

Breckland Local Plan Examination

Matter 2:

The Vision and Strategic Objectives

Breckland District Council

Hearing Statement

March 2018



2.1 Is the vision justified and consistent with national policy?

1. The vision has been derived from the challenges, issues, opportunities and aspirations expressed by neighbourhoods, businesses and local organisations through stakeholder consultation. The Strategic Vision aims to articulate where the Council wishes to be by the end of the plan period, 2036.
2. National guidance promotes local plans which reflect a collective vision incorporating priorities from neighbourhoods, businesses and local organisations which reflect the strategic policies of the area. The starting point for this vision was informed by Breckland Council's Corporate Plan 2015¹, which set out the following priorities:
 - Supporting Breckland to develop and thrive;
 - Providing the right services, at the right time and in the right way;
 - Developing the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth; and
 - Enabling stronger, more independent communities.
3. The strategic vision was developed over the course of consultation on the emerging Local Plan. Question 1 of the Issues and Options Consultation (LP/S/6) asked 'what do you think Sustainable Development means for Breckland?' question 2 asked 'Do you have any views which should be included in our vision? If so, how do you think Breckland should develop?' Consultation responses, as summarised on page 16 of the Preferred Directions document (LP/S/8), were then used to inform and develop the vision in Preferred Directions Part 1 Policies (LP/S/8) which formed the final Strategic Vision presented in the Local Plan Regulation 19 Pre-submission Publication (LP/S/1). The vision has been developed over three consultation periods and is reflective of the priorities of neighbourhoods, business and local organisations, in conformity with national policy and guidance.
4. The vision sets out that "Breckland's settlements and the wider rural area will be developed in a sustainable manner appropriate for the rural nature of the District". It is clear that residential development will be balanced throughout the district, but directed to the most sustainable locations (those with co-ordinated transport provision, good access to services, community facilities and open space). Employment will be directed towards the most sustainable locations to assist in providing the right balance between the rural

¹ Breckland Council Corporate Plan (2015) https://www.breckland.gov.uk/media/1952/Corporate-Plan-2015-2019/pdf/corporate_plan_june_2015

economy and the wider district. This approach is in conformity with the NPPF's definition of sustainable development by helping to build a strong, competitive economy, supporting a prosperous rural economy and promoting sustainable transport.

5. The vision respects Breckland's rural nature by continuing to cherish and protect the natural and built assets which make the district unique. The natural and built environment is vital to the rural economy in terms of encouraging visitors and investment to the area. This is in conformity with sections 3, 11 and 12 of the NPPF.
6. Breckland's Strategic Vision is considered to be justified and consistent with national policy. The vision seeks to achieve sustainable development throughout the district and scores positively overall in the Pre-Submission Sustainability Appraisal (LP/S/3).

2.2 Are the strategic objectives justified and consistent with national policy?

7. The Strategic Objectives seek to facilitate delivery of the District's strategic priorities which reflect the requirements of the NPPF as well as local aspiration.
8. Option 1 of the Issues and Options consultation (LP/S/6) set out 9 proposed strategic objectives, which were based on the adopted Core Strategy and grouped under the headings Social, Economic and Environmental. Question 3 of this consultation document asks the following: 'do you think these objectives are still relevant? If not, please explain why and how you think they could be improved.' Consultation responses were then used to inform and develop the objectives in Preferred Directions Part 1 Policies (LP/S/8) and then finally in the Local Plan Regulation 19 Pre-submission Publication (LP/S/1). Feedback from the consultation led to the creation of a total of 18 objectives on the following areas: Development in the Right Place; Meeting the Housing Need; a Strong Economy; a Rich Environment; and Thriving Communities. The additional objectives conform to the Social, Economic the Environmental principles of sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF, and support Breckland's Strategic Vision.
9. The strategic objectives under the headings 'Development in the Right Place' and 'Meeting the Housing Need' are in conformity with Section 6 of the NPPF. These objectives seek to boost housing supply and deliver a wide choice of high quality homes across the District, focusing development into areas where services are available and where facilities can be supported. The objectives, set out under the heading 'A Strong

Economy', are in conformity with Section 1 of the NPPF, seeking to promote and support economic growth in sustainable and accessible locations in a flexible manner and developing the local economy and meeting local employment needs. Objectives included under the heading 'A Rich Environment' are in conformity with Sections 11 and 12 of the NPPF, seeking to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment. Finally, objectives set out under 'Thriving Communities' are in conformity with Sections 8 and 3 of the NPPF.

10. Breckland's Strategic Objectives are considered to be justified and consistent with national policy. The 18 strategic objectives aim to implement and deliver Breckland's Strategic Vision and are set in the context of national planning policy.