

Council – 10 September, 2018

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 7(1) and are listed in accordance with Standing Order 7(2).

1. GREEN BELT POLICY

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Seconded by Councillor David Burgess-Joyce

Council welcomes Cabinet's decision to finally commence preparation the Local Plan, as first required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Council further notes that Cabinet have identified potential sites for development

Council recognises that there are currently 6,000 empty properties in Wirral and that Peel Holdings have stated that they are on target to provide up to 6,500 homes on Wirral Waters by 2035, with five planning applications submitted since March 2018

Council welcomes and supports the Leader of the Council's resolute commitment to protect Wirral Green Belt when he stated in 2017, ***"I am not prepared to allow our green belt land to be built on. I am resolute about that commitment. It is the jewel in Wirral's crown and greatly valued by our residents."*** (Wirral Globe 16th February 2017)

Council also recognises the valuable role Green Belt provides in halting urban sprawl and protecting our local environment.

Council welcomes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Council also notes and support the draft revised version of the NPPF which states that local authorities should regard development of new buildings on the Green Belt as inappropriate.

Therefore; Council requests the Cabinet to work with empty home owners, Peel Holdings and other developers including the Wirral Growth Company, in order to deliver Wirral's housing needs to ensure that there is no inappropriate development on Green Belt land.

2. THE GREEN BELT OR WIRRAL WATERS.....TIME TO CHOOSE

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

1. Council notes the report to Cabinet of 23 July 2018 – Core Strategy Local Plan – Review of Development Options; in particular, the resolution of Cabinet to authorise consultation in September of sites recommended for housing use.
2. The necessity to consult on sites for housing provision arises from the Government’s ‘Objectively Assessed Need’ (OAN) for housing in Wirral of 803 houses per year.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/household-projections#live-tables>
3. Appendices 5 and 6 of that report relate to a recommendation of potential release of land from the green belt to meet a perceived gap of 4,794 houses identified in table 3 of the report. Council recognises that fundamental questions have been asked by members of the public concerned about the accuracy of the population projections, the over ambitious assumptions about economic growth and the capacity of the sites being considered for release. Taken together with actual historic growth and building rates and the detailed nature of these contributions, Council considers that a detailed review is required of the work undertaken to date in order to justify any assumptions made.
4. Table 3 of that report makes allowance for 1,100 houses to be delivered at ‘Wirral Waters’ during the period of the plan (2018-2033).
5. Since the report was published and Cabinet resolved to begin the consultation, Peel Land and Property Group has published data which indicates that it is able to deliver up to 6,450 new houses within its site during the period of the plan.
6. Council considers that in light of the new data submitted by Peel Land and Property Group, there is no requirement for any release of land for development from the green belt and calls on Cabinet to review its resolution.
7. Council further agrees with Peel that ‘Wirral Waters’ can only be delivered with true and honest collaboration and genuine partnership working. They identify the fact that this involves a ‘whole place’ approach to regeneration including the planning and delivery in the wider underpinning infrastructure.
8. Council therefore calls on Cabinet to work with, rather than against, Peel Land and Property Group to this end.

3. GREEN BELT POLICY

Proposed by Councillor George Davies

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

Council recognises that it has a legal duty to prepare a Local Plan which will guide and determine land use in Wirral over the next fifteen years.

Council notes with concern that the current Conservative Government has set Wirral a target of 12,000 new homes to be built in Wirral by 2035 which will be extremely challenging.

Council recognises the importance of the Borough's Green Belt in providing a vital amenity for Wirral residents and preventing urban sprawl.

Council accepts the conclusion of officers' technical analysis presented to the special meeting of Cabinet on the 23rd July which concluded that there is insufficient brownfield land to accommodate the Government's housing target for Wirral and that there is currently no alternative to reviewing the potential of land in the Green Belt to meet the shortfall in the Borough's housing and land supply if the Council is to submit a sound and legally compliant Local Plan to the Secretary of State.

Council therefore:

1. Reaffirms that developing Green Belt sites must always be a last resort and that every effort should be made to focus development on brownfield sites;
2. Rejects comments made by Tory Cabinet Minister, Liz Truss, as reported in the Daily Mail on the 7th August 2018, that planning laws should be ripped up so that homes can be built in the countryside.
3. Agrees to make representations to the Government against the issuing of top-down housing targets which fail to take into account the housing needs of areas like Wirral;
4. Agrees to continue to make strong representations to owners of brownfield land in the Borough to develop new housing as a matter of urgency and to examine all options available, including the use of compulsory purchase orders, to accelerate development of brownfield sites;
5. Agrees to write to Wirral's MPs to request that they lobby Parliament to introduce legislation to prevent land owners from land-banking;
6. Supports the timetable for submitting a Local Plan as set out in the report to Cabinet on the 23rd July;
7. Notes the process set out for ensuring consultation on Green Belt sites and encourages local residents to take part.