



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 12 JUNE 2003 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Farmer - Chair
Councillor Thomas - Labour Spokesperson
Councillor O'Brien - Conservative Spokesperson

Councillor Fitch

Councillor Kitterick

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77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Thomas declared a non-prejudicial interest in Appendix F, "SRB Programmes – Update", as he was Ward Councillor for Charnwood which contained part of the SRB6 Greater Humberstone area within its boundaries.

86. LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND RUTLAND STRUCTURE PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The Service Director, Planning and Sustainable Development submitted a report which considered the objections to the Proposed Modifications to the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan.

The Committee received a presentation which detailed the background and process to date of the Structure Plan, the next stages / timetable and the key comments made on the Proposed Modifications and Responses of the three Councils involved, Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils. It was noted that despite Government plans to abolish Structure Plans, if the plan was approved before the proposed Planning Bill was enacted it would continue to be a formal legitimate document for three years.

Members of the Committee welcomed this presentation and noted the hard work by Officers and Members to get to this stage.

Members of the Committee queried what the implications were of any delays in adopting the Structure Plan, especially in relation to the questions of possible

Government direction and any possible legal challenge which contested the plan's contents. Officers pointed to the dangers inherent in not having strategic planning guidance in place, especially the vulnerability of those districts adjoining the city boundary which could find it difficult to resist the release of greenfield site on appeal. This would have a potentially damaging effect on the flow of investment into Leicester and hamper attempts to secure adequate levels of regeneration in the city.

Members went on to query whether an increase in the size of the City boundaries would help to resolve the problem in the long term. Officers stated that as a result of recommendations from the Examination in Public, where the plan was discussed by all interested stakeholders and given an independent analysis, the authorities within the Central Leicestershire Policy Area would need to work together with the County Council to reach agreement regarding the provision of new housing. Officers agreed that that this would be more easily administered by a single body. It was also noted there were inherent difficulties with the present structure plan arrangements where policy approved at a sub-regional level and was implemented at district level.

The Committee noted the challenge that was faced in meeting the housing provision target but recognised that targeting housing on old industrial brownfield sites was helping to regenerate these areas. They agreed that the Plan was now fundamentally sound and should proceed to adoption.

The Chair summed up the discussion and the following was agreed:-

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Head of Development Plans and other Officers be thanked for their involvement in bringing the Structure Plan to the completion stage;
- (2) that Council Departments be requested to provide information for a report to respond to the implications of 19,000 new homes within the City;
- (3) that the Scrutiny Committee receive regular reports monitoring whether the targets in the Structure Plan were being met;
- (4) that a report be provided at a future meeting which detailed how strategic planning would operate within the East Midlands regional assembly;
- (5) that the Committee expresses the view that the proposed level of housing allocation of 19,000 houses, whilst being challenging, was achievable but this would be the absolute maximum level the city could accommodate; and
- (6) that Committee recommends to Cabinet and Council that the Plan should now proceed to adoption.

