

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2020

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGULATORY & COMMUNITY SAFETY

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSE

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None.

PURPOSE

To seek Cabinet approval to submit comments in response to Lichfield District Council's Local Plan Review - Preferred Options consultation on behalf Tamworth Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet note the policies and proposals contained within the Lichfield District Council Local Plan Review 2018-2040 - Preferred Options document; and
2. Cabinet approves the comments to be made to Lichfield District Council in response to the consultation as set out in Appendix 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lichfield District Council (LDC) is currently reviewing its local plan with the aim to produce a new plan which will provide the planning framework for the district up to 2040. Once adopted the new local plan will replace the current local plan strategy and site allocations and will form the basis for making decisions on planning applications in the district.

As part of the plan making process, LDC are now seeking views on the preferred options and the information gathered will inform the pre-submission version of their new plan which is intend to be published in May 2020. The current consultation runs until 5pm on 24 January 2020.

Officers have reviewed the document and a recommended response to the consultation is included at Appendix 1.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council could decide not to respond to the consultation, however this will mean that our views and potential requests for amendments are not formally recorded or

taken into account.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications specifically as a result of this report. However, there are development proposals located adjacent to the Tamworth boundary that have the potential to impact upon the infrastructure within Tamworth Borough, particularly highways and education provision as well as sport and leisure and affordable housing. As the proposed allocations are contained within Lichfield District, Tamworth Borough Council will receive no additional Council Tax or New Homes Bonus.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

The Duty to Cooperate was introduced through Section 110 of the Localism Act which inserted section 33A 'Duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development' into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). Section 33A sets out a duty to co-operate in relation to the planning of sustainable development.

The duty applies to all local planning authorities, county councils and prescribed bodies and requires that they must co-operate with each other in maximising the effectiveness with which development plan documents and other local development documents are prepared. The legislation states that in particular the duty requires that engagement should occur constructively, actively and on an on-going basis during the plan-making process and that regard must be had to the activities of other authorities.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Development within Lichfield district that is on, or in close proximity to, the border of Tamworth has the potential to negatively impact on the infrastructure within the borough, such as highways, school and leisure facilities, if not planned properly and sustainably. The current consultation provides the Council with an opportunity to engage proactively with a neighbouring authority to ensure that development that might impact on Tamworth can be delivered sustainably.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

All planning authorities are required to produce strategic plans which show how their area will develop in the future. These plans are often known as 'local plans'. The local plan should provide a positive vision and framework for the future development of an area, seeking to address needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure as well as safeguarding important environments.

Lichfield's current local plan consists of two parts. The local plan strategy was adopted in February 2015 and sets out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the district including the levels of development needed and a number of large strategic allocations for housing growth. The local plan allocations document was adopted in July 2019 and identifies site specific proposals and policies to deliver

the strategic vision established through the local plan strategy.

LDC is currently reviewing its local plan with the aim to produce a new plan which will provide the planning framework for the district up to 2040. Once adopted the new local plan will form the basis for making decisions on planning applications in the district.

The Council has previously been consulted on the Scope, Issues and Options document in early 2018 and the Preferred Options & Policy Directions document in early 2019. The Preferred Options document on which LDC are now seeking the Council's views forms the next stage of the plan making process and will inform the version of the new local plan that LDC plans to submit for examination in 2021. There will be further opportunities to comment prior to submission of the plan and an opportunity for the council to make representations at the examination of the plan.

The proposed spatial strategy sets out LDC's intention to deliver a minimum of 7,282 new dwellings within the district, plus a contribution of 4,500 dwellings towards meeting the Greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall.

The adopted Tamworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006-2031 identifies a need for 6,250 additional dwellings by 2031 and available land to provide 4,425 of those dwellings. This leaves a shortfall of 1,825 dwellings. The council signed a statement of common ground with LDC and North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) in September 2018 in which LDC committed to provide 912 dwellings towards the Tamworth's unmet need. There is no specific reference within the preferred options document to providing for Tamworth's unmet need, however a recent joint piece of evidence (the Lichfield and Tamworth Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment) demonstrates that Tamworth's housing need should now be considered to be significantly lower than previous evidence suggested, and so there is unlikely to be any unmet need arising in Tamworth in the future. As a result, it is considered that it would not be appropriate to ask LDC to specify an amount of housing to be delivered to meet Tamworth's needs at this time. It is instead considered appropriate to make clear in the council's response that, as a result of the new evidence, the council will not accept meeting Tamworth's housing need as an argument to support development on or in close proximity to the Tamworth border.

In addition to the new dwellings, it is also proposed to plan for approximately 61ha of employment land. As with the housing need, a similar situation exists in relation to employment need. Tamworth's adopted local plan identifies an unmet employment land need of 14ha up to 2031 which LDC and NWBC agreed to provide through the September 2018 Statement of Common Ground. The most recent evidence again suggests that Tamworth's need will be significantly lower than previously thought (8.8ha down from 32ha) and so it is again not considered appropriate to request LDC consider Tamworth's need as part of their proposed options as the lower need is likely to be able to be delivered within Tamworth borough.

In order to accommodate the proposed level of growth, LDC have identified four main areas in which to focus strategic allocations for growth which are Lichfield city, Fradley, Whittington, and Fazeley. In recent years significant development has been granted planning permission on or in close proximity to the Tamworth border which has the potential to impact on existing infrastructure within the borough boundary. Of the proposed areas for growth included within LDC's preferred options, the area with most potential for impact on Tamworth is Fazeley, and in particular the proposed allocation of a site for 800 dwellings (see Appendix 2). The site is not directly

adjacent to the borough boundary, but in close proximity to it, and the document states that the intention is to provide facilities and services to meet day to day needs for the settlement and the surrounding rural areas. However at this stage there is very limited information available about the proposal as the key design principles and infrastructure requirements will be addressed through a masterplan at a later date. It is therefore considered appropriate to object to that allocation at this stage due to the lack of information available to be able to assess the potential impact on Tamworth.

The proposals also make reference to a new settlement (Preferred Policy NS1) that is not anticipated to deliver any new homes until after the end of the proposed plan period (2040), however no location has been proposed for a new settlement at this stage. Whilst the development of a new settlement within Lichfield district has the potential to impact on Tamworth, a significant amount of work would still be required before any such development could occur. It is also considered unlikely at this stage that such a policy (Preferred Policy NS1) would be found sound during a local plan examination. Notwithstanding this, it is considered appropriate to object to the proposed inclusion of this policy at this stage due to the lack of information available to be able to assess the potential impact on Tamworth.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lichfield District Council Local Plan Review 2018-2040 - Preferred Options
Local Plan Review Preferred Options Policy Maps

These, along with other supporting documents are available on LDC's website at:
https://lichfielddc-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/local_plan_review/lprpo

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft response to Lichfield District Council Local Plan Review - Preferred Options consultation

Appendix 2 - Lichfield District Council Local Plan Review Preferred Options Policies Map Inset 11 Fazeley, Mile Oak and Bonehill