

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 5 November 2020
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Steve Gribbon (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Tom Dowse (Vice-Chair); Councillors Will Dawson, Roy Driver, Helen Foster-Grime, Philip Harding, Colin MacAlister, Andy Sorton and John Taylor.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

2. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

3. GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated Members on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).

The GMSF had been the subject of two previous drafts in 2016/19 which had been the subject of extensive evidence gathering and consultation. The report set out some background information in respect of the GMSF and why it was being produced. It referred to the strategic context in which the plan sat, whilst referencing the plan making process to date.

The report explored the proposals in a Stockport context, in particular having regard to the need to proceed with the provision of an update planning framework to support inclusive and sustainable growth.

GMSF 2020 was not being prepared in isolation. It was one of a suite of strategic documents setting out how Greater Manchester could achieve the ambition set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy. It sat alongside the Local Industrial Strategy, Housing Strategy, 5 Year Environment Plan, Digital and Cultural Strategies.

If supported by the Council, there would be a further period for representations on the GMSF before its submission to the Secretary of State.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Elise Wilson) and Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- Without the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) the Council would need to prepare a Stockport-specific Local Plan that addressed how the full Local Housing Need (LHN) for Stockport was to be met. GMSF proposed to redistribute over 25% of Stockport's LHN, around 5,000 dwellings, to other Greater Manchester districts due to the constraints of the borough. The majority of this was to the central core of Greater Manchester.
- Local housing need was the responsibility of each borough. The Council had co-operated throughout the process and there was no requirement on the other local authorities in Greater Manchester to agree to meet any of Stockport's local housing need.
- The identified Stockport Local Housing Need in 2020 of 18,343 had been derived using the Government's methodology for calculating local housing need (LHN). The reliability of this methodology was questioned by some Members of the Scrutiny Committee particularly due to its reliance on 2014 household projections.
- The methodology used to assess the number of dwellings was a national methodology based on projected household figures which had not taken account of national issues such as Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The GMSF is one of a number of strategies including the Industrial Strategy which would help establish sites for new businesses.
- In terms of the transport infrastructure to support the dwellings, the policies require the delivery of necessary and supporting infrastructure to mitigate the effect on traffic. A number of sites are linked to the Council's desire for key improvements to the public transport infrastructure. Other application sites, for example, may require the building of a new school and all sites require contributions towards education provision.
- The report stated that the scope to increase the supply of dwellings in urban areas had already been fully explored. To protect the Green Belt would require an additional 7,300 dwellings to be built in urban areas at the expense of existing structures such as car parks or open space.
- Without the GMSF there would be a significant risk of a 'planning by appeal' scenario which would place a significant financial burden on the Council.
- Should Stockport Council vote against the GMSF and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority decided to continue with the plan without Stockport, they would be planning for the combined need of nine Local Authorities. Stockport would still need to build the number of dwellings required to be built according to the Local Housing Need and the other local authorities in Greater Manchester would not be obliged to assist Stockport in meeting this need. This would be covered by the Duty to Co-operate, but this is not a duty to agree.
- The viability of the proposed sites in Stockport differed in terms of policy asks. One of the most viable locations was the former Woodford Aerodrome site and the least viable was the former Offerton High School site.
- Concern was expressed that little had changed in the plan as a result of the consultation exercises undertaken, for example to mitigate the impact on High Lane.
- Without GMSF the Council could be restricted in its ability to access funds such as the Brownfield Land Fund which was dependent upon an up-to-date plan being in place or pro-actively being worked towards.

- With regard to the Housing Land Supply, of over 100 sites put forward in the 'call for sites' earlier in the year, only two were suitable for development. Following a number of other 'call for sites' exercises, this was evidence that the prospect of significant numbers of new brownfield sites being identified and brought forward was small.
- Concern was expressed that without GMSF the Council could be restricted in its ability to access funds such as the Brownfield Land Fund which was central to the Council's growth plans. Concern was expressed that if a Local Plan was required to be looked at which further examined brownfield sites, this could potentially lead to the loss of small and medium-sized businesses in the borough. Members stressed the importance of protecting and maintaining a suitable supply of employment land in the borough.
- The borough's housing need was more than double that which it was trying to achieve in 2011 under the adopted Core Strategy. Sites were required with planning permission to identify a five year housing land supply and there was currently only one site with planning permission beyond a five years period and that was at the former Woodford Aerodrome site.
- An aim of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework was that decision making would be brought closer to local people as part of the planning process.
- Concern was expressed that there was a real threat of over-development in urban areas and the GMSF proposed a small percentage of development in the green belt. The GMSF would ensure a balance between houses, schools and the economy in urban areas.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

4. GREATER MANCHESTER 2040 TRANSPORT DELIVERY PLAN AND STOCKPORT DISTRICT LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated Members on the Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Delivery Plan and Stockport District Local Implementation Plan.

Alongside work to prepare a refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy and the next version of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Transport for Greater Manchester had been working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the ten Greater Manchester councils and the Greater Manchester Mayor to prepare new, and updated, transport strategy documents that covered the entire city-region.

This work included a refreshed version of the long-term, statutory local plan – the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 – and a final version of Our Five Year Delivery Plan (2020-2025) which set out the practical actions planned to deliver the Strategy over the next 5 years. In addition, ten new Local Implementation Plans had also been prepared (one for each Greater Manchester council).

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. ADOPTION OF ADDENDUM TO THE STOCKPORT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) 2015

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated Members on the requirement of the Council to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on the details relating to how the Council would engage local communities and other interested parties in producing its Local Plan and determining planning applications. The Council was required to adhere to the adopted SCI when undertaking consultation in relation to these activities.

An addendum to the SCI (2015) was now proposed to deal with the constraints on undertaking community involvement which arose from the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm