

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

19 June 2017

THE COUNCIL (SPECIAL)

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Chichester Local Plan Review: Timetable and Issues and Options Consultation

1. Contacts

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2. Executive Summary

This report concerns the Chichester Local Plan Review which will replace the existing Chichester Local Plan and provide an updated planning framework for the period to 2034. The report has two aims.

Firstly to agree a formal timetable for the main stages in the Local Plan Review process so that the key dates can be added to the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Secondly to seek approval to undertake a public consultation on Issues and Options as the first major stage of the Local Plan Review. The published consultation documents will include a questionnaire which will seek views on what should be included in the development strategy, which locations may be suitable for development, and what planning policies are required to deliver the strategy. It is intended to undertake the consultation over a six-week period from 22 June 2017 to 3 August 2017.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That the Cabinet recommends to the Council:

3.1.1. That the published Local Development Scheme 2017-2020 be amended by adding the key dates for the Local Plan Review set out in paragraph 6.3 of this report;

3.1.2. That the Local Plan Review Issues and Options documents presented as appendices to this report be approved for a six-week period of public consultation from 22 June to 3 August 2017; and

3.1.3 That the Head of Planning Services be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning Services, to make minor amendments to the consultation documents prior to their publication.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council has committed to reviewing the current *Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029* within five years of adoption (ie no later than July 2020) with the aim to ensure that the area's identified housing needs are met. It is intended that the new Local Plan will have an end date of 2034. The requirement to plan for additional housing means that the development strategy set out in the current Local Plan will need to be reviewed and updated, as will the policies to deliver supporting infrastructure and facilities. The Local Plan Review will also provide an opportunity to review other policies in the current Plan to assess whether any amendments or additions are needed.
- 4.2 The work to develop the evidence base for the Local Plan Review is at an early stage. Several key studies are now underway, including the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will provide a detailed analysis of all potential development sites across the Plan area and the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), which will quantify future housing and employment requirements and provide more information on the range of needs that should be planned for. However, at this stage no decisions have been made about the scope of the Local Plan Review or which sites and locations should be allocated for new development.
- 4.3 A proposed timetable for the Local Plan Review process is set out at paragraph 6.3 of this report. The first main stage of the Local Plan Review will be an Issues and Options consultation exercise, which it is proposed will be undertaken over a six week period starting on 22 June 2017. This report seeks the Council's approval for both the Local Plan Review timetable and the proposed Issues and Options consultation.
- 4.4 The proposed Local Plan Review timetable and draft Issues and Options consultation documents were presented to the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel for discussion at its meeting on 3 May 2017. In response to the comments received, amendments have been made to the consultation documents – see para 6.9 below.

5. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 5.1 The agreement of a Local Plan Review timetable will enable the Council to publish a timeline showing the key stages and milestones in the Local Plan process that will enable Plan adoption by 2020.

- 5.2 The Issues and Options consultation will enable the Council to obtain views and information from a wide range of stakeholders which will help inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review strategy and policies.

6. Proposal

Local Plan Review timetable

- 6.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out its programme and timetable for producing planning policy documents over a rolling three year timeframe. An updated LDS for the period 2017-2020 was approved by the Council on 7 February 2017 and has since been published on the Council's website. However, at the time of the 7 February report, there was uncertainty about the timetable for strategic planning work to be undertaken by the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton (CWS&GB) authorities to prepare a new Local Strategic Statement (LSS3). Therefore, it was agreed that the timetable for the Local Plan Review in the LDS should include proposed dates for the Issues and Options consultation, but leave the timetabling of later stages of the Plan Review process under review.
- 6.2 Due to delays in the Local Plan examinations underway for several of the other CWS&GB authorities, it is now clear that work to prepare LSS3 will not commence until 2018 at the earliest. Therefore, the Local Plan Review will need to run ahead of the LSS3 process in order to ensure that the new Plan is adopted within 5 years (ie by 2020).
- 6.3 A proposed timetable for the Local Plan Review, setting out proposed dates for the key milestones in the Review process is presented below.

| <i>Key milestones</i> | <i>Dates</i> |
|---|--|
| Consultation on Issues & Options | June - August 2017 (6 weeks) |
| Approval of Preferred Approach Development Plan Document for consultation | Cabinet – Jan 2018 Council – Jan 2018 |
| Consultation on Preferred Approach (Reg 18) | Feb - Mar 2018 |
| Approval of Statutory Public Consultation DPD for consultation (Pre-Submission) | Cabinet – July 2018 Council – July 2018 |
| Statutory Public Consultation document (Reg 19) (Pre-Submission) | July – Aug 2018 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | October 2018 |
| Examination hearings | February 2019 |
| Adoption of Local Plan Review | November 2019 |

- 6.4 Subject to the Council agreeing this timetable, it is proposed to add these dates to the 'Local Plan Review' section in the published LDS 2017-2020.

Issues and Options consultation

- 6.5 The Issues and Options consultation will form the first main stage of the Local Plan Review. Its purpose will be to obtain comments and information that will help the Council to develop a draft strategy and policies. It is proposed to publish a consultation questionnaire and several supporting documents, appended to this report as follows:

- Appendix 1 – Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation document including questionnaire
- Appendix 2 – Initial Sustainability Appraisal of possible development locations
- Appendix 3 – Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Issues and Evidence report.

- 6.6 The main focus of the consultation will be the questionnaire (appendix 1), which seeks views and comments on the general approach that should be taken to identifying locations for further development, and the key factors that need to be taken into consideration in determining where new development should be located and how it should be planned and delivered. Within the questionnaire, the following questions are particularly relevant in helping to inform the overall development strategy that should be included in the new Local Plan:

- Q9 asks for views on the relative weight and importance that should be given to different policy considerations in preparing the new Local Plan strategy.
- Q11 seeks views on a number of broad locations within the Local Plan area that may have potential for larger scale strategic development involving 500 or more dwellings supported by local community facilities (and possibly employment uses). These are locations which are reasonably accessible and have a significant area of land which appears free from absolute development constraints (subject to further detailed investigation). In most cases, strategic developments would involve a single large site, but some of the locations could potentially include more than one site with shared facilities.
- Q14 seeks views on the amount of medium and small scale housing development that should be planned for in the different settlements throughout the Plan area.
- Q13 and Q16 ask for views on how far the Local Plan should go in identifying and allocating sites, and how much should be left for neighbourhood plans or a subsequent site allocation plan.

- 6.7 In addition to the questions highlighted above, the consultation document includes questions on a number of other areas including:

- The Vision and Objectives for the Local Plan Review.

- The settlement hierarchy and role of different settlements in terms of planning for new development and facilities.
- Policies for the economy and employment, including how planning policies can be used to promote economic growth and/or provide for a wider range of employment opportunities.
- Policies for housing and neighbourhoods, and how these may need to be changed to reflect recent and proposed changes in national policy for housing (e.g. to promote starter homes and self-build homes).
- Policies for transport and access, the environment, and health and well-being.
- The approach to planning for infrastructure provision.

6.8 Council officers have undertaken an initial sustainability appraisal of the locations under consideration for development in Q11 and Q14 (appendix 2). In addition, consultants AECOM have prepared a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Issues and Evidence Base report (appendix 3) which will provide the basis for the HRA work to be carried out as part of the Local Plan Review process. Both the sustainability appraisal and HRA report will be published alongside the consultation document.

6.9 Following the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel meeting on 3 May 2017, some amendments and additions have been made to the consultation documents as summarised below.

Amendments to Issues and Options Consultation Document and Questionnaire (Appendix 1)

- Addition of a Foreword by Councillor Mrs Susan Taylor.
- Amendments to Q9 (spatial policy principles) – following the Panel’s comments, the question has been simplified and now asks respondents to select their ‘top 3’ priorities in terms of the spatial principles listed.
- The title of the first pie chart in the ‘Possible Strategy Options’ section has been amended to read ‘Location of housing 2011’.
- Amendments to Q11 (locations with potential for 500+ dwellings) - a map has been added showing the broad locations under consideration and the wording has been altered to “large scale (‘strategic’) development” to reflect the fact that the term ‘strategic’ is being used here as a generic description. The suggested location South of Chichester (east of Stockbridge) has been removed as an option for development since all of the potential land immediately south of the A27 between the Chichester Canal and the B2145 Selsey road is already subject to planning permission for gravel extraction (which is now being implemented) with provision for future restoration to lakes and wetland habitat.
- Addition of ‘Sidlesham’ as an option in Q14 (settlements/locations that may be suitable for development of up to 500 dwellings). Both the Sustainability Appraisal (appendix 2) and HRA Report (appendix 3) have been updated to reflect the inclusion of Sidlesham. It should be noted that Sidlesham is not currently identified as a service village or settlement. Issues around the provision of infrastructure would need to be addressed.

Amendments to Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2)

- Some amendments to the commentary and scoring against assessment criteria for the locations in Q11 and Q14 reflecting comments from members and officers in the Planning Policy team.
- 6.10 Prior to publication, the questionnaire in appendix 1 will be transferred into 'Objective', an online consultation interface. The questionnaire and supporting documents will be published on the Council's website. Hard copies of the consultation documents will also be available at the Council offices and public libraries. The consultation is expected to attract comments from parish councils, neighbouring local authorities, statutory bodies, key infrastructure providers, developers and site promoters, and local residents. A consultation strategy and communication strategy have been developed in liaison with the Council's Public Relations and Community Engagement teams and in line with the requirements set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

7. Alternatives Considered

- 7.1 The current *Chichester Local Plan Key Policies 2014-2029* includes an explicit commitment that the Council will review the Local Plan within five years with the aim to ensure that objectively assessed housing needs (OAN) are met. Should the Council decide not to proceed with the Local Plan Review, the existing Local Plan would become out of date in July 2020. After that date, the planning weight that would be attached to policies in the current Plan would reduce and the general planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would take precedence, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Without an up-to-date plan, the Council would find it harder to control where development would take place and this would be left solely to the development management process. It would also become harder to manage the provision of infrastructure alongside new development. Therefore it is not considered a viable alternative not to proceed with a Local Plan Review at this stage.
- 7.2 The statutory regulations covering preparation of Local Plans allow local planning authorities considerable flexibility in how to carry out the early stages of plan production, although the level of consultation and publicity must be in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Chichester SCI (which is currently being updated) commits the Council to involve people as early as possible, to notify and work with groups, organisations and residents, and to consider issues and alternatives.
- 7.3 Alternatives that have been considered to meet these requirements included undertaking more focused consultation with specific groups of stakeholders rather than publishing a general consultation paper. Alternatively the consultation could have covered a more limited range of questions (e.g. only including questions relating to strategy options or not including questions about potential development locations). However, it is considered that publishing a wide-ranging Issues and Options questionnaire will be more

helpful in providing evidence for the Local Plan Review and will best meet the objectives of the SCI. In particular, the Issues and Options consultation exercise will maximise the opportunity for all interested persons and organisations to submit views, comments and relevant information at an early stage before the Plan strategy and policies are developed.

8. Resource and Legal Implications

- 8.1 Preparation of a Local Plan is subject to a statutory process and carries considerable resource implications in terms of cost and staff time. The Local Plan Review is part of the Planning Policy team's work programme. A project budget of £800,000 has been agreed by Council in July 2016 to cover commissioning the evidence base and funding the planning inspector and programme officer costs associated with the Local Plan examination. A need for additional staff resources has been identified (a Principal Officer and a Planning Policy Officer). Funds available from the original project budget for the recently adopted Local Plan are sufficient to finance the additional staff resources this financial year, before they are considered as part of the base budget through the annual budget setting process.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The Issues and Options questionnaire and supporting documents have been prepared with input from officers in other relevant services within the Council. An officer level Local Plan Review Group has been set up to meet and discuss the Plan Review process in order to ensure input and 'buy-in' to the Local Plan process from all services within the Council. In addition, a Member workshop was held on 4 April at which Planning officers outlined the broad direction of the Issues and Options consultation. The draft consultation documents were presented to the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel on 3 May and have been amended to take account of the Panel's comments as set out in paragraph 6.9 above.

10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 10.1 The Local Plan Review is likely to have significant implications for many communities in the Local Plan area. The purpose of the Review is to identify additional sites and locations to accommodate new housing and other development, and this will need to be supported by new or improved infrastructure and facilities. Preparation of the Local Plan Review will need to be handled sensitively, recognising that there may be local opposition to some proposals, particularly in areas where new development is proposed.
- 10.2 The Council has committed to working with parish councils to ascertain how they wish to plan for new development. The Issues and Options document consultation includes questions on what approach should be used to identify sites and bring forward development - whether this should primarily be Council-led through the Local Plan Review, or whether sites should be identified by parish councils reviewing or making new neighbourhood plans.

11. Other Implications

| Are there any implications for the following? | | |
|---|-----|----|
| | Yes | No |
| Crime and Disorder The NPPF requires that local plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, and that planning policies should ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. | ✓ | |
| Climate Change The NPPF identifies addressing climate change as one of the core land use planning principles which should underpin plan-making. To be found sound, Local Plans will need to reflect this principle and to enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. This includes requirements for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the <i>Climate Change Act 2008</i> , and to co-operate to deliver strategic priorities which include climate change. In addition to the NPPF requirement, there is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts. This complements the sustainable development duty on plan-makers and the expectation that neighbourhood plans will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. | ✓ | |
| Human Rights and Equality Impact The <i>Equality Act 2010</i> sets statutory duties on public bodies such as local authorities with regard to promoting equality and reducing inequalities of outcome. To ensure that the statutory requirements are achieved, it is intended to undertake and publish an equality impact assessment (EIA) which will be published as one of the supporting documents when the Local Plan Review is submitted to the Secretary of State for formal examination. | ✓ | |
| Safeguarding | | ✓ |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Other (please specify) | | ✓ |
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12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Document and Questionnaire
- 12.2 Appendix 2 – Local Plan Review Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal
- 12.3 Appendix 3 – Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Issues and Evidence Report

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 None.