

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	11 th February 2015
Report of:	Executive Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity – Caroline Simpson
Subject/Title:	Notice of Motion – Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Don Stockton – Housing and Jobs

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider and respond to the following motion which had been moved by Councillor S Corcoran at the Council meeting on 11th December 2014 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

‘This Council welcomes the strong community involvement in and the cross party support for the Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan and regrets the comments of the Leader of the Council about the Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan on the Sunday Politics Show on 30 November.’

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet consider and respond to the motion referred to in paragraph 1.1 above.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recognise and endorse the high level commitment this council has made to the residents of Cheshire East in it's support for neighbourhood planning
- 2.3 That Cabinet recognise the significant and fast progress that our communities are making in bringing forward their plans
- 2.4 That Cabinet support the ambition to make Cheshire East the leading local authority in neighbourhood planning.
- 2.5 That Cabinet also continue to support the resources necessary to enable the hard work of our Councillors, officers, town and parish councillors and most importantly, of our residents, that underpins this progress toward sustainable planning in Cheshire East, by, and for, all of our communities.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Since neighbourhood planning was introduced in 2011 there's been a revolution in plan making with communities across the country now taking up their right to plan for their own futures and define for themselves what sustainable development means in the context of their own towns and villages.
- 3.2 It's an agenda that nationally, now covers almost 1300 communities and some 5 million people resulting in 32 finalised plans to date; plan making is now in the hands of our communities and Cheshire East Council is at the forefront of supporting this.
- 3.3 The government has confirmed funding to support neighbourhood plans into the next financial year and beyond and is fully supporting the views expressed in them when it comes to planning decisions. A series of appeal decisions and high court rulings have now definitively confirmed this and signalled the overriding weight given to neighbourhood plans, even in instances where the neighbourhood plan is at a draft stage, even where the host local authority has no five year supply of housing land and even where there is no up to date local plan in place. Even in these scenarios, the views of the community are, expressed in a neighbourhood plan, are becoming the de facto framework against which planning decisions should be made. Cases from Tattenhall, Winslow, Devizes, Hurstpierpoint, Malmesbury, Malpas and beyond confirm this. Neighbourhood plans are fast becoming the cornerstone of a new planning system, built from the ground up that puts residents first across the whole country.
- 3.4 In Cheshire East we are most definitely continuing to put our residents first, and put them at the heart of sustainable planning. This Council has committed to resisting development which is not sustainable and in July 2014 the Council made a high level commitment to support neighbourhood planning, ensuring the financial and staff resources were made available to get neighbourhood plans in place as quick as possible.
- 3.5 To make this happen the council entered a partnership with Cheshire Community Action and their team of six neighbourhood planning specialists. Six months later, excellent progress is being made across Cheshire East with the first draft plans expected in the spring. There are now 19 plans underway in the borough, with communities joining in week by week.
- 3.6 The continuing efforts of our councillors and officers in driving this agenda and bringing neighbourhood planning front and centre, should be recognised and the continued commitment of this Council to building sustainable planning is generating more and more requests for assistance (we've now had discussions with at least 40 communities).

Our residents want to plan for their own futures and with high level support from this council and it's members, we're making that happen.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 Sandbach Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Councillor Sam Corcoran; Councillor Gill Merry; Councillor Barry Moran; Councillor Gail Wait

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 None

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 None

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 This report addresses the issues raised by the motion referred to in paragraph 1.1.

11.2 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new legal rights that enable communities to prepare local development plans (neighbourhood plans) with equal weight to the Local Plan for decision making purposes on development proposals.

11.2 Such plans have the power to allocate land for development purposes and establish local policies applicable to the development of land. Any future neighbourhood plan must be prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the strategic policies held within the Development Plan of the host local authority.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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