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Matter 5 – Sustainable Development in Ashfield

Issue

Whether the Local Plan has been positively prepared and whether it is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to sustainable development in the district.

Relevant Policies – S12-S14

Questions

5.1 Are the requirements of the sustainable development in Ashfield policies S12 – S15 justified by appropriate available evidence, having regard to national guidance, and local context?

5.2 Do Policies S12 – S15 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?

5.3 Do Policies S12 – S15 serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of national policy? Is the wording consistent with national policy?

S12: Tackling health Inequalities and facilitating Healthier Lifestyles

e) *Providing good access to health and social care facilities.*

h) *Supporting the provision of community facilities*

i) *Measures to close the gap in educational attainment in Ashfield.*

k) *Supporting the provision of infrastructure to meet health and wellbeing need.*

The Forum is extremely concerned that the Local Plan does not recognise the need to ensure that provision of health and social care facilities in the TSS area is critical. This is despite numerous attempts to engage with the Council to highlight the issue. There has been no provision included to develop health care facilities across TSS area. This is despite the services being under considerable strain resulting in long waits and unmet need. The situation currently is desperate, this is without the additional housing developments proposed (or those development in progress), which means that the situation will only get worse.

Reviewing other Local Plans (for example Bassetlaw), it is clear that their engagement with their local ICBs is more robust with detailed information on what is provided across the district, where there are current gaps and concerns. And what is required to ensure that future development does not overwhelm the primary care health services. Reliance on the ICB using the NHS formula for allocating 106 monies is insufficient to ensure that future services are planned and provided. 3.124. The Policy looks to reduce health inequalities, it tends to focus on lifestyle changes and plans to support health and wellbeing but without giving due regard to facilities.

Part of the TSS area has some of the worse deprivation indices in the country, failure to have full engagement between the Council, ICBs and other interested parties will result in an increase in mortality and morbidity. Lack of action is a failure of the Councils duty of care responsibilities.

Access to quality education for all children from pre-school/nursery to further education/university is paramount to reduce the gap that currently exists in Ashfield, and significantly worse in Stanton Hill, alongside other community provision and support. The Policy fails to provide direction of what is required to achieve this.

S13: Protecting and Enhancing Our Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment

The green gaps between settlements are part of the Neighbourhood Areas character and the Forum is committed to retaining these. They are also identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to be of primary importance. Development within those green gaps will be strenuously resisted. The Forum is concerned that some of these gaps/corridors are under threat in the draft Local Plan, especially in Fackley (between Stanton Hill and Teversal) with proposed allocated sites sited in these gaps. The Council is of the view that in specific cases it is reasonable to allocate sites despite the protective policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

S14: Conserving and Enhancing Our Historic Environment:

The Forum is concerned that little reference is made of the heritage assets in the TSS area, unlike in other areas across the District where considerable emphasis is given and used to add reasons for being unsuitable for development. It is of note that 3.87 and 3.88 states that heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas ... whether designated or not, that have a degree of significance...The Forum has submitted numerous applications for Non-Designated Heritage Assets to be considered by the Council. However, the Council does not have an in-house Conservation Officer and as a result, no applications have been processed. The process feels unfair, and by not considering the assets planning decisions have been made to develop in locations which might have been excluded elsewhere.

The Council has not worked with the Forum as a statutory consultee to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets.