

**12 March 2019**

**Planning and Licensing Committee**

**Response to the Southend-on-Sea New Local Plan Issues & Options (February 2019)**

**Report of:** *Phil Drane – Director of Strategic Planning*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval on a formal response from Brentwood Borough Council to the Southend New Local Plan Issues & Options consultation document (Regulation 18).
- 1.2 The proposed response conveys broad support of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's aims in preparing a new local plan. The Southend Plan is currently at the early stages of the plan-making process with little specific details provided on the strategic approach for the area.
- 1.3 Brentwood Borough Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint working with other South Essex local authorities, including Southend Borough Council. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) meet regularly on a number of workstreams including strategic planning and cross-boundary issues.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 To approve the response to the Southend New Local Plan Issues & Options consultation, as set out in Appendix A.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is currently working towards replacing their existing Core Strategy with a new local plan, with a plan period of 2018-2038. An Issues & Options consultation document has been

produced as part of the Southend plan-making process and is available for public consultation.

- 3.2 The document does not set out specific proposals about how Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will progress strategic planning in the area, but rather outlines possible options for planning appropriately on a number of matters, such as meeting housing needs and infrastructure provision.
- 3.3 Brentwood Borough Council is duty bound to undergo the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on preparation of their local plans. Southend Borough is not a neighbouring authority but is within the neighbouring South Essex housing market area as well as being part of cross-boundary joint working that both authorities are signatories to. Considering this the proposed response is limited to high level comments regarding strategic planning issues shared by Southend Borough and Brentwood Borough, mainly through joint working as part of ASELA.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires each local planning authority to produce a local plan. This should set out strategic priorities for the area and plan positively for development and infrastructure needs, in line with national policy and guidance.
- 4.2 Local Plans should include strategic policies to deliver:
- a) Homes and employment needed in the area;
  - b) Provision of retail, leisure, and other commercial development;
  - c) Provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, water supply, waste water, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - d) Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
  - e) Climate change mitigation and adaption, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 4.3 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is at the beginning stages of developing their local plan. The Issues & Options document outlines key strategic planning topics and identifies possible approaches for developing a local plan.
- 4.4 The majority of the issues and options identified in the document do not have a direct impact on Brentwood Borough. Therefore, the proposed

response is limited to addressing the need for both councils to continue engage through the duty to cooperate and address the need for Southend Borough to make every reasonable effort meet local housing needs.

- 4.5 Southend Borough forms part of the South Essex housing market area, along with, Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, and Rochford. According to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum 2017, Southend's objectively assessed housing need is between 900-1,200 homes per annum, equating to 18,000-24,000 homes over the plan period (2018-2038). The Southend Issues & Options document proposes three possible development options. Two of the development options focus development within the Southend Borough boundary. However, these options would still leave an unmet need of approximately 10,200 dwelling due to a physical shortfall of land.
- 4.6 The third development option highlights that local authorities have a legal requirement to work with neighbouring authorities to assist with meeting unmet housing need.
- 4.7 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council sent a letter to Brentwood Borough Council on 4 March 2019 (Appendix B) requesting assistance with meeting unmet housing need. The Council will be replying to this request in due course.
- 4.8 Brentwood Borough Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint working with other South Essex local authorities, consisting of Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Southend-on-Sea, and Rochford, as well as Essex County Council. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) meet regularly on a number of workstreams and are working towards a shared vision for South Essex. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines the core purpose and aims of ASELA and the principles of collaboration. A Statement of Common Ground has been signed by group, which include issues such as the need to address distribution of housing needs.
- 4.9 The Southend New Local Plan Issues and Options sets out the physical difficulties that Southend Borough faces to fully meet local development needs, such as housing and employment. Joint working within ASELA has been set-up to discuss this type of issue, and so it is proposed that the response highlights this but also raises concern more generally about the amount of unmet need from several plans in South Essex (Southend, Basildon, Castle Point identified so far), and the assumption that the wider South Essex area can accommodate this. Joint work and discussion is required to clarify the feasibility of this assumption.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are at the early stages of the plan-making process. No policies or site allocations have been proposed as part of this consultation and so the proposed response focuses on high-level strategic issues.
- 5.2 It is considered appropriate that Brentwood Borough Council express broad support for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's efforts to develop a local plan in accordance with national policy and guidance, and the commitment to continued collaboration through the duty to cooperate on strategic planning matters that affect South Essex.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The Southend New Local Plan Issues & Options consultation is open for comments from Tuesday 5 February to Tuesday 2 April 2019. Local planning authorities have a statutory obligation to allow consultees a minimum of six weeks to respond as part of the plan-making process.

## **7. References to Corporate Plan**

- 7.1 The Southend New Local Plan will have a close relationship with the Brentwood Local Plan, the production of which is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

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- 8.1 None directly arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

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- 8.2 The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other defined local bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. It is currently not a duty to agree, but local planning authorities must make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation before they submit their Local Plan for

examination. The cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary issues.

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 Southend New Local Plan Issues & Options, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (February 2019)

## **10. Appendices to this report**

- a) Appendix A: Response to the Southend New Local Plan 2018-2038 Issues & Options
- b) Appendix B: Southend New Local Plan 2018-2038, Duty to Cooperate Unmet Housing Needs, Letter received 4 March 2019

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