

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

**Meeting date** **Thursday, 18 November 2021**

**Members present:** Councillors Bill Evans (Chair), Mal Donoghue, Alistair Bradley, Harold Heaton, Alistair Morwood, David Borrow and Sue Whittam

**Officers:** Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Development), Carolyn Williams (Central Lancashire Local Plan Co-ordinator), Zoe Whiteside (Service Lead (Spatial Planning)), Katherine Greenwood (Principal Planning Officer) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Caleb Tomlinson

**136 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting**

**Decision: That Councillor Bill Evans be appointed as Chair for the meeting.**

**137 Welcome by the Chair and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**138 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Caleb Tomlinson (South Ribble Borough Council).

**139 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 22 June 2021 of Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee**

**Decision: That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 22 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**140 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were received.

## 141 Density Study Findings

Mark Vaughan from Hive Planning presented the Density Study Findings.

The purpose of the Density Study was to ensure that robust and defensible evidence was used for the Local Plan.

The methodology was outlined. Several zones were defined across Central Lancashire which aligned to existing planning policy designations and typologies. The zones were

- Rural Settlements
- Suburban
- Inner Urban and Town Centre
- Preston City Centre
- Other (rural)

The methodology avoided subjective assessments of gross/net ratios and non-developable areas and focused on residential only applications.

The findings demonstrated that density was higher closer to town and city centres.

Suburban and Rural Settlements were similar and were dominated by volume house builders.

Preston compared to other large cities and large towns, not South Ribble and Chorley. Preston was in a unique sub-regional process that resulted in the city punching above its weight of density and city living.

**Decision: The report was noted.**

## 142 Central Lancashire Local Plan Update

Carolyn Williams, Central Lancashire Local Plan Co-Ordinator addressed Members to share information related to the delayed development scheme, update the progress of studies and work undertaken for the GLP.

Consultation could start as early as 2022, but depended on resources, the Planning Advisory Service and MPPF requirements.

External consultants to independently review and update policies to be in line with MPPF.

Work was underway to provide up to date information regarding climate change, flood risk, and changes to the bio-diversity in the area.

Consultants Aspinall Verdi to complete the Local Plan Viability in addition to reviewing the Community Infrastructure Levi.

Land use consultants appointed to complete work on integrated assessment, currently at the screening stage.

The draft Employment Land Review was received, this was to gain a greater understanding of Covid-19's impact on the type and demand of employment space in Central Lancashire.

In response to Members questions on the green belt, it was explained that there were 5 key aims of the work. One of which was to review the policy designation of strategic green belt, open space, areas of separation and the need for safeguarded land.

The greenbelt land would be assessed to explore performance. Decisions would be made to either release or sustain the sites. It was clarified that there were five tests for greenbelt, which resulted in grading from strong to weak. Strong performers of the five tests required strong protection. Weak performers required further exploration into the requirements of protection. It was clarified that the Green Belt served five purposes

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Members wanted to ensure that green spaces were preserved to prevent an urban sprawl while enforcing positive change towards climate change.

In response to a query that related to places of worship and planning policy. It was confirmed that there were requirements for community needs which included religious celebrations and alcohol-free venues. Within the Local Plan there were also provisions for burials.

**Decision: The report was noted.**

#### **143 Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Bio-Diversity Net Gain**

Zoe Whiteside, Service Lead - Spatial Planning provided a brief overview of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain that would be introduced as part of the Environment Act. Across England, there would be special strategies for nature which contained a map which featured the most valuable habitats, with proposals for creating and improving habitats.

The Environment Bill to make delivering biodiversity a mandatory part of the development process, which included the establishment of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and a 10% uplift of biodiversity from late 2022, calculated by the Biodiversity Metric Tool Kit. In Spring 2023, a national digital register of Bio Net Gain sites should be in place which highlighted where the 10% would be spent, if the 10% could not be delivered on site

The three Councils must ensure cooperation, joint engagement and aligned planning policies for the creation of the nature strategy. The data needed to be an accurate representation of species and local habitats with input from local knowledge, local space officers.

Staff needed to be trained to understand the software and data.

Biodiversity net gain needed to be considered and a part of the template for Section 106, guidance would be provided by the Planning Advisory Service.

It was clarified that the 10% was not a charge but it was the value of biodiversity. It was expected to be incorporated in the planning process the same way flood and travel reports were submitted. If this was not feasible on site, off site provisions would be made based on the software's projection.

Members expressed concern that there could be an increase in the cost of homes. But Officers explained that it would be a viability issue that would have to be factored in.

#### **144 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Decision: Members agreed to exclude the public and press by Virtue of Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

#### **145 Strategic Housing & Economic Land Assessment Review and Sites Assessment Process Update**

Carolyn Williams provided the update which explained the process undertaken and the purpose of updating the existing Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), and covered the changes introduced to ensure that there was sufficient land to meet the need, and to provide justification of any released greenbelt land.

The process involved all land being submitted before suitability was assessed against local and national policy constraints. It was stressed that the correct approach taken would screen out illegible and unsuitable land.

The seven-step process was highlighted on agenda page 24. Starting with GIS and map-based work, due to be completed prior to the new year. Any duplicated land to be removed which should prevent an overcount of available land. Sessions with Officers to take place with the most effective use of land suitable for housing and employment put forward. The final list of land, accompanied by assessments for integration, habitat, flood risk, and viability used to engage with the County Council with input from transport, education, and health partners for decisions to be made.

The sites would be featured at each Local Plan Working Group in the New Year. If, however, a shortage of land was revealed, the process would restart.

**Decision: The report was noted.**

#### **146 Any Other Business**

**Decision: Members voted 1:5:1 against changing the start time of the Central Lancashire Joint Advisory Committee to 6pm.**

#### **147 Dates of Future Meetings**

Monday, 31 January 2022 at 6:30pm at Preston City Council.

Chair

Date