

**Minutes of** **Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee**

**Meeting date** **Thursday, 26 September 2024**

**Members present:** Councillor Ian Watkinson (Chair), and Councillors Caleb Tomlinson, Elaine Stringfellow, Alistair Bradley, Alex Hilton, Alistair Morwood, Amber Afzal, John Potter (virtually) and County Councillors Alan Cullens and attending virtually, Susan Whitham and Michael Green.

**Officers:** Gayle Wootton (Director of Planning and Property – Chorley and South Ribble), Chris Hayward (Director of Development and Housing (Preston City Council)), Catherine Thomas (Planning Manager - South Ribble), Carolyn Williams (Planning Policy Manager (Preston City Council)), Marcus Hudson (Acting Head of Planning and Environment (Planning and Transport) -Lancashire County Council), Benjamin Vickers (Principal Planning Officer (Policy) - South Ribble)), Katherine Greenwood (Principal Planning Officer (Chorley Council)), Chun Wai-Kwok (Project Manager (Central Lancashire Local Plan)), Emma Price (Planning Policy Officer (Local Plan)) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer – Chorley and South Ribble)

**Other Members:** Councillors Phil Smith (South Ribble Borough Council), Craige Southern (Chorley Council), Kath Unsworth (South Ribble Borough Council), Colin Sharples (South Ribble Borough Council) and attending virtually Karen Walton (South Ribble Borough Council)

## **50 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting**

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That Councillor Ian Watkinson be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

## **51 Welcome by Chair and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members and officers in attendance to introduce themselves.

## **52 Apologies for absence**

No apologies for absence had been received.

**53 Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

**54 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 7 February 2024 of Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee**

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on Wednesday, 7 February 2024, be approved as an accurate for signing by the Chair.

**55 Local Plan Update**

The Director of Planning and Property (Chorley and South Ribble) presented the report which provided an update on all aspects of work that had been progressing on the Central Lancashire Local Plan.

It was highlighted that work had been progressing in line with the Local Development Scheme that had been agreed by the three councils earlier in the year and crucially, a revised scheme was not deemed necessary as a result of proposed planning reforms announced recently.

As covered within the report, updates were provided regarding site selection, strategic flood risk assessments, policy preparation, employment land studies, playing pitch strategies, infrastructure delivery and policy mapping.

In addition, work was being undertaken to build an evidence base to demonstrate that the Central Lancashire authorities have met statutory requirements concerning the 'Duty to Cooperate' with appropriate partners such as the county council, neighbouring authorities and other consultees.

Concerning housing evidence, Members' attention was drawn to several pieces of work to assess housing need that should be finalised in the coming months. The current proposal was to proceed and plan for above the standard method figure as had been included within the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation carried out in 2022.

In response to a query about engagement with elected members on site selection, it was confirmed that communication was ongoing with members as the work approached publication stage. It was acknowledged that each council may take a different approach in how this would be achieved.

Reassurance was sought that given the amount of work to complete, including the drafting of over 60 policy documents, whether there was sufficient confidence to ensure the programme would be delivered on time to submit to Government. It was confirmed that the programme was at an advanced stage and expected to be completed on schedule. Although a number of studies were yet to be finalised, officers were in regular contact with consultants undertaking the work and in many cases had had sight of draft findings.

**Resolved** – that the update be noted.

## **56 Proposed Reforms to National Planning Policy Framework and Changes to the Planning System**

The Planning Policy Officer (Central Team) delivered a presentation that outlined the main proposals put forward by the new Government and how this may impact on both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and on a more local level, the preparation of the Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Members were advised that the Government had recently completed a consultation exercise which sought views on proposed approaches and revisions to the NPPF and a wider range of planning policy reforms.

The consultation presented a number of proposals, which included:

- Implement a new standard method and calculation to support the Government's manifesto commitment of 1.5 million new homes
- Make the standard method for assessing housing need mandatory
- Reverse changes made in the December 2023 NPPF, including making a 5 Year Housing Land Supply mandatory irrespective of plan status
- Broaden the existing definition of brownfield land
- Identify 'Grey Belt' land within the Green Belt, to be brought forward
- Deliver affordable, well-designed homes, with new 'golden rules' for land release in the Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest
- Improve the operation of the 'presumption in favour' of sustainable development
- Make wider changes to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector
- Support economic growth in key sectors
- Deliver community needs to support society and the creation of healthy places
- Support clean energy and the environment, including through support for onshore wind and renewables

Three key proposals were also highlighted to the Committee, those relating to housing need, green and grey belt land and implications for plan making.

Consultation responses were now being assessed, including submissions made by the three Central Lancashire councils, and would contribute to the publication of a new NPPF in due course.

**Resolved** – that the update be noted.

## **57 Dates of Future Meetings**

Members noted the next meeting of the Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee was scheduled for Monday 9 December 2024, to be hosted by Preston City Council.

## **58 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Resolved: (Unanimously)**

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information which is described in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 which are specified against the heading to each item, and that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

**59 Implications of Planning Reforms for the Central Lancashire Local Plan and Programme**

The Planning Policy Manager (Preston City Council) outlined how planning reforms would affect the Central Lancashire Local Plan. It was acknowledged that deadlines were challenging but work had been progressing in line with the agreed Local Development Scheme.

**Resolved** – that the update be noted.

Chair

Date