

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Local Plan Review – Project Initiation Document

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Local Plan Review Project Initiation Document (appended to this report) be approved.**
- 2.2. That the Council be recommended to approve a total budget of £800,000 to be allocated from reserves to fund the Local Plan Review.**
- 2.3. That Cabinet notes that from 2017/18, the annual draft revenue budget will contain a base budget contribution to reserves of £160,000 to fund future reviews of the local plan.**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Local Plan Review Initial Project Proposal Document was approved at Cabinet on 9 February 2016. This Project Initiation Document (PID) provides further information and detail to help define the project.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. The Local Plan Review will deliver the following outcomes:
 - (a) The amount of housing, employment and retail development to be delivered in the plan area is identified.
 - (b) The strategy for the location of new development means that development is provided in the most sustainable way.
 - (c) Land is identified to ensure that the amount of housing proposed (including different types of housing) can be delivered in the plan area.

- (d) Land is identified to ensure that the amount of employment and retail development can be delivered in the plan area.
 - (e) Policies are provided to ensure that development is undertaken to a high standard and environmental impacts are mitigated.
 - (f) The plan-led approach to development ensures that infrastructure to support that development can be provided in a timely and coordinated way.
- 4.2. The outcomes will be monitored through the annual Authority's Monitoring Report. Until the Local Plan is itself finalised it will not be possible to quantify these outcomes.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. An up to date Local Plan is the primary consideration for the determination of planning applications. The current Local Plan was adopted in 2015, but the Planning Inspector who conducted the examination into the soundness of that plan indicated that it could only be found sound and therefore be adopted if it was subject to an early review to be completed within five years.
- 5.2. That the Local Plan is reviewed in accordance with the PID (see Appendix). The Local Plan Review will need to make difficult decisions about the amount and location of development. The evidence base and the identification of constraints will help inform those decisions. Of particular relevance will be the need to work with other planning authorities under the Duty to Cooperate and also the final scheme selected by the Secretary of State for Transport for the improvements to the A27 Chichester Bypass.
- 5.3. There are obvious benefits for private land owners in terms of the sites selected for development. No doubt some communities close to sites allocated for development will be concerned about the amount and location of development that may be proposed to be allocated within or close to their areas through the Local Plan Review. The aim for the Council is to seek to apply a rational and consistent methodology to site selection so that the most sustainable sites are chosen using the sustainability appraisal.
- 5.4. The project plan, with key approval stages, is set out in section 10 of the PID. In order to deliver the Review additional resources amounting to £800,000 are proposed as detailed in Section 7 of the PID.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1. Should the Council decide not to proceed with the Local Plan Review, the existing Local Plan would become out of date in July 2020. This means that the weight to be attached to policies in the Plan would be reduced and that policies within the NPPF including the presumption in favour of sustainable development would take precedence. The Council would lose control over decisions about where development would take place and this would be left solely to the development management process. It would become increasingly difficult to secure investment in the types of development and in locations identified by the Council and to manage the provision of infrastructure alongside new

development. It would also become increasingly difficult to protect unallocated land from development.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1. Section 7 of the PID sets out the estimated costs for the Local Plan Review. Much of the cost of the Local Plan Review will be the staff costs of the planning policy team, which are revenue costs and included within the existing base budget. However, in addition there are a number of one-off costs that are not part of the existing budget and for production of the now adopted Local Plan were included in a specific capital budget. The PID estimates the additional cost of the Local Plan Review as £785,000. A small amount of contingency has been included in the recommended budget allocation of £800,000. This will deliver the Local Plan Review over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. It is further proposed, in accordance with the Council's agreed financial principles, that future reviews will be funded by setting aside £160,000 per year from the base budget, so that this recurring process is not a continual call against reserves.
- 7.2. Whilst estimated costs have been identified, it is only when the full procurement process is undertaken with a detailed brief and quotes or tenders are received that these costs will be refined. Where possible work will be undertaken in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and if costs cannot be shared then methodologies should enable comparison across local authority boundaries.
- 7.3. The Local Plan Review will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Planning Acts and government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.4. The existing Planning Policy Team will carry out the Local Plan Review, with assistance from other staff referred to in section 7.1 of the PID.
- 7.5. The Council will continue to use the 'Objective' bespoke software to publish and consult on Local Plan documents, for which an annual licence fee is payable.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. All staff involved in the project have been consulted on the PID. Elected members have agreed to the need for an early review of the Local Plan when approving modifications to, and then final adoption of, the Local Plan. No formal consultation has taken place with other Councils, although there will be a need to engage with the content of the Local Plan Review under the Duty to Cooperate.
- 8.2. The Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel (DPIP) has considered the PID and endorsed its contents for consideration by Cabinet. DPIP also agreed that Council reserves and base funding should be used to fund the review. The recommendations at 2.2 and 2.3 reflect further consultation with the Head of Finance and Governance following the meeting of DPIP.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1. There will be local communities that will be concerned about the impact of further development. However, the Council should ensure that the choices made are transparent and capable of withstanding scrutiny through the examination process. Furthermore, through implementing a plan-led process the Council will be more likely to be able to defend other sites from speculative market-led proposals for development.
- 9.2. There is a risk that the Local Plan will not be found sound and capable of adoption. The evidence base gathering and consultation phases of plan-making are important to help mitigate those risks, particularly with respect to constraints affecting where and how development can take place. In addition, working with neighbouring authorities should minimise potential risks associated with the Duty to Cooperate and professional development and training can minimise the risks associated with changes to government policy.
- 9.3. The Local Plan Review is likely to have benefits for mitigation of or adaptation to climate change. This is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework. An equalities impact assessment will be produced at each stage of production of the Local Plan Review.

10. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder:		X
Climate Change: See paragraph 9.3 above	X	
Human Rights and Equality Impact: See paragraph 9.3 above	X	
Safeguarding and Early Help:		X

11. Appendix

- 11.1. Local Plan Review Project Initiation Document.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 None