

The report repeatedly argues that the plan-led system itself has been undermined, but it doesn't really explain what fills that gap during the transition.

The report acknowledges that:

- the Local Plan has been overtaken by events and significantly weakened;
- speculative applications are coming forward; and
- national policy is making it increasingly difficult to resist development.

However, .. Planning committees are still expected to determine applications using planning policy.

If the Council accepts that the plan-led system has been significantly weakened, what planning policies can councillors realistically rely upon when determining speculative applications over the next two to three years?

The justification for abandoning the current Local Plan includes:

- local government reorganisation,
- new plan-making regulations,
- future Combined Authority priorities,
- future unitary authorities.

Yet all of these are future events.

Is the Council asking members to abandon a Local Plan because of uncertainty about a future system, while leaving communities exposed to greater uncertainty under the current system?

There is lots of discussion about:

- housing numbers,
- Government changes,
- devolution,
- timing,
- consultation,

but very little discussion about what happens to established policy protections like:

- the Spatial Strategy,

- COM2,
- settlement boundaries,
- countryside protection,
- local gaps,
- hierarchy of settlements,

during this transition.

The report explains why the Local Plan cannot proceed, but it says very little about the continued effectiveness of existing planning policies.

Can the Council explain what weight councillors should now attach to policies such as:

- COM2,
- settlement boundaries
- and the Spatial Strategy

when determining applications? Should residents still regard these policies as meaningful protections?

Councillors are effectively being asked to vote for abandoning years of work.

If this recommendation is approved this evening, are councillors strengthening the plan-led system—or acknowledging that planning decisions will increasingly be driven by speculative applications rather than democratically adopted planning policy?

Residents have spent years participating in Local Plan consultations because they were told this was how development would be planned democratically.

If settlement boundaries, the Spatial Strategy, COM2 and other development plan policies can now be overridden because of housing land supply and national policy, what confidence can the Council give residents that public participation in plan-making still has a meaningful influence on planning decisions, rather than becoming little more than a consultative exercise?