



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission 31 August 2023

Wards affected: All Wards

Update on the work of the Planning Policy Member Working Group

Report of Director (Community Services)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide and update on the work of the Planning Policy Member Working Group for the information of Scrutiny.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Scrutiny Commission notes the content of this report.

3. Background to the report

3.1 The Planning Policy Member Working Group is a non-decision-making forum to allow for all Members to be kept up to date with matters relating to Planning Policy and on occasion economic development and regeneration matters undertaken by the Major Projects team.

3.2 The adopted Terms of Reference (2015) for the Working Group state the primary role of this group is:

- To consider draft evidence base documents relating to the preparation and development of new Local Plan policy
- To consider draft Local Plan documents prior to consideration at the relevant formal decision-making committee
- To provide informal feedback on those draft documents to guide Officers in formulating formal proposals.
- To consider and keep abreast of the initial three stages of Neighbourhood Development Plans undertaken by communities across the Borough. These initial stages are:
 1. The identification and designation of a Neighbourhood Area

2. Assistance with evidence gathering, consultation and publicity
 3. Assistance submission of the Plan
 - To consider and keep informed of relevant work undertaken by the Major Projects team as required.
- 3.3 As an informal working party, the Planning Policy Member Working Group has no delegated decision-making powers. However, its advice and recommendations are considered by the Head of Service in executing any delegated responsibility as well as informing the development of policies and procedures relating to the Local Plan.
- 3.4 As per the Constitution, the membership of this working group is comprised of all members of the Planning Committee, the Leader and Executive Member for Planning. However, all Members are able to attend due to an open invitation of the Chair. The working group meets in private session every 6 to 8 weeks either in person and/or virtually. Additional meetings can and have been arranged on an ad-hoc basis to deal with particular time sensitive issues.
- 3.5 Following local elections earlier this year, the Planning Policy Member Working Group held on 20 July 2023 was utilised as a training session to update and introduce new members to Local Plan making. A presentation was made at that meeting by the Planning Manager (Policy), the scope of which was:
- To provide an introduction to how and why we plan (the plan-led system)
 - To help Members understand their important role
 - To advise Members of the key plan making stages
 - Why it is important to plan well - Collect intelligence on Members views/issues.
- 3.6 The presentation set out the purpose of planning and the plan-led system, what is considered sustainable development, the key stages of plan making, why and what we need to plan for i.e. meeting identified strategic development needs and importantly, the challenges to plan making.
- 3.7 The Government's proposals for planning reform were further touched on but this will be the subject of later meetings as information on this progresses. The meeting was well received by the Members in attendance and generated many questions and queries about plan making which made for a helpful and positive debate and gave officers a valuable insight into areas of the plan Members would like to develop further understanding of and work further on such as climate change, biodiversity net gain and allocation of housing sites.
- 3.8 Through the presentation, the important role of Members in local plan making was also highlighted. Engagement in plan making was cited as crucial to the robustness of the plan through Member leadership and challenge. Officers understand that Members have a difficult balancing act weighing community views with professional advice in order to plan for and meet the development needs of the borough. Attendance at Member Working Group is a key

element of working constructively in partnership with officers to aid this process. Members were also encouraged to put forward ideas for subjects they would like to have covered in future meetings.

- 3.9 Further Member Working Group meetings have been arranged for the remainder of 2023 on Wednesday 6 September, Wednesday 18 October and Wednesday 29 November. These dates have been noted by Democratic Services. In terms of Agenda items for each meeting an update on the Local Plan, Strategic cross-boundary planning matters and Neighbourhood Planning are standing items. Additional topics have been planned for the remaining 2023 meetings and these are included in the table below:

Proposed Member Working Group Work Programme 2023

06/09/23	Current Government consultations on planning reform
18/10/23	Links between Housing Dept and Planning (tbc)
29/11/23	Housing Land Supply

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 4.1 To be taken in open session.

5. Financial implications [CS]

- 5.1 None arising directly from the report

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 Legal implications were requested.

7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 This report relates to priority ambitions of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25, namely:

- People
- Place
- Prosperity

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Relevant colleagues were consulted on the formulation of this report.

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with

this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
DLS.50 Compliance and regulation	Preparation of Local Plan must be in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance.	Head of Planning

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 The Local Plan is relevant to all communities within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 Work will be delivered to limit carbon impact where possible, for example virtual/hybrid methods of Member engagement and paperless systems.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: None

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