

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 30 September 2020 via public remote access

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), Fry (Vice-Chair), Gilligan, Howard, A. Lowe, Nolan, Joe Roberts, Sinnott and Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Morley

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, A. Cross, G. Henry and A. Plant

Also in attendance: One Member of the press

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
EUR6	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2020 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.</p>	
EUR7	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
EUR8	REVISIONS TO THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING USE OF CLASS ORDER	
	<p>The Board considered a report which updated Members on changes to national planning regulations that removed, in many circumstances, the need for planning permission where change of use was involved. The Government's intent was to make it easier for high street uses to adapt and change according to local circumstances without a planning application. In addition, there were other changes including new Use Classes in relation to learning and non-residential institutions and local community uses.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a legal challenge to both the General Permitted Development Order and Use Classes Order changes.</p>	

Members were advised that the principle aim of these reforms, to create vibrant, mixed use town centres by allowing businesses greater freedom to change to a broader range of compatible uses was generally welcomed. The changes were generally considered to align with the significant steps taken by the Council – both prior to and since the pandemic – to support the regeneration of our town centres.

Arising from the discussion, Members queried the impact of the Use Class Order changes on the Council's position regarding the number of fast food outlets in town centres. In response, Members were advised that these changes did not affect the Council's position with regard to the Supplementary Planning Documents.

It was agreed that the document would be shared with Development Control Committee prior to its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the proposed changes to national planning regulations covering Use Classes that categorise the way that land and buildings are used.

EUR9 CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the Government consultation on the current planning system and the potential implications this could have for development in Halton. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was consulting on shorter term changes to planning policy and regulations in addition to the more fundamental reform to the planning system as set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper. The Government had set out proposals to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. These covered:

- The standard method for assessing housing for local plans;
- Delivering first homes;
- S106 and small site – to temporarily increase the threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing to up to 40 to 50 units for an 18 month period; and
- Proposals to increase the threshold for Permission in Principle by application.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. consideration be given to the proposals together with any response the Board may wish to provide to the consultation.

EUR10 LOCAL PLAN ADDENDUM TO THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which advised that the Government had introduced new legislation to help deal with governance issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings and Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These new regulations provided for the temporary suspension (until 31st December 2020) of certain planning consultation procedures where they may conflict with COVID-19 public health priorities. Subsequently, an addendum (COVID-19) to the Councils previously adopted Statement of Community Involvement had been produced. A copy was attached to the agenda item for information.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorses a recommendation to Executive Board for the addition of the addendum (Appendix A) into the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for Local Plan making.

Strategic Director
Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EUR11 PLANNING WHITE PAPER

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which informed the Board on the recently published (6 August 2020) Planning White Paper consultation and the potential implications this could have for development in Halton.

It was noted that the White Paper was first published on 6th August 2020 and had been heralded by many as the most radical reform of the planning system in England since the establishment of the current system. The key driver of the proposed reforms was the need to deliver, as a nation, 300,000 new homes per year. The proposals were set out under a number of pillars with each having a number of specific proposals. The pillars for change were:

- Planning for development;
- Planning for beautiful and sustainable places; and
- Planning for infrastructure and connected places.

The report set out each of the 24 detailed proposals as detailed in the White Paper with an explanation of each. An initial Council response to the proposals was also set out in Annex A of the report.

Arising from the discussion, it was noted that concern had been expressed regarding the protection of community green spaces and outdoor sporting facilities and this should be considered as part of the Council response.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. consideration is given to the proposals, together with any response the Board may wish to provide to the consultation.

EUR12 PROPOSED CHANGES TO NATIONAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on imminent changes to planning regulations which gave greater freedoms for certain forms of development to be undertaken without planning permission. It was noted that there was a legal challenge to both the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) and Use Classes Order (UCO) changes.

It was noted that the new planning regulations came into force on 31 August 2020 to further extend national Permitted Development Rights, as described in the report. The Government's aim through these changes was to "*boost housing delivery*".

It was agreed that the document would be shared with the Development Control Committee prior to its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to national permitted development rights that allow certain types of development without the need to apply for planning consent be noted.

EUR13 UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DRAFT
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SDPS)

The Board considered a report which recommended that four draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) should be formally removed from the Local Development Scheme (LDS). These were SPD's for:

- Draft Runcorn Old Town;
- Halton Lea;
- West Bank; and
- Halebank Regeneration Area.

It was noted that the draft SPD's associated with the Unitary Development Plan would expire alongside their parent UDP policies, once the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan was adopted.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorses a recommendation to Executive Board to remove the draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) from the Halton Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Strategic Director
Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.