

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minute of a meeting of the **Cabinet**
held on Tuesday, 21st July, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

22 CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

Cabinet considered a report on the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

In November 2014, the Inspector appointed to examine the Local Plan Strategy provided the Council with interim views on the soundness and legal compliance of the submitted Local Plan Strategy. On 15 December 2014, the Inspector formally suspended the examination of the Local Plan Strategy to allow the Council to undertake the additional work to address the concerns he raised about the soundness of the Local Plan Strategy in his interim views.

Further work had been carried out within a tight timescale set by the Inspector. The Council established a taskforce of Councillors and officers to oversee the necessary work, under the leadership of former Councillor Peter Raynes.

The report presented the output of the additional work undertaken during the suspension period which supplemented Local Plan evidence base and requested Cabinet to endorse the suggested revisions to be submitted to the Local Plan Strategy for the Inspector's consideration.

The proposed revisions reflected the changing economic context of Cheshire East and the impact on housing requirement. The suggested revisions did not involve any change to the overall Local Plan Strategy and therefore, fundamentally, it was the same Local Plan supported by an updated evidence base.

At the start of the Local Plan period the nation remained in the grip of the deepest recession for decades. This inevitably coloured the critical assumptions about future growth, development and migration. By 2015 the economic climate had changed and this enabled the Council to move forward with greater assurance of future prosperity.

The additional evidence reflected the changing context with the economic projection moving from 0.4% to 0.7% growth rate. As the economy continued to recover the Council was better able to gauge future potential. In turn the latest demographic data, combined with more optimistic projections for in-migration created a fuller picture of the likely pattern of the workforce and population. It could be said that the Council had not set the target high enough and should have aimed for 0.9% growth or higher. The Council believed that the projections should be based on growth in the

private sector and in the context of more efficient public sector and therefore was set at a realistic deliverable position which was 0.7%.

This then drove the need for an uplift in housing numbers – 36,000 homes over a 20 year period, importantly incorporating accommodation for the Borough's ageing population. Additional work to update the Green Belt Assessment and additional highway studies then informed an amended spatial distribution of development.

The updated evidence basis justified the suggested revisions to the submitted Local Plan Strategy. These revisions, along with the full suite of evidence would be submitted to the Inspector by the end of July.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet endorse the additional evidence and the suggested revisions to the submitted Local Plan Strategy for publication, additional stakeholder engagement and submission, as set out in Appendices 1-9 to the Report.