

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY 25 JUNE 2013 AT 1:00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bowman (Chairman), Councillors Bainbridge, Bowditch, Graham, Nedved, Watson (until 1:20pm) and Whalen.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Glover – Deputy Leader and Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder
Councillor J Mallinson – Observer

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Local Environment
Investment and Policy Manager
Principal Planning Officer

EEOSP.42/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Martlew and McDevitt.

EEOSP.43/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Graham, Watson and Whalen declared an interest in respect of the Planning–Land Allocations. The interest related to the fact that they were Members of Cumbria County Council.

EEOSP.44/13 LOCAL PLAN – LAND ALLOCATIONS

The Director of Economic Development submitted Report ED.15/13 regarding the Local Plan and Land Allocations.

The Executive had considered the Local Plan at their meeting on 17 June 2013 and decided:

“That the Preferred Options stage of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (Site Allocations) be made available for consideration by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and, subject to any issues arising from the Panel, be reported back to the Executive on 15 July 2013, with a recommendation to refer to Council on 16 July 2013 for approval for public consultation for a six week period.”

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder outlined the background to the matter, reminding Members that the development management and strategic policies and vision had been brought before the Executive on 31 May 2013 and considered by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13 June 2013. Together with the site allocations for development identified in report ED.14/13, they would form the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015 – 2030. He added that the Plan would provide a statutory planning policy framework for Carlisle District which would in turn provide developer and community confidence in decision making.

The report identified the Preferred Options for sites to be allocated for a range of development including housing, employment and community uses up to 2030. The

allocations would help to meet the objectives of the strategic housing and employment policies. Following the findings in the retail study that by 2021 Carlisle could accommodate an additional 16,900sq m of retail floor space, work was also currently being undertaken on a City Centre Master Plan.

Maps showing the preferred locations for a range of housing to meet the needs of current and future population, employment sites and a health centre at Brampton were appended to the report. Those allocations would also form part of the Local Plan Policies map which would also indicate existing established land uses such as areas of housing, employment, retail, etc as well as areas of land which were protected, such as parks, playing fields, other protected landscapes and sites which were important for nature conservation.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder informed Members that the Preferred Options site allocations had been identified through a variety of sources, including:

- sites previously assessed and consulted on through the SHLAA
- sites recently submitted to the Council
- a review of land allocations in the current Local Plan
- a review of sites in other corporate strategic documents, such as the Asset Management Plan
- Carlisle Employment Land Study
- Carlisle Retail Study

In terms of housing, and in response to representations received from villages wishing to see protection and managed growth, an urban/rural split of 70/30% was proposed. All of the Preferred Options site allocations put forward in the report were required in order for the Council to meet its proposed annual housing target of 550 – 650 per year, with an urban/rural split of 70/30%. Although no firm decisions had yet been taken, it should be noted that the effect of removing a site would be the need to allocate an equivalent alternative elsewhere.

As the Council could currently demonstrate a five year housing supply with an additional buffer of 20%, it was not considered necessary to allocate sites for development in the first five years of the Plan period. The Preferred Options site allocations were therefore intended to come forward in years 6 – 10. For years 11 -15 (i.e. 2025 – 2030) a broad location for growth had been identified in the area of Carlisle south, spreading westwards from junction 42 of the M6 to Durdar, with potential to expand further in a later plan period. The ultimate aim of that area of development would be to enable the construction of a southern relief road linking Junction 42 with the newly opened western relief road (CNDR).

Details of the Strategic Housing Policy and next stages were also provided, including consultation which was proposed between 29 July 2013 and 16 September 2013.

Policy S2 – Spatial Strategy

The policy held an overarching key in the sustainability of Carlisle and drew on Policy S1. The policy set the key targets in relation to the number of dwellings, the growth in employment and the urban/rural housing split. The policy focussed on growth areas and other details such as public transport, educational achievement, community wellbeing and design.

- *How would Officers ensure the infrastructure was in place eg schools before land was developed?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that Officers liaised with the County council and utility organisations to determine what infrastructure was required for a development. She acknowledged that secondary education was a major issue in Carlisle and advised that Officers worked closely with the Education Authority to look at when new schools would be required in order to release a housing development.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that there had been many meetings with representatives from the Education Authority and informed them of the City Council's policies. The Education Authority had been broadly happy with the policies and had not requested a specific site for a school. She explained that Officers obtained their advice about the potential location of schools from the Education Authority.

The Director of Economic Development stated that, in her experience, when the document went to consultation people would challenge the information and therefore the City Council had to work with partners to encourage them to stand up and present their case for their decisions.

- *Is the City Council able to ask partners specific questions as part of the process?*

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that that would be possible as part of the consultation.

- *Were the sites interchangeable?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the sites proposed were preferred options and the consultation would indicate whether they were the right sites.

- *The policy states that the Council aimed to deliver at least 9000 dwellings over the next 15 years and mentioned the impact on employment, education, transport, etc but there was no mention of the hospital which was already at capacity.*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Health Authority would be part of the consultations and had been engaged in the process as part of the Local Strategic Plan.

In response to a query the Director of Economic Development confirmed that the development on Crindledyke had not been included as the development had already been approved.

- *Members believed it was essential that the City Council worked with partners and in particular those partners involved in education and health.*
- *The statement "Strengthen the City as a focus of high educational achievement with facilities that support future economic growth" was a very broad statement and should incorporate all higher education.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that Officers were engaging with the university and through the consultation would attempt to determine the university's plans for the future. The statement would be amended to include the university and the college.

Policy S5 – Regeneration and Strategic Retail in the City Centre and Botchergate

The policy drew on the Carlisle retail study and focussed on high quality retail. With regard to Botchergate the policy looked at retail and other uses that would enhance the City Centre and be linked to the City Centre Masterplan.

- *How did the existing Botchergate regeneration programme fit into the document?*

The policy fit underneath the Botchergate Conservation Area Management Plan and enabled the continuation of the focus of attention on the area. Botchergate was part of the public realm and would improve when the County Council developed their offices in the area.

- *Where did the City Centre fit into the Retail Masterplan?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Carlisle Retail Study carried out in 2012 provided an assessment of how much retail would improve over the next 10-20 years. She advised that retail had reached saturation in some areas and that flexibility around high value comparative retail would be necessary. Morton and St Nicholas Gate developments would be included when looking at population growth capacity.

Policy 1 – Employment and Commercial Growth Land Allocations

Some allocated employment land in the current Local Plan was being carried forward, namely at Brunthill and Morton. In terms of new allocations the Policy highlighted land north of Junction 44 of the M6 for employment development that would require a major electricity supply. In addition the M6 corridor was recognised as an area with potential for the development of employment uses for high value jobs. The airport was included in the policy and Officers were monitoring the application and subsequent Judicial Review and the policy would reflect the Council's aspirations of the development of the airport.

- *Would it be clear in the text that the policy was linked to policy S6 to enable members of the public to better understand the background to the policy?*

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the information would be clear in the final document. The Director of Economic Development explained that comments from the Panel and the cross party working group would be included before the final document was presented to the Executive for their consideration and subsequent submission to Council with the recommendation of consultation.

- *How could the Council ensure high value jobs were brought into the area?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there were a number of factors apart from ensuring the correct infrastructure and site. Carlisle had accessible motorway junctions and a high quality environment but there were other factors that were not part of planning policies.

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that class usage would be included in the glossary to make classification clearer to the public.

- *Areas were available along the M6 corridor although Rosehill was at capacity.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there were a number of plots available around the M6 junctions but that some were more constrained than others. The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder stated that energy hungry industries would be better placed closer to Harker which had the power source while less hungry industry could be placed further south.

- *What was the current situation regarding the former Laings site on Dalston Road?*

The Principal Planning Officer advised that had been allocated as 70% housing and 30 commercial and was included in the current Local Plan.

Policy 9 – Morton District Centre

The Morton District Centre was part of the Carlisle Retail Study undertaken in 2012 to ensure the delivery of a foodstore.

Policy 21 – Housing Strategy and Delivery

The policy would set out how the housing target could be achieved and reflected the urban/rural split and the results of the SHLAA.

The tables included in the report set out the sites to be allocated, the size of the area and the potential yield. The Director of Economic Development explained that once the Plan was completed the information would be sent to the Planning Inspector and the Council would need to prove that the information was based on sound evidence. If that could not be evidenced then the information could be found to be unsound and the Officers had done a lot of work to ensure that did not happen.

- *Some of the maps require clarification of location and the public would not be able to identify various sites.*

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that the information would be included in the final document. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the Plan would have a brief description on the maps for clarity. She advised that, as the Council had enough sites for the first five years, the allocations were for the second five year period. During that period other sites would be monitored to be ready for allocation during the final five years of the plan.

- *If an allocated site was not developed could an alternative site be developed to ensure the target was achieved?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that would be the case.

Housing Allocations

The Principal Planning Officers explained that the SHLAA could be described as a catalogue of available sites. The City Council had asked people to identify sites for housing allocation and they had been included in the maps appended to the report.

The Director of Economic Development advised that discussion had taken place with some Members in respect of specific areas and reminded Members that they would be part of the consultation and their views would form part of the consultation.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the SHLAA was assessed in collaboration with representatives from education, highways, United Utilities, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Each site was assessed in respect of deliverability and the constraints placed on that site. The information was updated every six months.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Policy team had met with all of the Parish Councils who had an appetite for limited housing in their Parishes. Villages could only be protected through their long-term support.

- *Supporting services to the villages would help young people to stay in the villages.*

In response to a query the Director of Economic Development advised that it would become clearer through consultation whether any of the Parish Councils did not support the Plans.

- *It was important that Parish Councils were encouraged to respond to the consultation.*

Brampton

- *There was a narrow point of access indicated into site BRAM2.*

That issue had been explored in the past with the Highways Authority who had seen all of the sites and were confident that they could find a solution to any problems.

Longtown – The preferred allocation was the site of the former secondary school.

Dalston – The main site was a greenfield site at Buckabank where development would help to support local services. No more than 10 dwellings would be built on the site. An application for development on a separate site in the centre of Dalston was currently under consideration by the Development Control Committee.

Wetheral – The site was in a central location and would support community services. The site was flat with no significant flood risk.

Scotby

- *There were currently 1 application that had been approved by the Development Control Committee and 2 awaiting consideration. Were they part of the preferred allocations?*

The Principal Planning Officer advised that Scotby was a large village close to Carlisle and that the site allocation was relatively small.

Linstock – A site had been allocated for the first time in Linstock which was linked to Carlisle via a dedicated cycleway and footpath. Any development would be in scale with the size of the village.

Rockcliffe – The village was small with a primary school and the preferred allocation was on a greenfield site and part of a bigger site. The scale would be appropriate for the village.

Cummersdale – The site allocated was supported by the Parish Council.

Cumwhinton – The site was small as the village had seen a lot of development in the past and the primary school was at capacity.

Warwick Bridge -

- *A Member was concerned that a site had been developed in the 1960s with provision allowed to carry on development of the site yet the report indicated that a different site had been allocated.*

The Principal Planning Officer explained that to date no-one had come forward with a proposal for the original site. People would be invited through the consultation to put alternative sites into the Plans.

- *Where would access onto the A69 be located?*

The Principal Planning Officer explained that that would be decided by the Highways Authority. All locations would be included in the Rural Masterplan and Officers had to ensure that there were landowners who were willing to sell their land.

Wreay – Only 10 dwellings would be allowed to be developed on the site. The village had a primary school, church, public house and a village hall.

Harker – There were no preferred options in the village but there was an alternative option.

Houghton – There had been a lot of development in Houghton in the past.

- *What was the current position regarding the old airfield? Would it be used for light industry?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that the site had been the subject of a recent planning application and was currently overgrown. Part of the site had been allocated for housing and she suspected the remainder would be developed for housing in the future. The site could be considered for employment if there was the appetite to do so. However, Officers would be reluctant to develop the site for employment as it was too far from the motorway and was not appropriate from an economic development viewpoint.

Smithfield – No site had been put forward as the village was a long way from Carlisle. The village did currently have a primary school and one or two dwellings would be considered if an application was brought forward.

- *The consultation period would conflict with summer holidays and it would be restrictive for obtaining the best responses. Would there be any flexibility?*

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the deadline for responses from the Parish Councils had been extended to October 2013. The Communications Team had worked hard to ensure as many people as possible would be included. Some specific questions would be forwarded to some stakeholders and partners and there would be a press

release nearer to the start of the consultation. The Director of Economic Development had been part of radio and television interviews and would continue to do so.

The Investment and Policy Manager advised that the consultation would end on 16 September 2013 to enable Officers to progress the Plan to the next stage but would continue dialogue after the deadline.

RESOLVED – 1) The Panel thanked the Officers for their work in producing the report.

2) The link between Policy S1 and Policy S6 should be made clearer in the final document

3) The Panel would like some consultation with regard to the clarification of potential school sites (Policy S2).

4) The Panel were satisfied that Policy S5 would fit the requirements of the City for the future.

5) The Panel were content with the draft local allocations and for the report to progress to the Executive and then Council to approve consultation.

(The meeting ended at 2:15pm)