

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities held at
2.00 pm on Tuesday, 21 September 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor D Welsh (Chair)

Shadow Cabinet Members Present: Councillor R Bailey and Councillor M Lapsa

Other Members: Councillor K Maton (item 14 below)

Employees Present:

D Butler, Planning and Regulation
U Patel, Law and Governance

Apologies: Councillor L Bigham

Public Business

12. Declarations of Interest

Councillor R Bailey declared an "Other Interest" in the matter the subject of Minute 14 below headed "Response to Petition Regarding Building on Areas Identified as Green Belt and Urban Green Space". As a member of the Planning Committee, he stated that he would not be discussing specific applications.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2021 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

14. Response to Petition Regarding Building on Areas Identified as Green Belt and Urban Green Space

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which provided a formal response to a petition regarding building on areas identified as green belt and urban green space.

The petition bearing 117 signatures was submitted on 28 May 2021 and was sponsored by Councillor K Maton, a Henley Ward Councillor. Councillor Maton and the petition organiser attended the meeting and spoke in respect of the petition.

The petition headed "Green Urban Space and Green belt Policy" read:

"We the undersigned petition the Council to reiterate its policy that no housing should be allowed on identified green belt or urban green space areas. Further, that the council increases efforts to ensure that new housing

areas contain high levels of quality accessible landscaped space and developers are encouraged to provide such landscaped areas and gardens as part of their housing developments

The council has both a policy of “brownfield first” and a policy of the protection of green belt and urban green spaces. In the recent planning application by the council for Elm Fields Farm it includes houses on land that was identifies as urban green space in the Coventry Local Plan and the previously approved planning application. We are alarmed that the council could be setting a dangerous precedent for future planning applications by this application”.

The report stated that it was taken that urban green space referenced in the petition and the land designation Local Green Space are synonymous. The Council’s position on development in green belt and Local Green Space are expressed in Policy GB1 of the Local Plan, specifically:

- “2A: Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Coventry Green Belt unless very special circumstances exist. Development proposals, including those involving previously developed land and buildings, in the Green Belt will be assessed in relation to the relevant national planning policy. And
- 2B: Within areas designated as Local Green Space, the erection of small buildings and structures which are ancillary to the primary use of the land may be acceptable. Other development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances are demonstrated”.

The Council remains committed to the above policy, which also conforms with national policy.

The Council also remains committed to delivering high quality residential environments through the use of Plan policies and constructive negotiation with developers. To further aid this, the Council would soon be undertaking a public consultation on a Green Space Supplementary Document (SPD) that would further articulate developers' requirements and help deliver on-site provision of a variety of open space typologies.

Councillor Maton commented that the recent Covid pandemic had highlighted the importance of green space and placed it firmly on the health and wellbeing agenda. He referred to recent developments in the city where one had incorporated plenty of green space and the other, on a former industrial site, consisted of cramped housing with very little green space. He added that developments should comprise of good quality housing and ample green space, not just back yards.

The petition organiser explained that the motivation behind the petition was to campaign against a specific planning application and he expressed disappointment at the Council for failing to fulfil policy in respect of that development. He stated that the Council should lead by example and be committed to providing high quality housing.

Whilst it would not be appropriate to comment on specific planning applications, it should, however, be noted that green belt and Local Green Space are specific land designations. These could easily be viewed via the interactive Policies map on the City Council website and compared with planning applications.

In summary, the report stated that it was important to note that each planning application must be determined on its own individual merits. Therefore, any decision on a specific application should not be considered to be a precedent.

The Cabinet Member having considered the report, the representations made at the meeting, and the representations made by Councillor Maton and the petition organiser, thanked everyone for their valuable contributions. He concluded that the Council's role was to meet the housing targets set by the government and those identified in the Local Plan.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, having considered the petition, reiterates the position set out in the Local Plan Policy GB1.

15. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

16. Any other item of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 2.40 pm)