

Planning Policy Advisory Panel (Special)

Minutes

22 January 2024

Present:

Chair: Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Councillors: Christopher Baxter
Stephen Greek
Asif Hussain

Nitin Parekh
David Perry
Zak Wagman

67. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were none.

68. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 3 - New Harrow Local Plan – Draft Local Plan

Councillor Stephen Greek and Councillor Asif Hussain declared a non-pecuniary interest in that they both worked for the London Assembly which scrutinised the London Plan, but do not have executive roles. They would both remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Resolved Items

69. New Harrow Local Plan - Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 Version)

The Panel received a report on the Draft Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) and sought Cabinet for approval to consult for eight weeks over February-April 2024. The report was accompanied by the draft Interim Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) advice note, and provided the Panel with

an update on the Local Plan process. The report also provided an outline of the proposed consultation arrangements.

Clarification on when would the plan be operational was sought and the Panel was advised that the aim was for the Local Plan adoption by Full Council by the end of 2025. The various stages of the process would determine the weight given to planning applications, with increasing importance as it progressed.

In response to a question as to whether the current SPD's (Supplementary Planning Documents) would become redundant, or remain in use or undergo changes. Members were advised that they were expected to remain effective for about 5 years. However, there would be an impact for a certain period, given recent legislative changes and the Government's evolving stance on planning regulations might influence the duration of the SPD.

In terms of Garden Protection and the importance of garden grabbing. The Chair had given an example that within the Local Plan it very much included the policies contained within the SPD's to give even more protection against inappropriate development. Officers also advised that the Local Plan document was a large policy that incorporated key elements of the Garden Land SPD, and it also aimed to echoed the same for conservation areas and heritage sites. Officers advised that the new policy document was highlighted as the primary source of policy/protection, especially concerning recent developments like tall buildings and upcoming town centre master plan.

Members indicated that an easy colourful guide outlining the changes from the current Local Plan (that people were used to) and the new Local Plan as the new policy document would be welcomed.

Members requested clarification on the processes as per per the report on Page 9, point 4.5, and were advised that this involved inviting stakeholders to propose potential development sites, which would then undergo evaluation based on factors such as viability, acceptability, and deliverability. These stakeholders were identified by using databases, engaging planning consultants, accessing Land Registry for landowners, and publicising the Local Plan to get stakeholders involved.

With reference GLA (Greater London Authority) and how the feedback would work. Officers advised that it was currently informal feedback but as part of regulation 18 the Mayor would feedback once he had reviewed the draft plans (including input from the wider GLA) and the formal 'general conformity' letter and conclusions would be compiled and feedback of to the Panel mid-2024.

In response to a question as to whether the 50% affordable homes would be an achievable goal. Officers advised that 50% was a strategic target, often achievable with the support of grant funding from the Mayor.

The implications of the proposed timeframes for the new Local Plan were raised in the context of any potential change in Government. In response, it was noted that it was not possible to predict any potential implications/changes and that the planning system was always changing.

Given the age of the current Local Plan it was important to continue preparing a new plan.

Clarification was sought as to the weight applied to sites once they had been assessed and included in the draft Plan (as site allocations) and whether there would be an influx of these sites. Members were advised that there would be an influx as the process was promoted and the site allocations would be formally identified in the Plan once the viability and the appropriateness of these had been considered. The height parameters of these sites would need to be weighed up before being formally included. In response to a subsequent question, officers advised that the call for sites process would assist in better understanding potential development capacity/supply relative to the London Plan target.

Members raised concerns about the subjective nature of terms of like practical and fit for purpose in the draft Plan (specifically relating to the policy on residential conversions). Officers explained that standards in the London Plan would guide what was considered fit for purpose and emphasise that any rooms in a residential conversion having reasonable dimensions.

Members also questioned whether focusing on areas of high public transport accessibility, might risk over population and over development of some areas. Officers advised that there was a need to balance sustainable transport goals with consideration of local character and impact.

Members thanked the Officers for their work on the report and requested a concise frequently asked questions summary during the consultation.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND (TO CABINET)

That the draft New Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 Version) be approved.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be noted;

(2) the intention to make minor amendments and insert outstanding background / process material to the draft new Local Plan prior to presentation to Cabinet and subsequently prior to commencement of consultation (under delegated authority) (paragraph 5.9 of the report).

(3) the proposed consultation arrangements be noted as set out in section 7 of the Officers report.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 7.41 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Marilyn Ashton
Chair

