

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEES ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & POLICY AND RESOURCES

DATES 28 JANUARY 1999 & 1 FEBRUARY 1999

SUBJECT OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE MANCHESTER PLAN

JOINT REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To set out the objections that have been received to the proposed alterations to the Manchester Plan and to suggest an appropriate way forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

(i) agree the modifications to the proposed alterations to the Manchester Plan as set out in Appendix 1 in response to objections by the Government Office for the North West and Chapman Warren;

(ii) agree that no further modifications should be made in relation to other objections;

(iii) agree that the Prison Service should be informed that the issues regarding future prison sites within Greater Manchester are ones which need to be looked at in a wider context at a regional or sub-regional level and that, given the provision already made within Manchester and which will be made at the new prison on the former Agecroft Colliery site in Salford, any further provision should be made in other localities.

Financial Consequences for the Revenue and Capital Budgets

There are implications for the revenue budget in respect of a public inquiry into objections to the proposed alterations to the Plan, and for the printing of revisions to the Plan.

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

Objections to the deposited proposed alterations to the Manchester Plan - December 1998.

Wards Affected

All wards

Implications for:

Anti-Poverty
No

Equal Opportunities
No

Environment
Yes

Employment
No

INTRODUCTION

1. In November 1998, nine alterations to the Manchester Plan were placed 'on deposit' for public inspection for the statutory six week period. They comprised the following:

ALT1. Regeneration Areas - to replace the Part 1 chapter on Urban Renewal Areas including a revised Objective R1 and Policy R1.1 in order to bring the plan up to date;

ALT2. Hierarchy of Road Users - a new Part 1 Policy to give expression to the Council's agreed approach in relation to the Hierarchy of Road Users;

ALT3. Guide to Development in Manchester - a new development control policy to give expression to the 'Guide to Development in Manchester' which has been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance;

ALT4. Metrolink - a revision to Policy T1.8 and the Proposals Maps to bring the Plan up to date as regards the lines of approved extensions to the Metrolink network;

ALT5. Hyde Road - revisions to policies T2.2, GO10 and AB10 and the Proposals Maps to reflect the new approach agreed by the Council to the improvement of Hyde Road;

ALT6. Special Needs and Supported Housing - a new Objective, Part 1 Policy and development control policies and changes to existing policies DC2 and DC4 to incorporate into the Plan an approach to dealing with planning applications for these uses previously agreed by the Council;

ALT7. Large Buildings of Historic and/or Architectural Interest - a new development control policy previously agreed by the Council to assist with dealing with planning applications affecting large buildings of historic and/or architectural interest in extensive grounds;

ALT8. The site of the former Spinners Public House, Rolls Crescent, Hulme - an addition to Policy HU11 which identifies sites in Hulme for mixed business, commercial and residential uses;

ALT9. The restoration and aftercare of waste disposal sites - an addition to Policy DC27.4 to provide for conditions being imposed for the restoration and aftercare of waste disposal sites.

2. A small number of objections have been received to three of these alterations - ALT3, ALT6 and ALT7. The remaining six have been adopted. The objections are set out below. In addition, several objections were received into matters which were outside the scope of the alterations and these have not been accepted as being duly made. Several representations have also been made on other issues to do with possible future alterations to the Plan.

3. Unless agreement can be reached with the objectors in respect of the duly made objections a public inquiry will be necessary. This will involve an Inspector being appointed by the Secretary of State who will consider the objections either via written representations or orally at an inquiry sitting. He will then report to the Council and recommend whether or not changes should be made to the alterations. Any amendments which the Council may wish to make to the proposed alterations in response to the objections will have to be advertised if they involve a material change and these in turn will be open to objection.

OBJECTIONS TO ALTERATION 3 - GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT IN MANCHESTER

4. There have been three objections to this alteration which introduces a new development control policy to give expression to the 'Guide to Development in Manchester':

(i) **Government Office for the North West (GONW)** - The objection is of a technical nature with GONW wishing to see a strengthening of the wording and the reference to SPG moved from the policy to the reasoned justification. An alternative form of words has been provisionally agreed following a meeting with GONW.

(ii) **Chapman Warren, acting for EMR Limited** - They also wish to see the reference to SPG removed from the policy. They also wish to see an addition to the reasoned justification to explain that SPG does not have the same weight as policies in an adopted development plan.

(iii) **Manchester Civic Society** - The objection relates to the Civic Society's view that the Manchester Plan, and the proposed alterations to it, do not provide proper guidance on good design of buildings and do not pay sufficient heed to the advice in PPG1. It is the Civic Society's opinion that a new city wide design policy is required which closely follows the recommendations of PPG1.

Views of the Director

5. *The objections by GONW and Chapman Warren are of a technical nature and relate to advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG12. A meeting has taken place with GONW and minor changes which should overcome these objections have been provisionally agreed. These involve the use of the word 'require' rather than 'encourage' in relation to the implementation of this policy and moving the reference to SPG to the start of the reasoned justification. This revised wording is set out in Appendix 1. As these amendments would strengthen the policy and its application to new proposals, Members are recommended to approve these changes. The Director does not, however, feel that it is necessary to add a reference in the reasoned justification to the status of SPG as suggested by Chapman Warren. Not only is this unnecessary in terms of the role of a development plan, it could have the effect of underplaying the importance of the 'Guide to Development in Manchester'.*

6. *The thrust of the objection by Manchester Civic Society appears to relate to the lack of a policy to provide guidance on the design of buildings. Their objection reflects a difference in approach in how best to reflect the recommendations of PPG1 in the Plan. The currently proposed alteration introduces the Guide as a set of principles to be applied across the City. The Civic Society appear to be seeking more detailed and area specific, or site specific, design policies. The Director believes this approach would be too prescriptive and go beyond the advice contained in PPG1 and would not be practical in a city of the size of Manchester with its diversity of built environment.*

7. *Apart from the changes to meet the GONW objection and part of the Chapman Warren objection, the Director does not feel that any further changes to ALT3 are necessary.*

OBJECTION TO ALT6 - SPECIAL NEEDS AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

8. Only one objection has been received to this alteration which seeks to incorporate into the Manchester Plan the Council's agreed approach to dealing with planning applications for special needs and supported housing:

(i) **GONW** - Again this is a technical objection and it relates to the two new development control policies which are proposed in this alteration. GONW wish to see the words 'have regard to' replaced by a more specific reference to how the policy will be implemented.

Views of the Director

9. *Minor revisions to the wording of these policies have been provisionally agreed with GONW in order to overcome this objection and are included in Appendix 1. Members are recommended to approve these changes.*

OBJECTIONS TO ALT7 - LARGE BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

10. Four objections have been received to this alteration which seeks to introduce into the Manchester Plan a new development control policy previously agreed by the Council to assist with the consideration of planning applications affecting large buildings of historic and/or architectural interest in extensive grounds:

(i) **St Quintin** - Their view is that the policy is confusing, ambiguous and unworkable. They think that the appropriate vehicle for protecting any buildings which the Council consider to be of historic and/or architectural character is to include a development control policy which aims to safeguard their contribution to the local scene and that it should be accompanied by an appropriate list of the buildings to which the policy applies. In the absence of such a local list they maintain that ALT7 should be deleted in its entirety.

(ii) **Drivers Jonas** - They are concerned that the policy will introduce uncertainty and subjectivity into the decision making process and that if a building is not included in a statutory list or conservation area, or listed as a building of local architectural importance, there is a presumption that it does not have such architectural or historic interest to merit its protection on this ground alone.

(iii) **Manchester Civic Society** - Whilst generally welcoming the introduction of the proposed policy the Civic Society objects to some of the wording which it feels unnecessarily restricts the scope of the policy. The Civic Society wish to see the scope of the policy extended to cover all buildings where demolition would have a significant impact on visual amenity.

(iv) **GONW** - Another technical objection where GONW wish to see the words 'have regard to' replaced by a more specific reference to how the policy will be implemented.

Views of the Director

11. *A minor wording change has been provisionally agreed with GONW and is contained in Appendix 1. Members are recommended to approve this change.*

12. *The issue of a local list of buildings as suggested by St. Quintin was considered by the Director when the policy was originally approved by Environmental Planning Committee in 1997 and again when reporting in September 1998 on the outcome of consultation on the proposed alterations. The main reason for rejecting the idea was that buildings on a local list would be subject to normal development control procedures with their demolition being an option open to owners or potential developers without the Council being able to intervene. In addition, the staff resource costs of assembling such a list for the whole of the City and undertaking appropriate consultations with other interested parties would be prohibitive. The policy as drafted would enable important buildings to be identified at the time development proposals are brought to the attention of the Council and introduces clearly the approach that will be followed. The Director does not agree with the view of Drivers Jonas about the subjectivity and legitimacy of the policy and would particularly point out that a local list, which they appear to be suggesting, would itself be based on largely subjective assessments. It should be noted that GONW are content to see such a policy included.*

13. *Manchester Civic Society wish to extend the scope of this policy to cover all buildings where demolition would have a significant impact on visual amenity. The policy was originally conceived as a response to the continuing pressure, especially in South Manchester, for the redevelopment of large houses in their own grounds which have a particular value in respect of the character of the surrounding area. The Director feels that the Civic Society's suggested amendments would push too far in the direction of attempting to introduce planning controls on demolition of buildings in cases where the Government has deliberately not introduced controls for local planning authorities. Also importantly, and unlike the proposed policy ALT7, the Civic Society has not identified cases, or categories of cases, where the lack of a policy is causing particular problems.*

14. *In the light of the above, the Director is not suggesting any amendments to ALT7 apart from the changes in respect of the objection from GONW.*

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

15. A number of representations have been received which do not constitute formal objections to the alterations. They comprise the following:

(i) **Edmund Kirby** - This representation has been made on behalf of house builders who are active in South Manchester and relates to parking provision and standards within new development. It makes the case for a reduction in parking standards and therefore the amount of land required to provide in-curtilage car parking in order to increase densities and ensure that urban areas provide for future housing requirements without the need to encroach onto greenfield or greenbelt land. It is suggested that parking provision could be reduced to one space per dwelling or that parking requirements in new developments be examined case by case in relation to the likely characteristics of the occupants, the availability of public transport and other criteria. It is felt that the intention set out in the 'Guide to Development in Manchester' to achieve a density of 170 bed spaces per hectare may well be frustrated by the absence of a policy on parking provision.

Views of the Director

16. *The issues raised are ones which will merit consideration in the light of revisions to Regional Planning Guidance which will inform house-building requirements in Manchester which will need to be reflected in the Manchester Plan. The current Supplementary Planning Guidance in the 'Guide to Development In Manchester' seeks to promote a sufficient density to sustain and enliven housing areas and to create a sufficiently urban form. If there is a need to revise approaches to parking in housing developments in order to support these aims this can be done either by alterations to the Manchester Plan or to SPG.*

(ii) **HM Prison Service** - A letter has been received from HM Prison Service which, while not raising any objections to the proposed alterations, draws the Council's attention to the advice issued to local planning authorities in February 1998 by the Secretary of State in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Environment Circular 03/98. Paragraph 4 of the Circular indicates that the Secretary of State expects local planning authorities and the Prison Service to work together to allocate land in local or unitary development plans for new prison sites where there is a need.

Paragraph 9 of the Circular indicates that in identifying a potential prison site the Prison Service has to take account of local and regional requirements for additional prison places, the court catchment area served and the relationship of the site to nearby population centres. The courts which serve the Greater Manchester Area commit to custody around 4000 prisoners a year, many of whom have to be held in prisons outside the area. HMP Manchester is designed to house 950 prisoners and currently holds 1100. A new prison is under construction on the site of

