

## **RUGBY LOCAL PLAN REVIEW : PREFERRED OPTIONS**

### **RESPONSE BY BRANDON AND BRETTFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Brandon & Bretford Parish Council welcomes the review of the Rugby Local Plan in order that it can provide a robust basis to shape the future growth of the Borough alongside protecting and enhancing the character of the town of Rugby and the many villages including those of Brandon & Bretford.

The Parish Council has demonstrated its responsibility to plan for the local community by producing the Brandon & Bretford Neighbourhood Plan which was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Neighbourhood Plan in the Borough to be made in June 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan played an important role in the planning appeal involving Brandon Stadium, with the Inspector giving significant weight to Policy LF1 in the Neighbourhood Plan which gives protection to community facilities in the Parish including Brandon Stadium.

Whilst the Parish Council supports the intention to review the current Rugby Local Plan, it is disappointed that the Regulation 18 Preferred Options has been drafted and published for consultation without engaging with Parish Councils in the Borough to ensure that emerging policies respect the needs of local communities as well as those of the Borough as a whole. In the preparation of the adopted Local Plan, there was considerable early engagement with local communities in advance of drafting the Local Plan, which helped to ensure that local views would be understood and taken into account. Neighbourhood Plans, such as the one for Brandon and Bretford, will need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with the emerging Rugby Local Plan review, which is a process that would greatly benefit from early engagement with the Borough Council on the Local Plan.

Alongside the concern regarding the lack of engagement with local communities, the Parish Council is concerned that the Preferred Options document that is being consulted upon, has been drafted prior to the

evidence base being complete. The publication of the latest revision to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024, cannot have been fully taken into account in drafting the policies set out in the Preferred Options Local Plan, because important guidance on matters such as Green Belt policy applied to Plan preparation, were only published after the Preferred Options had been drafted. It is noted that a Green Belt Contribution Study, to reflect the Government's updated policy and guidance on Green Belts, is still being prepared as is the Strategic Transportation Assessment, with both of these studies being extremely significant elements to the review of the Local Plan. Government advice on Local Plan formulation is clear that *evidence needs to inform what is in the Plan to shape development rather than it being gathered retrospectively.*

Accordingly, whilst the Parish Council supports the Borough Council's review of the adopted Local Plan, it considers that the Preferred Options consultation should not have been commenced until proper engagement had taken place with Parish Councils in the Borough and following the publication of important evidence relating to Green Belt and transport.

The Parish Council therefore wishes to reserve its judgement on the Regulation 18 document pending the completion of the missing elements of the evidence base and trusts that, once these have been completed, the Borough Council will engage effectively with all of the constituent Parish Councils prior to progressing the Local Plan review.