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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2019

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs C Jeffreys (Chairman), S Mallender (Vice-Chairman), R Adair, S Bailey, B Bansal, N Begum, A Brennan, R Butler, N Clarke, T Combellack, J Cottee, G Dickman, A Edyvean, M Gaunt, P Gowland, B Gray, L Healy, R Hetherington, L Howitt, R Inglis, R Jones, A Major, R Mallender, D Mason, G Moore, A Phillips, F Purdue-Horan, S J Robinson, K Shaw, D Simms, J Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood, C Thomas, R Upton, D Virdi, J Walker, R Walker, L Way, G Wheeler and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks	Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
P Linfield	Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
R Mapletoft	Planning Policy Manager
K Marriott	Chief Executive
D Mitchell	Executive Manager - Communities
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors K Beardsall, B Buschman, J Murray and J Wheeler

35 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

36 Local Plan Part 2

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Upton presented the report of the Executive Manager – Communities outlining the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies, which incorporated the Inspector's recommended modifications.

Councillor Upton advised that the adoption of the Plan was extremely important given the increasing demand for housing, as development had failed to keep pace with a growing population and previous years of under supply of housing, with the problem being acknowledged by all main political parties. Rushcliffe was a popular place to live with demand for housing outstripping supply and the Council had to respond to Government pressure to deliver more housing. Last year 760 new homes were delivered in the Borough, more than any other district or borough in Nottinghamshire. The Council's vision was to ensure that all Rushcliffe's residents had a choice of affordable, good quality, energy

efficient housing in sustainable locations. Rushcliffe continued to work with neighbouring councils and was disappointed when the Government allocated the Borough a minimum of 13,150 homes to be built by 2028, rather than the Council's preferred target of 9,000. The figure was not negotiable and the Council needed an adopted Local Development Plan to ensure that the Borough had quality housing and jobs in the correct locations. The Council's homes allocation had been adopted into the Core Strategy. Development of some of the large strategic sites had been slower than anticipated and it was unlikely that as a whole they would deliver the required number of houses by 2028. The Local Plan Part 2 was proposing an additional 25 small to medium housing sites that should be quicker to deliver, to make up the shortfall with the strategic sites. Allocating sites required careful consideration, particularly when Greenfield and Greenbelt sites were involved, with over 40% of Rushcliffe made up of Greenbelt and only a small number of Brownfield sites. With the Council's Core Strategy, the Inspector had stated that there was convincing evidence that the housing allocation could not be delivered without the removal of land from the Greenbelt and had found that there were exceptional circumstances to alter Greenbelt boundaries. That had established the context of the release of Greenbelt for development in Part 2. Not everyone agreed with the allocation, as was the case with any planning development; however, if the Council failed to deliver its housing allocation, the Government had advised that it could intervene to allocate the sites. The Council therefore needed to be pragmatic and decide where the housing should be built. The Inspector had concluded that the Local Plan Part 2 was legally compliant, sound and could be adopted providing that the main modifications were incorporated in full. The Council could not legally make any further modifications nor seek to delete any of the Inspector's recommended main modifications and then adopt the Plan. The Inspector's report had been considered by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Group and it had recommended the Plan's adoption. If the Plan was not adopted it would leave the Council without a complete and up to date set of Local Planning Policies but more importantly, with the National Planning Policy Framework having a presumption in favour of sustainable development, a failure to adopt would considerably restrict the Council's ability to resist unwanted, speculative development, a situation that the Council was already familiar with. A five-year housing supply of deliverable housing was required and currently it stood at 3.4 years, which had led to unwanted development. The Inspector's report had confirmed that the Council had engaged with stakeholders, met the duty to cooperate, and undertaken a sustainability appraisal, and subject to the main recommended modifications, all the individual policies were clear, justified and consistent with national policy and would be effective, with the release of the Greenbelt justified in principle and where necessary exceptional circumstances had been demonstrated. The Council had a statutory duty to produce a local plan and in Rushcliffe that would comprise of the Local Plan Part 1, the Core Strategy which had been adopted in December 2014 and the Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies. Planning Officers were thanked for their hard work and dedication over many years in preparing the Plan.

The report was moved by Councillor Upton and seconded by Councillor Butler.

Councillor Grey stated that as new Councillors, members of the Labour Group had enjoyed the challenge of reading this lengthy report and thanked fellow Councillors and officers for their help and support. The Labour Group

understood the importance of the document and the need to secure a five-year housing supply to avoid speculative development. It was noted that there was an element of redundancy built into the Plan in case of slippage to ensure that planning decisions stood up against appeal. Slippage on previous plans had led to speculative development in some villages, causing service and infrastructure problems. Everyone wanted good housing and ideally without building on Greenbelt land and it was interesting to see best practice throughout the country, with Norwich City Council making headlines for its award winning housing. It was noted that the recommendations made by the Inspector needed to be taken in full and the document could not be amended before adoption, therefore further comments would be for future consideration. The Labour Group looked forward to taking a greater role in the review of the Core Strategy.

Councillor Jones advised that in 2014, the Liberal Democrat Group had opposed the adoption of Part 1 for two reasons. On Sharphill the Group had objected to both the increased number of dwellings and lack of affordable housing and community facilities. Secondly, the Group had objected to the scale of increase imposed by planning processes and the Planning Inspectorate on Rushcliffe. In 2011, Rushcliffe had 47,349 dwellings, by 2028 Rushcliffe would be expected to have a further 13,150 dwellings which equated to a 28% increase. In practical terms it was evident that the strategic sites would not be built as quickly as originally planned and that had led to speculative development in villages, particularly East Leake. Reluctantly the Liberal Democrat Group accepted the requirement for the 13,150 dwellings and would therefore be supporting the adoption of the Local Plan Part 2, especially given that the failure to adopt the Plan would expose the Borough to further unwanted, speculative building. It was pleasing that no further development was planned for either Bingham or East Leake, other than those already approved. Inevitably, the allocations at the key settlements and other villages would be unwelcome to some, particularly in Ruddington where extensive developments had already been approved. The Group was pleased to see that renewable technologies would be encouraged and welcomed the inclusion of Policy 25 on retail centres and Policy 26 on neighbourhood significance. The Group questioned the strength of the policies related to flood protection given ongoing climate change. The Core Strategy report referred to excellent transport systems and an associated reduction in travel; however, the Group was concerned that the planned transport improvements would not mitigate the 28% increase in housing planned for the Borough and the issue should be considered as part of the review of the Core Strategy. Although infrastructure improvements were planned as part of new housing developments, the Group was concerned that overall planning for secondary education and primary health care provision was inadequate and asked the Cabinet and officers to seek clarification from relevant authorities on how infrastructure improvements would be secured to match the proposed 28% increase in dwellings.

Councillor Richard Mallender referred to the significant time and work undertaken by officers to produce the Plan, which would continue to be reviewed and updated. Additional powers from Government were required to combat climate change and to ensure that environmentally sustainable housing was being built for the future. The Council had to act now as people around the world were protesting and taking action. Biodiversity was an important issue and sites required protection. Significant transport improvements were still

required; bus services remained poor in many outlying villages and traffic congestion was a problem for all. Improvement to both bus and tram services was essential, together with tram/train systems to interlink areas and use the existing train network. New local services and infrastructure should be built centrally to ensure easy access for all. Improving the use of sustainable energy was essential and should continue to be pursued. The Green Group supported the Plan.

Councillor Thomas confirmed that the Independent Group would be voting to adopt the Local Plan Part 2 and thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the Plan. Without the Plan, villages, including East Leake and other areas outside the Greenbelt had seen significant speculative development take place. Development on Greenbelt sites had also been granted on appeal. Adoption of the Plan would allow development to become more plan led rather than developer led. The Group had concerns regarding a number of policies, including climate change issues that would require consideration during the review of the Core Strategy and it was important that Councillors were involved in the early stages of the review. It was essential that the strategic sites moved forward to maintain the five-year housing supply, with a continued focus on the Clifton site, where some progress was being made. The biggest threat to the maintenance of the five-year housing supply came from the delay to the Gamston/Tollerton development and it was hoped that all agencies could work together to allow the development to progress. The Group considered that further sites adjacent to the urban edge should be considered for future housing allocation. Some of those sites had come forward as part of the Local Plan Part 2 process and should be reviewed again. Building on the sites removed from the Greenbelt in the Core Strategy should also be considered for future development. Given that there was no opportunity to further modify the Plan it should be adopted; however, it would be necessary to ensure that planning policies and housing land supply were kept under review.

Councillor Robinson requested a recorded vote for the motion.

Councillor Robinson thanked officers and reiterated the comments made by fellow Councillors regarding the officers' hard work and dedication. He recognised and thanked members of the LDF Group who had significantly contributed to the Plan over many years. Planning issues were important in all wards and it was pleasing to note the support of the Opposition Groups for the adoption of the Local Plan Part 2. Since 2014, work had been underway to ensure the delivery of sites, including the larger strategic sites, although it was acknowledged that with many agencies and authorities working together the situation was complex. However, work was now progressing on those larger sites and by adopting the Local Plan Part 2 the allocated smaller sites would be much easier and quicker to deliver. Significant development had already taken place at Sharphill, Edwalton, Bingham and Cotgrave and it was hoped over the next 12 months to see further significant progress. The concerns expressed over health and educational provision were shared as this issue was of key importance and Councillors were assured that strong dialogue continued with all relevant agencies. Timing was key to ensure the appropriate delivery of infrastructure as seen at Sharphill and Radcliffe on Trent. Environmental issues were also of key importance and for many years the Council, though its scrutiny groups had been a leader in the County in promoting environmental policies. It was a challenging issue and the Council had petitioned the

Government and asked it to implement improved standards for housing. The Council was not waiting for the Government to take the lead, it was leading the way and it was anticipated that the Abbey Road development would be an exemplar scheme in terms of housing standards. Opposition Group members had a significant role in scrutiny, and would influence many policies going forward and would review the Plan to ensure that it was achieving its targets.

Councillor Butler reiterated that development was inevitable and it was better for the Council to be in control. As with any planning issue, some people would be disappointed; however, through cross-party working, including the LDF Group, officers and Councillors had worked hard to produce the Plan. Future Government policies would continue to demand further housing development in Rushcliffe as it was a popular place to live and without the Plan further speculative development could take place. The recent development in Cotgrave had won several awards for house design, energy efficiency and green and leisure opportunities it offered to residents and it was hoped that this would continue to be replicated throughout the Borough.

Councillor Rex Walker advised that it was the Council's duty to control development and the Plan played an important role in achieving that and he would be supporting its adoption. A failure to evidence an adequate supply of housing in the Borough, which would be an inevitable consequence of not adopting the Plan, would be a failure to residents. In respect of the Gotham Ward, in redrawing the Greenbelt boundaries around Gotham, an area of land to the south of Pygall Avenue had been removed from the Greenbelt without being allocated for housing. In his report, the Inspector had concluded that the removal could give rise to further housing development and given the knowledge that the site had previously been promoted for housing development, it should have either remained as Greenbelt or been promoted for housing development. Subject to a positive Referendum result, the Gotham Neighbourhood Plan sought to designate the land as local Green Space to protect the landscape quality and community value of the land.

Councillor Gaunt expressed concern that Councillors had been given limited opportunity to consider the report and questioned the accuracy of parts of the report. In particular, he referred to the modifications recommended by the Inspector for Ruddington in respect of the number of new houses that the village could sustain and was alarmed that the figure had been increased from 350 to 525 dwellings. The figure for East Leake had also been increased from 1,000 to 1,200, although the target had originally been 400. The accuracy of the report in respect of the boundaries of the future Wilford Road development was also questioned. The report referred to the A60 being a boundary to the east of the proposed development; however, that was not the case and it was a concern that the Inspector might not be aware of that. The Wilford Road development would be located in the floodplain, with a substantial area being in Zone 2 (1-100 year) and a smaller area in Zone 3 (1-20 years). Whilst it was acknowledged that substantial mitigation measures were planned to combat flooding, climate change would inevitably lead to increased flooding and building on those areas was unacceptable. If the Wilford Road development was removed from the Plan, it would reduce the number of dwellings planned for Ruddington to 400, which had been the initial number considered to be sustainable. As a representative of the local community, he could not support the Plan and suggested that additional time be given to consider the

Inspector's report further before making a final decision.

Councillor Cottee advised that he was speaking on behalf of his fellow Ward Councillors. He referred to the significant work undertaken to produce the Keyworth Neighbourhood Plan, which had commenced in 2011 and approved in a Referendum in 2015, with over 80% voting in favour of the Plan. Some residents of Keyworth had been sceptical when the Local Plan Part 2 was drafted, when some sites were put forward for development that had not been included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Inspector had received numerous local objections to the inclusion of one site; however, the site remained in the Local Plan Part 2. There were now four sites in Keyworth rather than three and they were all in the Greenbelt. Due the substantial areas of Greenbelt land, Keyworth had previously remained undeveloped and the community now welcomed the proposed development, as it would benefit the local community by improving local business and securing school numbers. The speculative development that had occurred elsewhere in the Borough and the impact on local residents was acknowledged and it was appropriate that those local communities were now protected. The Plan was for the entire Borough and would be supported. Officers were thanked for their help and assistance in producing the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan Part 2.

Councillor Clarke stated that there had been significant debate over the years and the Council needed to adopt the Plan; otherwise, it would be vulnerable and could led to additional speculative development in villages that had already seen significant development. The aspiration for the Abbey Road development to be a showcase site and an exemplar scheme to others had already been referred to. It was also correct that work would continue once the Plan had been adopted. In respect of health and educational provision, meetings were taking place at the County Council to consider school provision in the light of additional development in Rushcliffe. There was no easy solution; however, the issue was being addressed. The Local Plan document would form a platform for campaigning to both Government and developers of the importance of providing infrastructure provision first. The Plan would provide evidence of the challenges and pressures the Council faced and the importance of infrastructure provision.

Councillor Brennan in supporting the Plan congratulated officers and Councillors on bringing the Plan to fruition. Given the length of time, it had taken to produce the report, the possibility of streamlining planning processes should be considered. It was hoped that the Plan would protect the Borough from speculative development and the emphasis on attaining vibrant community centres with a balance of facilities and uses for the local community was welcomed. In respect of Radcliffe on Trent, it was noted that the Inspector had stated that there was no substantive evidence that the overall level of new homes could not be adequately accommodated by the current road infrastructure. As a resident of Radcliffe on Trent that comment was surprising and Ward Councillors would continue to monitor the situation. The importance of infrastructure provision at the commencement of a development had been highlighted by Councillor Clarke and should be reiterated.

Councillor Simms echoed the comments made regarding traffic congestion as an East Bridgford Ward Councillor. Local residents were concerned about traffic associated with the Newton development, and the development at

Radcliffe on Trent would further exacerbate the problem. Relevant authorities should act now to alleviate the problem.

Councillor Jones returned to the issue of the projected 28% increase in housing and the pressure on infrastructure and stated that there was a shortage of secondary school places in the West Bridgford area. Increasingly children were travelling greater distances to school, which was adding further pressure to the transport networks. There was increased pressure on health provision and immediate action was required.

Councillor Upton confirmed that Appendix 2 of the report, the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2, provided the final figures on housing numbers, which were not at the minimum number, as originally quoted. Following the Inspector's examination and consultation with stakeholders, the Inspector had concluded that the key settlements had sufficient infrastructure, services and facilities to support the proposed allocations. Consideration of the housing capacity for each site, traffic issues and infrastructure contributions would be covered when an application came before the Planning Committee. In respect of transport provision, the report referred to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Borough Council, County Council and Highways England for the provision of an infrastructure package for improvements to the A52 to support housing growth, with the support of developer contributions. The Council would continue to lobby the Government regarding climate change and housing standards and Rushcliffe was not content with using the minimum standards of building regulations. A working group was reviewing standards, with a view to submitting a report to Council in the New Year. The Abbey Road development would set a high standard and be an exemplar scheme to others.

In accordance with Standing Orders – Council 16.4, a recorded vote was taken for the motion as follows:

FOR: Councillors R Adair, S Bailey, B Bansal, N Begum, A Brennan, R Butler, N Clarke, T Combellack, J Cottee, G Dickman, A Edyvean, P Gowland, B Gray, L Healy, R Hetherington, L Howitt, R Inglis, R Jones, A Major, R Mallender, D Mason, G Moore, A Phillips, F Purdue-Horan, S Robinson, K Shaw, D Simms, J Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood, C Thomas, R Upton, D Viridi, R Walker, L Way, D Wheeler and G Williams.

AGAINST: Councillors M Gaunt and J Walker.

ABSTENTION: Councillor Mrs C Jeffreys and S Mallender.

The motion was carried.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies incorporating the main modifications recommended by the Inspector to make the Plan sound and legally compliant be adopted;
- b) 'saved' policies ENV15, H1, E1, E7 and E8 of the 1996 Rushcliffe Local Plan be deleted;

- c) the Local Plan Policies Map incorporating the amendments as a consequence of adopting the Local Plan Part 2 and the deletion of the 'saved' policies ENV15, H1, E1, E7 and E8 of the 1996 Rushcliffe Local Plan be approved; and
- d) the Executive Manager – Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, be granted delegated authority to make any necessary final minor textual, graphical and presentational changes required to the Local Plan Part 2 and adopted Local Plan Policies Map.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN