

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 2 on TUESDAY, 7th JUNE, 2016 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Allen, Ball, Beck, M. Dixon, Francis, I. Galbraith, Jackson, Middleton, Mordey, Porthouse, M. Turton, G. Walker and P. Walker.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Lauchlan, Scaplehorn, Taylor, W. Turton, Tye, P. Watson and D. Wilson

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th April, 2016.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April, 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 26th April, 2016.

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held 26th April, 2016 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 12th April (Extraordinary) and 19th April, 2016

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 12th April (Extraordinary) and 19th April, 2016 (copies circulated) were submitted.

(For copy reports – see original minutes)

3. RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub Committee held on 26th April, 2016

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 26th April, 2016 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Reference from Cabinet – 23rd March, 2016
Sunderland Local Plan Core Strategy: Consultation on Growth Options**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought the Committee's advice and consideration on a report which was considered by the Cabinet on 23rd March, 2016 which sought approval of the draft Core Strategy Growth Options document for the purposes of carrying out a formal public consultation on the document.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Gary Clasper, Principal Policy Officer for Planning, introduced the report and drew Members attention to the three growth options.

The low growth option would see the construction of around 515 new houses in the city each year and would see a decline in the working age population of the city which would then likely lead to declining services such as schools and could further reduce shopping activity in the city centre and local centres.

The medium growth option would see the construction of around 820 new homes and would help to increase the working age population of the city by around 2000. There would be benefits to the economy from people choosing to live in the city and there would be a lower impact on transport infrastructure although there would still be commuting into the city.

The higher growth option would see the construction of around 1055 houses per year and this would help to increase the level of choice of types of housing and would help to significantly reduce the number of people choosing

to leave the city. This would create a growing population which would reverse the current trend for the city.

The low growth option would not offer the opportunity for the city to thrive and was the minimum requirement for the city; this option was therefore not recommended.

Mr Clasper also advised that there was public consultation being undertaken and that a number of public meetings had been arranged in May and June at various locations across the city. Those events which had already taken place had been well attended and had provided officers a valuable opportunity to meet residents. People in Sunderland were passionate about the city.

Councillor G. Walker stated that he felt that the consultation could have been more widely publicised at a local level through additional means as some residents were not aware of the events. Mr Clasper advised that there had been two adverts placed into the Sunderland Echo in accordance with the statutory requirements and there had been an item on SunFM. There had been some difficulties in arranging additional publicity steps due to changes occurring in the Council's Corporate Communications department; additional publicity would be looked at again for the next stage of the consultation.

Councillor G. Walker then queried how other Council departments would be engaged as part of the formulation of the local plan. Mr Clasper advised that there was a cross directorate working group in operation in respect of the local plan. The local plan was a land use document and there was a need to look at how the document could be publicised through the various council boards; there was a need to obtain the opinions of the boards. The plan took into account the corporate development strategy and there was also work being done with partners to ensure that the work aligned with the priorities of the council.

Councillor G. Walker then stated that he was in favour of the high growth option however he did have concerns over the use of green space in the Coalfield area. He also commented that existing infrastructure and services including highways, schools and doctors were not always of a sufficient standard to accommodate significant development. Mr Clasper advised that there had been a lot learned since the last plan was produced in 2013. Development in the Coalfield area would be reviewed and it was acknowledged that there was a need to look at the impact on proposals on greenspace, services and infrastructure.

Councillor Porthouse referred to the growth option map and expressed concerns that the plan was broken down into four areas of the city; this did not match the 5 Area Committees and he felt that there needed to be a relationship between the areas on the plan and the Area Committees. There was a need to create jobs in the city and there also was a need to work with developers; there had been aspirations to build 500,000 houses within the city however this had not happened. He agreed that there was a need for a plan to

be implemented and he thought that the medium growth option was the most appropriate.

Councillor M. Dixon queried what contact had there been with landowners of vacant sites. Mr Clasper advised that landowners were contacted on a yearly basis as part of the Council's SHLAA and that there was going to be a new register of brownfield sites produced. When producing this register landowners would be contacted to find out whether the sites were deliverable. There would be a temporary interim document produced and there would be work done with developers to ensure that all of the named sites were deliverable.

Councillor Ball stated that there was a shortage of industrial land in the city. Mr Clasper advised that this was the first review of employment land for a number of years; there was an undersupply of industrial land in the North area however within the South of the city there was an oversupply. It was considered that the overall employment land position for the north and south should be considered together. It was suggested that there was an overall need for up to 40 hectares of new industrial land in the city.

The Chairman commented that businesses looked for land near to key routes and a current lack of infrastructure was the reason behind the surplus of industrial land in the South area.

Councillor Mordey commented that the planned infrastructure improvements in the area including the upgrades to Testo's junction on the A19 and the new Wear crossing and its associated network upgrades would help to open up access into the city which would help to attract employers into the city. There was a need to try to attract more high quality well-paid jobs into the city.

Councillor Francis queried what type of industry was likely to be attracted and whether they would be large or small scale employers. Mr Clasper advised that the proposed International Advanced Manufacturing Park north of Nissan was likely to attract companies involved in the Nissan supply chain. There was a thriving manufacturing sector in the city and there had been a growth in high-tech manufacturing. The number of employees varied dependant on the type of company; those involved with genetics and life sciences often did not have more than around 10 to 20 employees while in other sectors there were some large employers.

Councillor Mordey stated that there was a need to look at the retail offer in the city. He hoped that the consultation would identify people's desires for retail. The Chairman added that all city centres were struggling. Councillor I. Galbraith commented that more people shopped online now rather than going to retail stores which had a significant impact on comparison shopping.

Councillor Porthouse commented that 10 – 20 years ago there had been a previous desire from planning policy departments to promote housing and retail away from city centres to out of town locations; this had now changed to

looking to attract new housing and retail development back into the centre as a priority.

5. RESOLVED that the Committee's comments and feedback on the draft document be reported to Cabinet in due course for further consideration as part of the outcome of the consultation process.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. BELL
 (Chairman)