

19 LOCAL PLAN - MAIN MODIFICATIONS CONSULTATION

Councillor Scullion, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration and Strategy presented a written report of the Director of Regeneration and Strategy. The report outlined the Main Modifications to the draft Calderdale Local Plan (CLP) that the independent Planning Inspector deemed necessary to make the CLP sound and legally compliant.

The report advised that the CLP was fundamental to all three of the Council's Corporate priorities to 'Act on the Climate Emergency', 'Reduce Inequalities and Address Local Poverty', and 'Develop Sustainable Towns'. In relation to this the CLP would help to ensure that everyone had access to a decent home; that there were opportunities for fulfilling employment; that people could move around the district and travel beyond safely, sustainably and conveniently; and that the environment was protected and enhanced for future generations.

The report aimed to provide Cabinet with the information required to consider the Main Modifications to the CLP, and the recommendation to agree to these and proceed to a public consultation as the next steps towards Adoption of the CLP.

The report outlined background information, options considered, financial, legal, environmental, health, economic, equality, and diversity implications.

Councillor Hey attended the meeting and addressed Cabinet. He expressed disappointment that there were no main modifications to the building plans in Northowram and Shelf. He commented that the 2021 National Census did not reflect the population growth forecast by the Local Plan, and that policy changes could not drive this level of change. He suggested that adjustments should be made given the level of impact on the greenbelt.

Councillor Scullion responded and thanked Councillor Hey for attending. She advised that Calderdale had failed to provide the housing required by Central Government for the last decade. The lack of housing, and in particular quality housing, was one of the reasons for the low increase in population. There was a need to rebalance the age structure of the population and the level of affordable housing in order to sustain economic growth.

Councillor Leigh MBE attended the meeting and addressed Cabinet. He noted that Cabinet had decided not to hold meetings for discussion of the main modifications by interested parties based on the expectation that the modifications would be accepted. He advised that the percentage of the new homes which were affordable was extremely low. It was necessary to have an appropriate number of houses based on the likely events to take place, and that the numbers proposed bore no resemblance to the tests. He commented that an 8-week consultation period did not allow for fair opposition, given the length of the document, the necessary reading of additional documents referenced and the need to come up with alternative options. He requested that Cabinet consider extending the consultation period to at least 3 months.

The Leader, Councillor T Swift MBE, advised that the statutory requirement was to provide 6 weeks for consultation, an extension to 8 weeks had already been added.

The documents had been published a further 3 weeks ahead of the beginning of the consultation period, and the majority of the material was not new. He advised that it was damaging to Calderdale not to have a Local Plan in place.

Councillor Scullion rejected the point that the numbers of proposed housing bore no resemblance to the tests. She further advised that if the plan was not approved by the Planning Inspector, Calderdale could lose its power over housing.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Inspector's judgement on the necessary Main Modifications to the CLP as set out in the Post Hearings letter (23 March 2022, Appendix 8) along with the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment be noted and the Main Modifications and associated documents for public consultation be approved;
- (b) The Calderdale Local Plan: Main Modifications (Appendix 1 & 2), the modifications to the Policies Map (Appendix 7), and the updated Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 3) and Habitats Regulations Assessment Statement (Appendix 4) be published for the purpose of representations to be made commencing on or around the 29th July 2022;
- (c) The Calderdale Local Plan: Minor Modifications (Appendix 5 & 6) be published alongside the Main Modifications for information and comment;
- (d) the Director of Regeneration and Strategy be given delegated authority to make any typographical or presentational/format changes to the Main Modifications, the Sustainability Appraisal, the Habitats Regulation Assessment and the Minor Modifications to address any errors and/or improve clarity prior to the start of the consultation period; and
- (e) all responses received be reviewed by Planning Officers and forwarded directly to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for consideration.