector.

The Task Group supported the recommendation to Cabinet.

Councillor de Whalley abstained.

RESOLVED: That a housing requirement is calculated for designated neighbourhood areas using the methodology set out at section 2.13 and Appendix 3.

The Chair thanked Members for their input and expressed thanks to Mr T Leader for the legal advice given to the Task Group.