

## **COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Besford (in the Chair); Councillors Beswick, Cocks, Emsley, Kelly, Angela Smith, West, Peter Williams and Winkler.

**OFFICERS:** P. Moore (Head of Planning), W. Poole (Economy Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Blundell (Cabinet Member for Economy and Communications) and three members of public.

#### **13 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Susan Emmott.

#### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **15 PLACES FOR EVERYONE JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Communications and the Director of Economy setting out proposals for public consultation on the 'Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan' document. Following the withdrawal of Stockport Borough Council from the production of the Greater Manchester Plan for Jobs, Homes and the Environment, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, the AGMA Executive Board had agreed to consider producing a joint Development Plan Document (DPD) of the nine remaining Greater Manchester (GM) districts.

Earlier in 2021, the nine Councils had approved the establishment of a Joint Committee to progress the Joint Development Plan document, to be known as 'Places for Everyone'.

The 'Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2021' was a statutory plan and required approvals from the Cabinet and Full Council of all of the nine relevant authorities, so that the next stages of the Plan could be developed.

The submitted report, which the Committee scrutinised, set out the processes that has been undertaken thus far, the content of the plan and the next steps. Specifically the report was seeking approval to undertake a 'Regulation 19' consultation on the plan and, following that consultation, approval to submit the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

The report advised members that a "Future of GM" report in 2019 had set out Greater Manchester's plans for the future in the face of uncertainty. Despite Covid-19 and ongoing uncertainties about the country's future trading relationships, the bold and ambitious vision for the city-region remains unchanged, although the actions prioritised to achieve some of those

ambitions would inevitably have to change. Greater Manchester's ambition to continue to be - and further develop our position as - a global city-region, with strong and prosperous communities throughout as well as a thriving and productive economy remains. Without a clear, long term cohesive set of plans it becomes almost impossible to implement and deliver initiatives that will achieve this ambition.

Within this context, the need for a bold spatial plan to provide certainty and guide development, investment and infrastructure remained. The Government had sent a strong message that Covid-19 should not be a reason to delay either the preparation of statutory plans or the determination of planning applications through the publication of emergency guidance to enable local authorities to continue to exercise their planning functions in a Covid-19 compliant way.

At a meeting of the AGMA Executive Board, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021, a report was considered setting out the merits of continuing to produce a joint plan of the nine remaining GM Councils, to be known as "Places for Everyone".

The report highlighted that producing such a plan would enable those nine Councils to continue to:

- a. progress the strategic policies in the GMSF 2020, for example net zero carbon development, affordable housing and space and accessibility standards for new housing.
- b. maximise the use of sustainable urban/brownfield land and limit the need for Green Belt to accommodate the development needs of the nine
- c. align with wider Greater Manchester strategies for transport and other infrastructure investment
- d. utilise the evidence base already commissioned and completed, minimising the cost of producing further evidence
- e. spread the cost jointly of the independent examination

At the AGMA Executive meeting, it was noted that each district would be asked to approve the making of an agreement with each other to prepare a joint Development Plan Document. Subsequently, each of the nine Councils have sought approval to establish a Joint Committee and to delegate the formulation and preparation of a joint Development Plan Document to the Joint Committee.

The Committee considered the report in detail and in doing so sought clarification on a number of areas:

- a. Does Rochdale Borough Council have the authority to make changes to the Plan?
- b. Has there been any changes (including minor changes) to the Plan since it was previously scrutinized by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021?
- c. Concerns were raised at a previous meeting of the Committee (on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020) about 'inconsistencies' which were highlighted between figures in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and the then Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and a question on this matter was raised at a

subsequent Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The Member raising these concerns asked if the 'inconsistencies' were being looked into and he added that 'since that time figures would have moved with new developments and information. Can the Committee have an update on current figures to ensure that the new report was consistent with all other relevant documents; and that both greenfield and greenbelt sites are being proposed for development if absolutely necessary to meet the local housing need'.

d. Concern was expressed at the proposed 'expansion' of the Greater Manchester City Region, which was not popular with a lot of smaller towns in the north of the region which were 'struggling' to maintain an 'independent' identity.

e. Clarification on the data being used to compile the report's statistical information and whether there was still a reliance on information obtained from the 2011 Census.

f. How much of the new development/housing provision would be 'socially affordable'.

g. Were the proposals in the report 'fit for purpose' and what affect did Covid-19 have on the compilation of the report.

h. Clarification on the targets (in terms of the Government and the Council) for new building projects in the Borough.

i. Clarification on the existing supply of housing in the Borough

j. Clarification of the next stages – if the Plan is approved by the nine constituent authorities.

k. Details were sought of specific proposals to develop on greenfield and greenspace sites.

l. Clarification on the procedures and protocols regarding the allocation of Section 106 funds (in terms of projects and locations).

m. Clarification regarding the provision of 'ancillary' services such as school and GP surgeries for example.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted

2. That the head of Planning be requested to write to Members off the Committee outlining the relevant procedures and protocols regarding the allocation and distribution of Section 106 funds

(NB: Councillors Angela Smith and Winkler requested that their opposition to the proposals contained in the submitted report in their present form).