

Report to Council – 21 March 2017

Report of Cabinet – 6 March 2017

Cabinet met on 6 March 2017. The minutes are published on the Council's website.

The following Members were present at the meeting:

Present: Mayor Dorothy Thornhill
Councillor Peter Taylor
Councillor Karen Collett
Councillor Stephen Johnson
Councillor Iain Sharpe
Councillor Mark Watkin

Also present: Councillor Nigel Bell
Councillor Kareen Hastrick

The following was a recommendation to Council:

80 Local Plan Part 2 Submission

A report was received from the Deputy Managing Director which set out the site allocations and detailed development management policies to support the delivery of the vision and strategy set out in Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy which was adopted in 2013.

Councillor Sharpe introduced the report and explained that it also had to be approved by Council. This was the second part of the local plan which included the development management plan and site allocations. The council had to justify its decisions through a sound evidence base which would be examined externally. However, the evidence base was constantly changing which had been problematic for all councils. It was important that the council had a plan as without one it would be far more vulnerable to developers. The changing evidence base meant that the council would have to review the plan at an early stage. However, the rewards were greater than the risks to have the site allocations and development management policies in place.

The Deputy Managing Director drew Cabinet's attention to the risks outlined in the report. There was an outstanding objection from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) regarding transportation and the council would be working with them on a memorandum of understanding. Also, regarding the Metropolitan Line Extension if a decision was made which was not favourable then the council would have to consider the impact on the plan. Hopefully, the council would know about both risks shortly before submitting the plan to the planning inspectorate.

Councillor Bell commented on the objection from HCC and the Mayor responded that the council agreed with HCC that the housing numbers could not be increased to the detriment of those travelling around Watford. The council wanted a sound transport plan and had asked HCC for a major review

Councillor Bell welcomed the taller building policies and that there was clarification on special policy areas e.g., western gateway, Clarendon Road, Ascot Road. This was an issue which would come up in future Development Management applications.

The Mayor responded with regards to tall buildings that the council could not refuse every application it received as they would go to appeal. With the government's housing white paper, urban density had been specifically mentioned. It was for the council to challenge the quality of the buildings which would be proposed. It was further commented by Cabinet that the government's strengthening of the greenbelt was forcing further development within urban areas and similar councils to Watford were also looking at tall buildings policies.

Councillor Bell commented on the traveller site on Tolpits Lane and stated that this should be accepted as a settled area. The Mayor commented that there was not a great need within Watford for sites and some of the traveller community had settled within the area.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. agrees that Local Plan Part 2 should be reported to Council on 21 March with a recommendation that the Plan be submitted for independent examination in line with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This recommendation remains subject to agreement with Hertfordshire County Council on an acceptable way forward in respect of transport modelling.
2. agrees that the Deputy Managing Director is delegated authority to agree, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, any late minor changes/documents needed to accompany the submission such as the agreement with Hertfordshire County Council and the updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Appendices

- Report to Council, 6 March 2017
- Local Plan Part 2 Publication (available at: <https://watford.jdi-consult.net/localplan/readdoc.php?docid=14>) [due to the size of the document there will be a few hard copies available at the meeting, there is also a hard copy available for inspection in the CSC – for electronic agendas, the appendix is produced as a supplementary document]
- Schedule of Proposed Modifications
- Schedule of Changes to the Policies Map
- Proposed Submission Policies Map and Town Centre Inset Map (draft)