

ROTHERHAM LOCAL PLAN STEERING GROUP
Thursday, 12th December, 2013

Present:- Councillors Falvey, Godfrey, McNeely, Pickering and Whelbourn.

together with:- Bronwen Knight, Helen Sleight, Andrew Duncan, Neil Rainsforth and Ryan Shepherd (Planning Service) and Ann Todd (Corporate Communications and Marketing).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark, Dodson, Lakin, Rushforth, R. S. Russell and Smith.

12. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor Whelbourn be appointed Chair of this meeting.

(Councillor Whelbourn in the Chair)

13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Rotherham Local Plan Steering Group, held on 13th September, 2013.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

14. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2013

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Research and Spatial Analysis Officer stating that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report, for the Local Plan, to be published by the end of each December. The Annual Monitoring Report is intended to cover progress in achieving the programme published in the Local Development Scheme, together with the monitoring of performance in implementing the policies supporting Rotherham's strategy for spatial development, as well as the findings of Sustainability Appraisal monitoring.

Members noted that Annual Monitoring Reports are required to cover the financial year preceding December publication - this ninth Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. The Annual report sets out a monitoring framework which is evolving incrementally as the first round of planning documents and policies are prepared and additional ones are brought forward in the future. Accordingly, this ninth Annual report builds on some of the initial broad principles to guide the monitoring of the developing Local Plan, as well as a selection of performance indicators based on data that is most readily available.

There have been some significant changes from earlier years' Annual Monitoring Reports, because the requirements for reporting on regional and national indicators have been changed or removed completely (although a few core indicators do remain). The indicators are now aligned with local priorities and the core policies of the Core Strategy under the seven broad themes of 'Delivering Development in Sustainable Locations', 'Creating Mixed and Attractive Places to Live', 'Supporting a Dynamic Economy', 'Movement and Accessibility', 'Managing the Natural and Historic Environment', 'Creating Safe and Sustainable Communities' and 'Infrastructure'.

For all of the indicators measuring the strategic themes and policies contained in the Core Strategy, the performance throughout the year showed that:-

- 18 indicators have improved;
- 23 indicators have shown no significant change from the baseline or updated data is unavailable;
- 13 indicators have declined or are not on target.

An analysis of performance by the six broad themes and headings (excluding infrastructure, for which monitoring indicators will be determined as part of the infrastructure delivery plan) was contained within the report.

Information was provided about the principal proposed developments in the Rotherham Borough area : Rotherham town centre; Bassingthorpe Farm (Greasbrough); the Waverley development.

Local authorities are no longer required to submit the Annual Monitoring Report to central Government.

Members discussed the contents of the 2013 Annual Monitoring Report and highlighted the following issues:-

: development on brownfield sites within the Borough area (a suggestion was made that photographs of individual sites 'before and after' development ought to be published on the Council's internet web site);

: performance indicators and the need to improve those indicators which have not been performing well.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the publication of the 2013 Annual Monitoring Report be approved.

15. LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY - EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC - UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 9 of the meeting of the Rotherham Local Plan

Steering Group held on 13th September, 2013, consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Planning Officer providing an update about the Examination in Public of Rotherham's Local Plan Core Strategy.

The hearing sessions took place between 22nd October and 6th November 2013, at Riverside House. During these sessions, the Council and other participants had the opportunity to respond further to the questions set out by the Inspector and to respond to points made by other participants. Throughout the hearing sessions, the Council was represented by officers from the Planning Policy team with assistance from other programme areas (including housing, education, audit and asset management, leisure and green spaces and transportation) plus external consultants. Various site inspections were also undertaken after the hearing sessions had ended.

The report listed the key areas on which the Core Strategy had been challenged. The Inspector suggested a number of wording changes to policies and supporting text, or asked other participants (including the Council) to suggest changes. The various proposed changes and any responses to them will be considered by the Inspector, who will provide feedback through his preliminary findings or final report.

Members noted that, in order to minimise the risk of delay to the Inspector's report and subsequent adoption of the Core Strategy, delegated authority has been given to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development to approve public consultation on main modifications to the Core Strategy following the Examination in Public (Minute No. C101 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th November, 2013 refers). It was suggested that the views of the Local Plan Steering Group could also inform this process.

Reference was made to:-

: Policy CS3 - phasing policy for development sites, including development on brownfield sites; the Inspector had questioned the need for a phasing policy in the document;

: the practice of land being reserved for future development (often known as 'land-banking') is not a significant issue within the Rotherham Borough area;

: the distribution of development around the various settlements and towns in the Rotherham Borough area;

: the policy relating to the provision of affordable housing (CS7);

: the Minerals Policy (CS26);

: a suggested new policy to deal with issues of housing land supply – a draft policy has been submitted for consideration by the Inspector;

: the view of the Inspector that the Core Strategy should be adopted and implemented as soon as possible;

: the potential allocation of Bassingthorpe Farm as a strategic location within the Core Strategy, rather than as a broad location for growth;

: the possibility of the land allocations for housing purposes and for employment purposes having to be increased.

The Local Plan Steering Group placed on record its appreciation of the work undertaken by the Planning Policy Team and other local authority staff and the professionalism displayed during the Examination in Public process.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the report of the Inspector on the outcome of the Core Strategy Examination in Public, which is due to be received during January 2014, be awaited and submitted to this Steering Group for consideration.

(3) That, subject to the outcome of (2) above, the arrangements for the consultation process in respect of the main modifications to the Core Strategy be noted.

16. SITES AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Further to Minute No. 7 of the meeting of the Rotherham Local Plan Steering Group held on 13th September, 2013, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Senior Planning Officer, providing an update regarding the continuing preparation of Rotherham's emerging Sites and Policies Document.

The report stated that a Final Draft of the Sites and Policies Document is being prepared prior to Publication stage, in order to review and assimilate, as appropriate, all comments received during the last round of consultation. A detailed Green Belt Review is also being prepared, as supporting evidence for the proposed amendment of the Green Belt boundary. The Review proposes the removal of development sites or allocations from the Green Belt and their designation as development land to meet identified needs. There will also be amendments to and the updating of the designations on the emerging plan, to replace the current Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map, which will guide decision-making within the built areas. In future, this plan will be known as the Policies Map.

The Final Draft of the Sites and Policies Document will enable the Council to further refine the sites selected to meet its development targets. These targets are to be agreed after receipt of the Inspector's report into the Core Strategy and the subsequent adoption of the Core Strategy

Reference was made to:-

: the inclusion of Foers Wood, Aston in Rotherham's Local Wildlife Site series;

: sites which have significant archaeological value;

: the impact of the Sites and Policies document on conservation areas;

: the consultation process about the Sites and Policies document is scheduled for February 2014 and will include arrangements for comments to be submitted on-line to the Council (this process may be affected by the period prior to the Borough and European elections being held on Thursday 22nd May 2014, during which there are restrictions on local authority publicity imposed by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986).

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the Cabinet be asked to note that the delay in receiving the Inspector's report on the outcome of the Core Strategy Examination in Public will produce a consequent delay in the start of the consultation process on the Sites and Policies document.

17. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Rotherham Local Plan Steering Group take place at the Town Hall, Rotherham on Friday, 17th January, 2014, commencing at 10.00 a.m.