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Meeting	Local Plan Working Group
Date	20 October 2020
Present	Councillors Ayre (Chair), K Taylor (Vice-Chair), Carr, Crawshaw, Cullwick, Cuthbertson, D'Agorne, Douglas, Fisher, Hollyer, Melly (Substitute for Cllr Perrett), Norman, Pearson, Rowley (Substitute for Cllr Doughty), Widdowson and Daubeney (Substitute for Cllr Orrell)
Apologies	Councillors Doughty, Orrell, Perrett and Warters

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#### **5. Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, and any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, which they might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

#### **6. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2020 be approved as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair at a future date.

#### **7. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

#### **8. Huntington Neighbourhood Plan - Examiner's Report and Proposed Modifications**

Members considered a report which presented the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Huntington Neighbourhood Plan and proposed additional modifications in relation to the Green Belt policies, following the recent case of Christopher Wedgewood v City of York Council Group [2020] EWHC 780 (Admin) and a challenge through the examination process by developers Redrow Homes.

The Examiner's report was attached at Annex A, with details of the recommended modifications, and the council's response to these, at Annex B. Most of the modifications were minor, but included key points in relation to housing and retail, as highlighted in paragraph 17 of the report. Annex C set out officers' proposed additional recommended modifications to the Plan in relation to Green Belt policies. These clarified that, in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan, decisions on whether to treat land as falling within the Green Belt for development management purposes would be taken in accordance with the approach supported in the Wedgewood case referred to above. Judgement in the case had been received after the Examiner's report was issued in February 2020.

Officers confirmed that the council had the capacity under relevant regulations to modify the Examiner's report if required and must notify prescribed persons of their proposed decision, and the reasons for it, and invite representations. In response to Members' questions, they confirmed that the Examiner was in agreement with the approach being taken in this case.

The Chair thanked Huntington Parish Council for their work in producing the Plan and it was

Resolved: That Executive be recommended to:

- (i) Approve the proposed additional modifications set out in Annex C to the report for consultation purposes.

Reason: To allow public consultation to take place on the proposed modifications.

- (ii) Approve a Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 17A(2)) consultation on the proposed additional modifications to the Huntington Neighbourhood Plan set out in Annex C.

Reason: So that interested parties can comment on the proposed modifications to the approach to the Green Belt policies.

- (iii) Delegate the proposed additional modifications and consultation strategy to the Assistant Director of Planning and Public Protection, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning.

Reason: To allow public consultation on the proposed modifications in Annex C.

- (iv) Defer consideration of the Examiner's report (Annex A) and proposed modifications schedule (Annex B) until the consultation on additional modifications (Annex C) has taken place.

Reason: To enable Members to make a decision on how to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to all proposed modifications with consideration for the consultation responses received to the Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 17A(2)) consultation on Annex C.

## **9. Temporary Amendments to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement**

Members considered a report which asked them to recommend to Executive that temporary amendments be made to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), to revise planning-related public access and involvement procedures in response to current social distancing restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The draft temporary amendments, attached as Annex A to the report, set out the approach being taken to the commitments in the SCI during the pandemic. They included the temporary suspension of face to face consultation events and provision of printed documents, and their replacement by alternative methods such as virtual meetings and social media, with advocates to be nominated for those without access to online consultation. It was proposed that authority be delegated to the relevant Director and Executive Member to determine when the temporary arrangements would cease.

Members discussed the proposals at length, raising a number of concerns about the provision made for those without access to the internet and whether this matter had been properly addressed. In particular, it was felt that printed copies should be made available in libraries. Concerns were also raised about the duration of the temporary arrangements, which it was felt required more clarity. Following questions to officers and further debate, it was

Resolved: (i) That officers be asked to produce an updated version of the proposed temporary revisions at Annex A, to address the concerns raised by Members at the meeting in relation to the provision of information in a non-digital format.

Reason: To ensure that the revisions do not have the effect of excluding some members of the community from the planning process.

- (ii) That Executive be recommended to:
  - a) Consider the updated proposed temporary revisions to the council's adopted SCI, reflecting the concerns of the LPWG as well as the specific requirements arising from national guidance and procedures in dealing with coronavirus implications.
  - b) Authorise officers to publish the covering note to the adopted SCI on the council's website.
  - c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Economy and Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning, to approve the implementation of the revisions for a period of up to 6 months and, should the revisions remain in place after 6 months, to ask the Local Plan Working Group to consider whether to recommend a further period of implementation.

Reason: To ensure that consultation and engagement in the planning process remains effective at a time when restrictions have been placed on face to face social interactions to help combat the spread of coronavirus, and to provide some certainty as to the duration of the temporary amendments.

## **10. York Local Plan Update**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the Local Plan examination, progress made in relation to the schedule of further work submitted following the Local Plan

Phase 1 hearing sessions, and subsequent correspondence received from the appointed Planning Inspectors.

Paragraphs 3-17 of the report set out the history of the Local Plan from its submission for examination in May 2018 to the end of the Phase 1 hearing sessions in December 2019.

Paragraphs 18-23 covered the schedule of further work published in January 2020, the documents submitted in response to this, and the progress made on outstanding items from the schedule in the light of delays to the original timetable as a result of the lockdown in March. Details of the Inspectors' letters of 12 June and 9 July 2020, and work done in response to these, were set out in paragraphs 24-39. In recent correspondence, the council had re-affirmed its commitment to continuing progress towards adoption of the Local Plan and confirmed the progress made in relation to the Green Belt Topic Paper Addendum, the HRA, and consequential engagement with interested parties

In response to Members' questions, officers confirmed that:

- Although the government's Planning White Paper and Devolution proposals could affect the Local Plan in the future, they would not hinder its progress at this stage;
- Survey work had been carried out to determine the sources of the recreational pressures on Strensall Common;
- The revised HRA had taken into account all evidence available to inform the revised conclusions and proposed recommendations in the report.

In considering this item, Members paid tribute to the late Rachel Macefield and the work she had done as the council's Forward Plan Manager to progress the Local Plan.

Resolved: That the progress on the Examination of York's Local Plan be noted.

Reason: To confirm that the Local Plan Working Group is aware of the current position on the Local Plan.

Cllr N Ayre, Chair

[The Meeting started At 5.00 pm and finished at 6.43 pm].