

# Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Scrutiny Committee

11 JULY 2017

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Poll (Chairman); Councillors A Cole (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, A Christensen (In place of L Monger), M Collins, M Edmonds and S Jenkins

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Mrs J Brandis, B Foster and Mrs C Paternoster.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Monger

## 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of 19 December, 2016 and 17 May, 2017, be approved as correct records.

## 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were none.

## 3. VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE

All Members of the Council had been notified previously that the timeline for finalising the submission draft of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) had been extended to ensure that all the evidence required to inform the overall strategy and detailed policies had been included. This was a necessity to ensure that the Plan was found to be “sound” at Examination.

The Sustainability Appraisal was being carried out by external consultants but unfortunately, this piece of evidence had not progressed to the anticipated timetable. This had in part been due to the very complex nature and number of variables associated with the emerging VALP, because of the scale of growth to be planned for in the District and the range of options that therefore needed to be considered in the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Sustainability Appraisal was a critical piece of evidence which had to feed into the content of the Plan and it was imperative that there was sufficient time for the Appraisal to be done properly. This was an incredibly complex Plan which would affect the Vale for generations to come and getting it absolutely right was an absolute priority.

Accordingly, the timescale for consideration of the Submission Draft had been amended as follows:-

- Report to VALP Scrutiny Committee – 6.30pm 26 September, 2017
- Cabinet – 6.30pm 10 October, 2017
- Council – 6.30pm 18 October, 2017

Work on finalising the Plan would continue during the summer, including continuing discussions with key stakeholders to ensure that any issues they had raised had been addressed. As previously intended, the Plan would then be published for public comment. The principal advantage of the change in timetable was the fact that the consultation period would not now have to be run over the summer holidays. It was believed that this should make it easier for residents, Town and Parish Councils and other interested parties to respond to the consultation.

Following the six week consultation, all the consultation responses would be pulled together and sent with the Submission Draft to the Planning Inspectorate in January, 2018 (two months later than the original timetable). The DCLG had advised that informally that their priority was to ensure that the Council was progressing with a “sound” Plan, and that they were comfortable with the proposed short extension. The Planning Inspectorate would advise the Council when the Plan would be scheduled for Examination, which it was expected would be mid-2018.

Officers provided the Committee with an update on the position regarding the “duty to co-operate” discussions with adjoining authorities (Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, South Northamptonshire, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Dacorum), and concerning those authorities’ timings in relation to their emerging Plans. Members were reminded that the latest evidence in support of the Plan could be found on the Council’s website at <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-valp>.

Members sought additional information and were informed:-

- (i) Officers were satisfied that other Buckinghamshire Districts were doing what they reasonably could to accommodate future housing needs in their own areas which would minimise unmet housing need into Aylesbury Vale. While they were constrained by the green belt it was felt that they were considering moderately acceptable green belt sites. It was explained that the ability to be able to develop some sites would depend on the attitudes of some landowners and also depend in the longer term on Government guidance issued regarding developments on green belt land.
- (ii) central Government preferred authorities not to propose Green Belt developments but would listen if there was a strong justification and if there were no alternatives.
- (iii) South Oxfordshire were currently consulting on the second draft of their Local Plan. It was not believed that they were not taking their share of unmet need from Oxford City Council which could potentially create some unmet housing need for Aylesbury Vale and other Oxfordshire authorities. An objection would likely be raised by other Councils in due course with the Planning Inspector.
- (iv) clarification was provided on development at Eaton Leys on the Aylesbury Vale / MK boundary.
- (v) South Bucks District Council were under pressure from Slough Borough Council to accommodate 7,500-11,500 houses on green belt land in their area. This proposal was now subject to further examination by an external inspector.
- (vi) the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee had requested at their June meeting “That the subject of electric vehicle charging points be comprehensively covered in the emerging VALP. That Committee considered that demand would grow quickly in the next few years and that planning policy should provide for Vale-wide public access to on-street charging points. A policy should also be in place to make full use of government incentives.” Members were informed that the VALP currently was looking to focus on 10% of housing having this provision for the first 5 years of the plan, which was in line with the take up of electric vehicles used in the UK.
- (vii) Officers were confident that the timescales for progressing the VALP were robust, including having confidence on the work being done with suppliers. It was also anticipated that the plan examination would commence within 6 months

of submission, due to the housing numbers involved and associated building in the green belt issues. Officers would be meeting with the Planning Inspectorate to discuss issues in August.

- (viii) that the Aylesbury Vale area contained a significant number of 'unknown' traveller sites which required further work. However, it was believed that the VALP had identified sufficient traveller sites for the first 10 years of the plan, with further work having to be done in the future.
- (ix) that the new NPPF was anticipated to be published in late 2017 or early 2018, which would likely include a new interpretation for development in the green belt.
- (x) Wycombe DC's delay in their local Plan was due to them relying on the same Sustainability Appraisal information that Aylesbury Vale was awaiting from the external consultants.
- (xi) there the VALP did not currently plan for a new settlement at Haddenham or Winslow. However, it was possible that housing numbers could change and increase in five years time, which was at the first review / re-calculation period. Officers would look at capacity to address issue if or when they arose.
- (xii) it was confirmed that reserve allocations in Parish areas would likely be called upon first if substantial further housing growth needed to be accommodated in the Vale.
- (xiii) an update was expected on the London Plan in the next few days. It was anticipated that the Plan would inform people that London would struggle to meet its housing targets and that assistance for allocating unmet housing need was being sought from other willing authorities.

RESOLVED –

That the current position and VALP timetable be noted.

#### **4. FUTURE MEETINGS**

As referred to in the preceding Minute, Members noted that the next meeting of this Committee would be held at 6.30pm on 26 September, 2017 in the Olympic Room at The Gateway, Aylesbury.