

# ***Report to Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee***

**Date of meeting: 28 June 2016**

**Subject: Local Plan Update**



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**Committee Secretary: A Hendry**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To note the progress on the Local Plan**

## **Reasons for Report:**

Under the terms of reference, the Neighbourhoods & Communities Select Committee has requested a regular review and update on the Local Plan.

## **Local Plan Timetable**

1. An updated Local Development Scheme is due to go to Cabinet on 21 July 2016 to reflect the new timescale for the development of the Local Plan. The key milestones prior to consultation on the Draft Plan – preferred approach scheduled for this Autumn are:

- 8 October 2016: Report to Cabinet to consider draft plan for consultation
- 18 October 2016: Report to Full Council
- 31 October 2016: Start of 6 week formal consultation

2. This will tie in with the publication of draft plans by East Herts, Uttlesford and Harlow Districts who are all proposing to publish their draft plans in the Autumn for a 6 week period seeking representations on soundness under Regulation 19 of the Local Plans regulations. There are proposals to coordinate the publications and it is likely that East Herts will start their 6 weeks on 3 November 2016.

3. The Government has made clear their expectation that all local planning authorities should have a post NPPF local plan in place and have set out their commitments to take action to get plans in place and ensure there are up to date policies. This includes intervening where no local plan has been produced by early 2017 to arrange for the plan to be written, in consultation with local people, to accelerate production of a local plan. One of the penalties proposed for not having produced a plan (it is not clear yet how this will be interpreted) is the loss of new homes bonus. It is clear that the Council needs to make good progress this year and to have consulted on our Draft Plan Preferred Approach prior to the cut off date. NLP published a research report in April 2016 setting out a review of local plan

progress. Their report identified 21 authorities most at risk of intervention and this names Epping Forest, Uttlesford and East Herts Districts.

## **Working with neighbouring authorities/duty to cooperate**

4. Further work is being undertaken to develop the housing target for the district and to discuss and agree at the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board how the growth will be distributed across the Housing Market Area. This work is being progressed with the 4 authorities within the Strategic Housing Market Area using support from ATLAS and facilitated by AECOM to assess the impact of strategic options in the four authorities to meet the overall OAN figure for the SHMA area. The Board on 6 June 2016 was provided with an update on progress with the evaluation of the 5 spatial options previously agreed for testing. Work is underway to evaluate the options through:

1. **Transport modelling** (what are the transport implications of the different options?)
2. **Sustainability appraisal** (how do the options effect air quality, biodiversity, water etc.?)
3. **Deliverability appraisal** (what infrastructure is necessary to deliver the different options?)
4. **Habitat Regulations Assessment** (how will the different options affect Epping Forest?)

5. The Board also received three draft memoranda of understanding: one with Highways England to cover strategic transport matters, one with Natural England to cover Air Quality and a third to set out the vision for the SHMA area and to agree the distribution of growth. A final decision on the preferred strategic spatial option is expected to be taken on 18 July 2016 and is critical to meeting the timeline for consultation.

6. As previously reported, officers are working with SHMA partners using CLG funding to assess the strategic sites around Harlow. This work will feed into the Council's site selection work (see below). The work is being undertaken by AECOM and a draft final report is due to be ready for the Board meeting on 18 July 2016.

## **Member Workshops**

7. Since the last meeting in March, further workshops have been held on climate change (24 May 2016) and transport accessibility and parking standards (31 May 2016). A further workshop is programmed for 16 July 2016 to cover development management policies and there will be a briefing on the proposals for the local plan consultation on 28 July 2016.

## **Key Local Plan Evidence**

8. Work continues on finalising the evidence base reports which will be used to inform the policies included in the Draft Plan (Preferred Approach) that the Council consults on later this year.

## ***Green Belt Review***

9. A draft report has now been received and officers are providing comments back to the consultants. The results of this work will be used to inform the Draft Plan and will be

published as part of the consultation.

### ***Settlement Capacity Work***

10. A draft has been received and officers are collating comments to send to the consultants. All the sites identified have been fed into the updated SLAA and the site selection process.

### ***Site selection and infrastructure delivery work***

11. The Council has appointed Arup to undertake the site selection work in order to provide options on the preferred sites for allocation. Mark Beard has provided advice on the methodology for site selection of employment, housing and traveller sites. Stage 2 of the process is almost complete and notwithstanding a number of logistical problems that have had to be overcome with data is on track with what is a very challenging timescale. A total of 33 criteria have been used to assess all the sites. We will be sending out proformas to promoters of sites to ensure we have correct and up to date information, which will be important when assessing the availability of sites. Some of the sites were submitted as far back as 2008 so this is an important element of the work. For some of the sites we do not have details of ownership and this will entail undertaking land registry searches. This needs to be completed in order to take complete the final shortlist of sites for potential allocation by the end of July so that they can be included in the draft plan for consultation.

12. We are also preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the sites being selected for the Draft Plan. Initial work has been undertaken to tie in with the site selection work programme to identify physical, social and community infrastructure requirements of the candidate sites.

### ***Other evidence***

13. Essex County Council has undertaken a historic environment characterisation study of the District with a draft final report now received. Other evidence to be completed will be to ensure that the Employment Land Review information is up to date, information to feed into the tourism section on visitor accommodation needs over the plan period, additional work around the future of the glasshouse industry and transport accessibility work at district level

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

14. The Council and the Parish have received the examiner's report for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner found that it did not meet the basic conditions and as required it is proposed to reporting this to Cabinet on 21 July 2016 with a recommendation that the plan does not go to referendum. Eight other Parish and Town Councils have been designated as neighbourhood planning areas (Chigwell, Epping, Buckhurst Hill, Theydon Bois, Loughton, North Weald Bassett, Epping Upland and Waltham Abbey).