

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities held at
2.00 pm on Tuesday, 26 October 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor D Welsh (Chair)

Shadow Cabinet Councillor R Bailey

Members Present: Councillor M Lapsa

Employees Present:

M Bajway, Law and Governance

D Butler, Planning and Regulation

C Eggington, Planning and Regulation

U Patel, Law and Governance

Apologies: Councillor L Bigham

Public Business

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

19. Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Methodology Consultation

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which sought permission to consult on the proposed Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Methodology.

This methodology would then be used when assessing proposed employment or housing sites in terms of whether or not they are suitable for development, which is an essential part of the Local Plan process. The proposed consultation will take place simultaneously with the Warwickshire District and Borough authorities who form part of the Housing Market Area (HMA) and who are working together under the statutory Duty to Co-operate.

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a long history of constructively working together to address a range of strategic planning matters. This relationship has enabled the LPAs to achieve sound Local Plans, Shared evidence and a collaborative approach is a vital element of being able to fulfil the statutory Duty to Co-operate and needs to be demonstrated to Planning Inspectors when Local Plans are examined.

The evidence base which informs the development of a Local Plan needs to be regularly reviewed and updated. Many of the Local Plans in the Coventry and Warwickshire area are currently being reviewed and updated, all running at different timescales. Similarly, the Government has updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), so evidence needs to be reviewed in the light of this.

In delivering sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified requirements it is important that each Local Authority keeps an up to date database of sites, which it needs to assess to see if they are suitable, available and can realistically be delivered to meet the needs of the area. This is especially important in order to be able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing sites (one of the government's key indicators for measuring success of a Local Authority's planning policies in delivering its stated ambitions for housing growth) and in encouraging brownfield opportunities to come forward, reducing pressure upon land which has not previously been developed. It is also important in understanding which sites are being promoted for potential economic use, so that a balanced and sustainable local economy can be achieved across the area.

The database of sites is known as the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). In order to keep this essential evidence up to date, each Local Authority will run its own 'call for sites' process, which in effect is an invitation for land owners, developers and their agents to express their interest in having their site considered for a range of uses such as housing, employment or even a range of other uses they wish to be considered through the local plan process. Inclusion in the HELAA document does not mean they will be developed: that is for the Local Authority to determine through their assessment process.

However, it is important that Local Authorities work together to make sure that they operate consistently. This is especially important when addressing areas where there are strong strategic relationships which stretch across different administrative boundaries such those relating to housing and the economy. This applies to the Coventry and Warwickshire area.

It is therefore essential that when Local Authorities look at the detail of how they plan for growth, they do it in line with a common methodology to ensure consistency of approach and understanding. The attached methodology has been drafted by Coventry and Warwickshire Local Planning Authorities to ensure that sites are being assessed within a common framework which accords with the most up to date National Planning Policy and guidance. It updates the previous agreed version which is now out of date.

Before the methodology is finalised, it was considered good practice to undertake a public consultation for a period of six weeks and to make any changes if necessary. This would ensure that the Local Authorities were operating within a robust framework as they develop and progress the detail of their own individual (or joint) local plans.

The City Council has committed, through its Local Development Scheme to undertake a 'call for sites' in Autumn 2021 which will be specifically focused upon encouraging brownfield sites to come forward for consideration. this updated methodology will greatly assist with this commitment.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member approves that the Methodology contained in Appendix 1 is taken to public consultation for a period of six weeks, in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

20. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

21. **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 2.17 pm)