
WBDC response to Planning for the Future White Paper

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	11 th September 2020
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Hilary Cole
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	02/09/2020
Report Author:	Bryan Lyttle
Forward Plan Ref:	C3957

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To formulate the Councils' response to the Planning White Paper published in August 2020 which is currently out for consultation and which closes on the 28th October 2020.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That West Berkshire District Council formally responds to the consultation questions as set out in appendix 1.
- 2.2 That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Shadow Portfolio Holders for Planning for any typographical errors and minor amendments needed prior to submission.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The White Paper contains significant proposals which could have a significant impact on:</p> <p>a) Planning fees received by the authority.</p> <p>b) CIL and S106 income are to be combined into new nationally set, value-based flat rate charge. Current CIL income is estimated to be £3,000,000 per annum (down due to Covid 19).</p>

Human Resource:	None			
Legal:	None			
Risk Management:	None			
Property:	None			
Policy:	<p>Proposed changes include: Identifying land under three categories: Growth, Renewal, Protected;</p> <p>Development management policies established at a national scale and an altered role for local plans;</p> <p>Local plans subject to a single statutory ‘sustainable development’ test replacing soundness test;</p> <p>Statutory timetable for local plan production of no more than 30 months and plans should be significantly shorter in length;</p> <p>Local plans should be based on the latest digital technology and supported by new template;</p> <p>New standard method for establishing housing requirement that factors in land constraints;</p> <p>Stronger enforcement powers.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

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<p>A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Housing have pointed out the potential reduction in affordable housing will disproportionately impact on those who have a disability. As this community is already extremely difficult to secure affordable housing for.</p> <p>Whilst the Housing Act allows for Designated Rural Areas to have a different approach to Affordable Housing in these areas it is discretionary and West Berkshire has not declared that it has adopted this policy.</p>
<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Housing suggest a significant reduction in the provision of affordable housing in the district.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>There could be a weakening of the protection afforded to much of West Berkshire, (AAAONB, SSSIs, Flooding) in relation to the deemed consent and automatic permission proposals.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>With national development management proposals and slimmer Local Plans it is hard to see how local health policies could be introduced.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>In order to get ready for the Digital Services Impact it is likely to have an overall positive outcome for ICT</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>Greater digital tools for planning would be a bonus.</p>
<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>Affordable housing, and other parts of the Council Plan will be affected negatively</p>

Core Business:				Unknown
Data Impact:				Unknown
Consultation and Engagement:	All members have received a written briefing on the document and a video conference was held which was available to all members. Details of the consultation was circulated to Parish and Town Councils along with a briefing note.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Council is in the process of producing its Local Plan Review to 2036 and the Government has just produced a White Paper which proposes a new planning regime based on 24 separate proposals.
- 4.2 These proposals would if taken forward;
- (a) Remove the right of councils to determine individual planning applications;
 - (b) Require all land to be designated: Growth, Renewal or Protected;
 - (c) Impose a housing figure on the local authority;
 - (d) Speed up the planning system – automatic outline consent for proposals in growth areas, local plans to be produced every 30 months;
 - (e) Place a greater emphasis on delivering beautiful places;
 - (f) Reform the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and scrap S106 contributions to be replaced by a charge on development value above a certain threshold with a nationally set rate called the Infrastructure Levy; and
 - (g) Only seek affordable housing on developments of over 40 units and for affordable housing to be provided from the new Infrastructure Levy
- 4.3 If the proposals in the White Paper are taken forward, they are likely to have significant implications across the Council and not just in Development and Planning but also finance, education, highways housing and ICT.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The White paper if implemented will represent a fundamental change in the planning system in England and it would appear have some big implications for significant parts of the Council outside of planning; education, finance, highways, housing and ICT.

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- 5.2 Like all White Papers a lot of the detail is missing, for example it makes no mention of how Mineral and Waste planning will work in the new system.
- 5.3 It should also be noted that Development and Planning as part of the New Ways Of Working project is already implementing a digital first strategy.
- 5.4 The report seeks to provide responses to the 26 questions that the consultation paper asks on behalf of the Council (Appendix A).

Background

- 5.4 There are five basic wishes behind the White Paper;
 - (a) Streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage;
 - (b) A radical digital first approach to modernise the planning process;
 - (c) A new focus on design and sustainability;
 - (d) Improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through the reform of developer contributions; and
 - (e) Ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need and to support the renewal of our town and city centres.

Proposals

- 5.5 Appendix A contains the draft responses to the 26 questions asked in the consultation and which need to be worked up more fully before the Council meeting if the Council is to respond to the consultation.
- 5.6 Where possible the more detailed examples should give facts and figures for West Berkshire to illustrate our response in greater detail. For example between 2011 and 2015 the Council received £15 million from S106 and following the introduction of CIL in 2015 the Council has received £13 million.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 As well as responding to the consultation, the other option considered was not to respond to the consultation. However, given the recent questions to the Executive and implications across the authority this was rejected.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 For the reasons stated in this report it is appropriate that the detailed responses to the 26 questions are worked up and discussed with members so that the Council can respond by the end of October deadline.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A Draft responses to the 26 questions asked in the consultation.

Background Papers: None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No: X

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval



Wards affected: All

Officer details:

Name: Bryan Lyttle
Job Title: Planning Policy Manager
Tel No: 01635 519638
E-mail: Bryan.lyttle@westberks.gov.uk

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