

COUNCIL – 10 JANUARY 2018

Recommendations to Council from the Executive meeting held on 9 January 2018

E/17/101 Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that presented the pre-submission Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. The Plan was a key strategic planning document for Central Bedfordshire and would guide and support the delivery of new infrastructure, homes, jobs and how this would be achieved and delivered up until 2035. The report sought approval to release the draft Pre-submission Local Plan for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks commencing 11 January 2018. The Local Plan had been prepared using a range of new background evidence work. The feedback from the consultation would be used to propose modifications to the Plan which would be submitted alongside all documentation to the Secretary of State in Spring 2018.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Regeneration responded as follows:-

- Members and the public were encouraged to attend the drop in sessions that were taking place across Central Bedfordshire and to respond to the consultation;
- Members and the public were encouraged to attend the engagement meetings with developers to help influence master planning, as it was through this process that detailed proposals for each allocation would be developed;
- the number of houses in Houghton Regis had not been double counted, as the Plan reflected both approved proposals and new for growth;
- Policy CC6 Water Quality did give consideration to water supply and confirmed that the environmental framework would be updated;
- the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities was ongoing and Councillors Clarke, Collins, Dixon and Matthews were taking a leading role in liaising with Cambridgeshire, Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes Councils to ensure that the Plan took account of cross-border issues. This work would continue until the Plan was submitted;
- planning applications for development in Arlesey would require a transport assessment and the necessary modelling to assess the impact on traffic on the A507.

- it was unclear how the Government were going to proceed with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). In the meantime, the Council would continue to negotiate Section 106 Agreements to secure investment in necessary infrastructure;
- it was essential that the open nature of countryside in the gaps between villages/towns be maintained in order to retain the character of these settlements and prevent the potential loss of their individual identity; and
- confirmed that there was a mixed use development allocated for Henlow.

The Director of Regeneration and Business confirmed that the Executive and Council on 10 January were being invited to approve the release of the pre-submission Central Bedfordshire Local Plan for statutory consultation to provide Members and the public with an opportunity to provide their comments.

The Leader proposed the following additional recommendations to Officers and this was duly seconded:-

- ‘1. To note that the Local Plan identifies the importance of development being infrastructure led and requests officers to ensure that priority is given to the early delivery of the infrastructure, including through the master planning process for the proposed allocations.
2. To note that the Local Plan recognises and addresses the importance of avoiding coalescence and requests officers to consider how this could be strengthened even further through supporting technical guidance that further emphasises the importance of countryside gaps to support the sustainable growth approach that underpins the Plan.
3. To ensure that new developments and homes are constructed to a high standard, the Council will continue to press the Government for powers to ensure this.’

Reason for decision: To ensure that the Council has an up to date Plan in place to guide development within the area to facilitate the infrastructure, homes and jobs that residents need. If the Council fails to submit the Local Plan by 31 March 2018 or the date at which the National Planning Policy Framework was published as the deadline for submission, the Council would have new housing need figures imposed on it and would need to plan for the additional housing as well as any unmet need from neighbouring authorities. Also failure to submit the Plan would risk a loss of control of the process and speculative development with no prospect of maintaining a five year housing land supply in the face of an annual requirement of 2553 homes.

RESOLVED

1. to note that the Local Plan identifies the importance of development being infrastructure led and requests officers to ensure that priority is given to the early delivery of the infrastructure, including through the master planning process for the proposed allocations;
2. to note that the Local Plan recognises and addresses the importance of avoiding coalescence and requests officers to consider how this could be strengthened even further through supporting technical guidance that further emphasises the importance of countryside gaps to support the sustainable growth approach that underpins the Plan; and
2. to ensure that new developments and homes are constructed to a high standard, the Council will continue to press the Government for powers to ensure this.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that the draft Pre-Submission Local Plan be approved for the purposes of publication; and***
2. ***to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any minor amendments to the Local Plan prior to publication.***

The decision was unanimous.