

STRATEGIC HOUSING AND PLANNING

A record of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet Member with responsibility for Strategic Housing and Planning:-

TUESDAY 3rd DECEMBER, 2019

Following consideration of the matters detailed below in the presence of:-

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| Councillor Greenhalgh | - As deputy for Executive Cabinet Member – Strategic Housing and Planning |
| Councillor Weatherby | - Minor Opposition Spokesperson |
| Councillor Hornby | - Minor Opposition Spokesperson |

Officers

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Mr. G. Brough | - Director of Place |
| Mr. J. Hundal | - Assistant Director of Economic Development and Regeneration |
| Mr. S. Godley | - Strategy Manager |
| Mr. D. Shepherd | - Principal Group Accountant |
| Mrs. V. Ridge | - Democratic Services Manager |

8. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which provided an update on decisions taken at previous meetings of the Executive Cabinet Member.

The Executive Cabinet Member NOTED the report.

9. BLACKROD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINER'S REPORT

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The Director of Place submitted a report which advised the Executive Cabinet Member of the receipt of the Examiner's Report on the Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan.

By way of background, the Executive Cabinet Member was reminded that the 2011 Localism Act introduced a right for communities to produce neighbourhood plans. These plans were introduced to provide local communities with the means to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area, where they chose to do so. It was also explained that Neighbourhood Plans, if supported by success at a referendum at the end of the process, became part of the Development Plan and the policies contained within them were then used in the determination of planning applications.

The report advised the Executive Cabinet Member that Bolton Council designated the Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan area in July, 2016 and since that time, Blackrod Council and Bolton Council had followed the statutory processes for neighbourhood plan preparation. The Town Council prepared a draft Neighbourhood Plan and consulted on that in December, 2018 and January, 2019 and, in light of the consultation responses, they prepared a further Plan and submitted it to Bolton Council in June, 2019. The Council then carried out consultation on the submitted plan and received representations. Following this, in July, 2019 the Council appointed an independent examiner whose role was to prepare a report to consider whether the Plan:-

- Met the basic conditions i.e. conformed with national planning policy and local strategic policies; would result in sustainable development; and met the requirements of European regulations for protecting the environment and for Human Rights; and
- Satisfied the legal requirements for neighbourhood plans

In addition to the above, the examiner must also identify an appropriate area for a referendum.

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The Executive Cabinet Member was informed that the examiner had now considered the submitted plan and the representations made on it and the Council had received his report a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report also provided a summary of the findings of the examiner and also detailed a number of modifications to the submitted Plan which had been recommended by the examiner and these were outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

In terms of going forward, the Council had three options on how the Neighbourhood Plan could proceed which were as follows, viz:-

- It could approve the Plan for referendum in accordance with modifications recommended by the examiner;
- It could approve the Plan for referendum not in accordance with the modifications recommended by the examiner. It would need to be sure that the Plan met the basic conditions despite not making the recommended modifications and if it were to do this, then there was a statutory requirement to carry out further consultation before a referendum; or
- It could refuse to approve the Plan for referendum but could only do this if it was considered that the Plan could not meet the basic conditions.

The Executive Cabinet Member was advised that it was recommended that the Plan was approved for referendum in accordance with the modifications recommended by the examiner. To support this, it was explained that the recommendations did ensure that the basic conditions were met and there were no sound planning or legal reasons why there should be a departure from the recommended modifications.

The relevant Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Executive Cabinet Member RECOMMENDED that Council at its meeting on 22nd January, 2020 agree that the

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submitted Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan, subject to the modifications proposed by the examiner, should proceed to referendum.