

PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR JOHN EVANS REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL, JULY 2020

Having withdrawn the previous Local Plan in April 2020, the Council has commenced preparatory work on a new Local Plan. The new Plan could take up to around 4 years to adopt. The Council is committed to preparing the new Plan with representatives of the local community and residents themselves fully engaged throughout the process. The new Plan must be evidence-led and subject to robust analysis throughout its development.

This preparatory work has involved the continued engagement of the East of England Peer Review Team and has started with the setting up of new governance arrangements for preparing the new Plan to ensure that the appropriate decision-making measures are in place to consider and steer the new Plan's development.

These governance arrangements involve the setting up of a new Local Plan Leadership Group, this will be made up of members from different political parties and different geographical locations across the district and will meet in public.

Looking forward, the Council will now look to put in place an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), setting out how the Council will engage with the public on the new Local Plan, as well as a Local Development Scheme, setting out the timetable for the production of the new Local Plan.

In order to fill a potential planning policy vacuum following the withdrawal of the Local Plan, an Interim Planning Policy Document is now being finalised. This will include planning policies specifically aimed at tackling climate change through the planning process. Although the policies will not be statutory, they will set out the Council's key planning policy expectations and will be used in pre-application discussions with developers to pro-actively encourage them to develop high quality schemes.

The Council continues to support Neighbourhood Plans across the district, an immediate change to the SCI has been agreed to allow for consultations to go ahead in the current public health emergency.

The Development Management service continues to deliver an efficient and effective service with our performance figures currently all well above the Government's targets. There is a drive to have more local community and member involvement in the pre-application stages of planning applications so that they can help shape the details of applications before they are submitted. More Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are being entered into with developers to ensure that applications are processed in a well-managed way and generate income for additional planning resources.

Finally, Manchester Airport Group (MAG) has announced its intention to lodge an appeal against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission earlier this year. If, as expected, the appeal is submitted to Government by the end of July, officers will need to start work on preparing the Council's case over the summer. However, it

is expected that the actual Public Inquiry will not be held until well into the 2021 as it has been indicated that such an important inquiry could not be effectively conducted “virtually”. The impacts of Covid-19 will therefore need to have been addressed before a traditional “face to face” Inquiry could be arranged.