
BROXTOWE LOCAL PLAN – Appendix 10

Publicity, Consultation & Local Plan Process

Introduction

Local Plans are of central importance to the planning system. The review of the Broxtowe Local Plan is intended to ensure that the planning framework for the borough is kept up-to-date in accordance with the statutory requirements. A Local Plan must be prepared in consultation with the local community and a range of other interested parties. The preparation process provides for both formal and informal stages of public consultation. The Borough Council has sought to maximise the opportunity for comment as part of the preparation for the review of the Local Plan.

Strategy Document

The initial stage of the review was a strategy document which was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 February 1997 and published in March 1997. This set out why the review was necessary, the issues to be considered, the general principles to be used in development choices and a likely timetable for the whole local plan review process. It also requested comments from local residents and other interested parties on the directions the reviewed plan should take.

Responses to the strategy document were considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 11 June 1997 and were taken into account in the subsequent preparation of the Consultation Draft document.

Consultation Draft

The Consultation Draft document was considered by a joint meeting of the Policy and Resources and Planning Committees on 23 March 1998 and was published in the following month. The consultation process centred on publicity material and a series of exhibitions and public meetings held throughout the borough during May and June 1998. The travelling exhibition visited twelve different venues and attracted over 2,500 people. In addition, public meetings were held in each of the borough's four main towns, and in total 1,100 people attended these meetings.

The Consultation Draft also received widespread publicity in the local press and around 43,000 copies of a special edition of the Council's newsletter "Broxtowe Matters" were distributed to households and businesses in the borough, giving information about the main issues in the Plan and publicising the exhibition and meetings. Publicity material included a freepost reply questionnaire asking for people's views on key issues. These leaflets were also available separately at exhibitions. In total 654 completed questionnaires were received. In addition to the questionnaires, 2059 letters from individuals were received and twelve petitions were also submitted objecting to particular policy issues and development on specified sites or areas.

Copies of the Consultation Draft including the Written Statement and the Proposals Map were also sent out to 235 organisations representing a wide range of statutory bodies, interest groups, local companies, residents' groups and neighbouring authorities. Meetings were arranged with parish councils and many local organisations to discuss the content of the Consultation Draft Plan, and these meetings all contributed to mutual understanding about the main issues in the Local Plan review.

On 5 October 1998 a joint meeting of Policy and Resources and Planning Committees was held to discuss the responses to the Consultation Draft and agree a selection of sites for further detailed investigation as a preliminary to the preparation of the Deposit Draft. These site choices followed a series of principles which were influenced by the comments received from the public and from organisations in response to the Consultation Draft.

The decision to reduce the number of potential development sites enabled more detailed evaluation and discussions on how development should take place and the provision of associated facilities and infrastructure. The result was a choice of a smaller number of sites to meet development requirements. All policies were also examined in the light of comments received.

Deposit Draft

Following a joint meeting of the Policy and Resources and Planning Committees on 6 December 1999, the Deposit Draft Local Plan was placed 'on deposit' from 17 January to 28 February 2000 at Council Offices and public libraries throughout the borough. During this period members of the public and organisations had the opportunity to make representations of objection or support and nearly 4000 were submitted, principally in the form of objections. A schedule of representations, divided into two documents, covering individuals and organisations, was published in June 2000 and made available for inspection at the deposit points. It was intended to make people aware of the scope of representations made and to encourage those with similar objections on part of the Plan to join together, so as to reduce repetition by objectors at the Public Inquiry.

All objections received to the Deposit Draft were examined to assess whether amendments should be made to the Plan to address issues raised. As well as these objections, revised government guidance and changed circumstances resulted in revisions to the Plan, to form the 'Revised Deposit Draft', a stage introduced through regulations coming into effect in January 2000.

Revised Deposit Draft

The Revised Deposit Draft was approved to be placed on deposit by a joint meeting of the Policy and Resources and Planning and Community Development Committees on 21 November 2000. The deposit period took place between 8 January and 19 February 2001 and again offered the opportunity for the public and organisations to make representations of objection or support, but only to the revisions made to the Plan.

Nearly 2800 representations were received on the Revised Deposit Draft, again principally in the form of objections. These representations were considered by Council on 25 April 2001. A consequent series of Pre – Inquiry Changes was also approved at this meeting.

Pre – Inquiry Changes

The Pre – Inquiry Changes consisted mainly of proposed changes to the housing allocations. They did not form part of the statutory review process, however they were the subject of a further period of public consultation between 8 May and 29 May 2001.

About 240 representations were received, the majority of them expressions of support. These representations were considered by the Cabinet on 17 July 2001 prior to their consideration, together with all other representations, at the public inquiry.

Public Inquiry and Inspector’s Report

The public inquiry took place between 2 October 2001 and 30 April 2002, with the formal sessions ending on 1 March 2002. At the inquiry objectors had the opportunity to put their case orally to an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The inspector also considered all written representations before preparing his report in which recommendations were made as to whether modifications should be made to the Plan. The inspector’s report was issued on 11 June 2003.

Proposed Modifications

The inspector’s report was considered by cabinet on 3 February 2004. As a result, the Council proposed modifications to the Plan in response to the report’s recommendations. These proposed modifications were the subject of public consultation between 17 February and 30 March 2004. The consultation procedure also dealt with the Council’s decisions not to accept some of the inspector’s recommendations.

About 490 representations were received, the majority of them objections to housing sites that had been introduced as a result of the inspector’s recommendations. These representations were considered by the cabinet on 20 July 2004 and by the Council on 28 July 2004. The cabinet and Council decided to make no further modifications.

Adoption

The plan was formally adopted on 2 September 2004.