

Sheffield Local Plan Full Council decision

Briefing note

Location/date: Sheffield, 16/02/2022

Ref No: 366

This Briefing Note is a follow-up to previous Note (No. 364) on the Sheffield Local Plan's Spatial Options.

Based on the Climate Change, Economy and Development Transitional Committee and the Co-Operative Executive's recommendation, Full Council voted on the 2nd February to take forward Option 3 of the emerging (Pre-Submission) Draft Sheffield Plan as the preferred overall spatial option. This commits to the release of sustainably located previously developed sites in the Green Belt, alongside other sites (PDL and undeveloped) within the urban area, where these are considered sustainable.

This Option identifies two large PDL sites in the Green Belt adjoining the urban area. The sites will require sustainability assessments and consideration of their suitability in planning terms as part of the detailed site selection process. These will sit alongside other sites in the urban area and within settlements as noted above.

There are also a small number of other PDL sites, both in minor settlements or adjoining them and in open countryside. The emerging Plan takes the view that these are unlikely to be reasonable alternatives because they would lead to an unsustainable pattern of development. In reaching this conclusion the Council relies on a recent appeal decision (Ref APP/J4423/W/20/3262600).

The Motion before Full Council was amended to include the following:

- Commendation of the cross-party work of the Climate Change, Economy and Development Transitional Committee for their work on the Local Plan Spatial Options, and recognition of the general consensus supporting the Administration's approach
- A note that under the national legislation imposed on Councils by Government, many areas across the country have been forced to build on Green Belt over recent years, but that due to the importance of protecting green spaces, in 2019/20 the Council

undertook detailed work and widespread public consultation to look at how the development of new homes in central Sheffield could be maximised

- Belief that the approach laid out by the previous Administration would have delivered the housing requirement of 40,000 new homes, as determined by Government at the time
- Regret that despite this substantial consultation with Sheffield citizens, the current Government took the decision in December 2020 to increase Sheffield's housing target by 35%
- Belief that this decision was not adequately evidence based, and that this number is far too high and that Sheffield, like many northern areas, saw such a high uplift in housing targets as a means to protect the Green Belt in the South of England – the majority of which falls within Conservative-led local authority areas
- Belief that this was a blatant disregard for the people of Sheffield, with the Government putting different rules to the city, than that of the south of England, and notes that this uplift has caused further delay to the process of determining Sheffield's Local Plan
- A note that the previous, and current, Administration has repeatedly challenged the Government on the high housing target and, whilst a local plan must be delivered for the city, what is finally delivered must work in the interests of Sheffield
- Belief that, on balance, Option 3 is the right spatial approach for Sheffield, which would utilise brownfield sites throughout the city, as well as delivering homes in sustainable and connected places
- Noted the support for Option 3 from Campaign To Protect Rural England (Peak District and South Yorkshire) in their media statement (12 January 2022) which stated: "The re-use of a very small number of derelict brownfield sites in the Green Belt, in sustainable locations at the edge of the urban area (as outlined in the Council's 'Option 3') may be a way

Contact us:

Ground Floor V1 Velocity, Tinter Street, Sheffield, S1 4BY

T 0114 2289150

F 0114 2721947

e shefield@dlpconsultants.co.uk

www.dlpconsultants.co.uk

forward that helps meet Sheffield’s realistic housing needs rather than the Government’s target”

- Belief that the Local Plan is about much more than housing alone – and that the strategy needs to be rooted in how new housing fits in with communities, infrastructure development, connectivity, green spaces and ecology, and leads to prosperous, well-connected, sustainable communities, as well as bringing economic growth (more jobs and higher wages). The Local Plan must also be flexible enough to deliver on these aims and to link intrinsically with other Council strategies

A number of suggested benefits from releasing a limited number of large brownfield sites in the Green Belt that adjoin existing urban areas, alongside the urban capacity led approach for brownfield and undeveloped land within the urban area, were identified by Officers and agreed by Councillors as:

- Providing greater flexibility in supply
- Offering more opportunities to provide family-sized housing in suburban areas
- Potentially providing additional scope to deliver more affordable housing (because previously undeveloped land is generally easier and therefore more economically viable to develop)
- Helping demonstrate that all reasonable options have been considered if it was decided that Green Belt should not be released
- Providing additional opportunities for family-sized housing in suburban locations and/or employment
- Enabling the reclamation of derelict/brownfield sites

No reference in this was made to specialist housing such as that for the elderly where there may be local requirements.

The sites being considered are described as being in ‘relatively sustainable locations’ – near tram

stops/railway stations and other local services and facilities. The main disbenefits of this option, however, are noted as:

- Some previously undeveloped land in the urban area can be more ecologically valuable than farmland
- Such sites could be unviable for housing due to reclamation costs; so there could be a stronger argument for releasing them for employment use

The decision to progress with Option 3 means a concentration on largely urban focused and larger scale development. This, however, potentially limits the delivery of a ‘localised housing response’ and a broad mix of house types overall, and potentially restricts the quantum and distribution of affordable homes coming forward, when compared to Spatial Option 4.

Now that the proposed spatial approach to be included in the Plan is agreed, a detailed site selection process will be commenced. Officers will now produce a full Publication (Pre-submission) Draft Plan (under Regulation 19) with the intention of placing this before Full Council in September 2022 before further public consultation takes place in October-November 2022 and submission to the Government for public examination by April 2023.