

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision Date 16 December 2019

Portfolio:	Planning and Development
Subject:	Draft Local Plan Consultation
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices Protect and Enhance the Environment Strong, Safe Inclusive and Healthy Communities Maintain and Extend Prosperity

Purpose:
To seek approval to the content of a consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

Executive summary:

Local Planning Authorities are tasked with producing a Local Plan to plan positively for the development needs of their area. The Council decided to review their Local Plan shortly after it was adopted in 2015. To date, the Council has produced a draft Local Plan for consultation in 2017 and a further consultation document on a revised development strategy to meet a higher housing need earlier in 2019. This report proposes a third consultation on a consultation document that adds to the draft Local Plan of 2017 with a revised development strategy, new housing allocations to meet the higher housing need, and new policies where these are now required by a revised national planning framework.

This report provides the background to the proposed consultation document as an appendix for approval. The consultation will run for a minimum of 6 weeks in early 2020 and will be complemented by a special edition of Fareham Today. The results of this consultation will feed into the Publication Plan which will be available for consultation in Spring 2020 before the new Local Plan is submitted to Government for examination.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) approves the content of the consultation document on the Draft Local Plan; and
- (b) agrees that the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development, provided these do not change their overall direction, shape or emphasis.

Reason:

To undertake publication and consultation as required under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Cost of proposals:

The consultation referred to in this report represents a key stage of the preparation of the new Local Plan. Costs associated with this stage are limited to the printing and delivery of consultation material, and the running of publicity events to promote the consultation.

The Local Plan process as a whole does have cost implications, largely arising from the need for substantial technical evidence to support the plan through examination, and the examination process itself, which is likely to require legal support. The task of masterplanning for two Strategic Growth Areas referenced in this report will have specific cost implications which will affect Planning Strategy budgets for a number of years depending on the decision taken in relation to timescales and the option to align the masterplanning with the preparation of the Local Plan.

In the short-term, the costs of the Local Plan are part of the budget setting for 2020/21 to be discussed at the Executive meeting in January 2020. In the medium term, a seven-year Local Plan budget is being developed to provide greater clarity over the forecast spend, which necessarily fluctuates depending on the stage of Local Plan preparation. The Local Plan process has extensive and long-term implications for the Development Management Service in terms of managing planning applications and appeals, which are likely to have significant budgetary implications. There may also be budgetary implications for other services, such as Leisure and Community, Streetscene and Strategic Housing from the outcomes of the Local Plan linked to new developments.

Appendices: **A:** Draft text of the consultation document

Background papers: None

Reference papers:

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Fareham Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (2019)

Fareham's Draft Local Plan 2036 (2017)

Fareham's Draft Local Plan Issues and Options consultation (2019)

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	16 December 2019
Subject:	Draft Local Plan Consultation
Briefing by:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio:	Planning and Development

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council is preparing a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and Development Sites and Policies that were adopted in 2015. The Council consulted on a new Draft Local Plan in 2017 and following changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), consulted on an 'Issues and Options' consultation in the summer of 2019 to address the increased housing numbers that are required in the plan. This consultation sets out the proposed development strategy and the preferred new housing allocations that the Council considers necessary to meet the new housing need figures. There are also a small number of new policies proposed to meet the requirements of the new NPPF.
2. This report provides the background to the proposed consultation document as an appendix for approval. The consultation will run for a minimum of 6 weeks in early 2020 and will be complemented by a special edition of Fareham Today. The results of this consultation will feed into the Publication Plan which will be available for consultation in Spring 2020 before the new Local Plan is submitted to Government for examination.
3. The consultation document can be considered as a supplement to the Draft Local Plan that was consulted on in 2017. It builds on the consultation that took place earlier in 2019 on the issues and options to be considered when developing a revised development strategy that would meet the new housing need figures for the Borough. Responses received to that consultation have helped inform the proposed strategy and the preferred new housing allocations.
4. Chapter 1 (Introduction) sets out the Council's approach to reviewing the Local Plan, states the purpose of this consultation and the timeline for the preparation of the plan. Chapter 2 (Revised Development Strategy) sets out the proposed development strategy for the borough that the Council has used to determine where growth would best be accommodated and would represent sustainable development. Chapter 3 (Housing) discusses the housing need before suggesting new housing allocations and new policies relating to residential development. Chapter 4 (Natural Environment) contains a number of policies required to meet the aspirations of the new NPPF.

5. In all cases, each chapter describes the changes that are required from the draft Local Plan 2017 and provides a justification for the proposed policy.

KEY ISSUES TO BE RAISED IN THE CONSULTATION

Housing need

6. The intention expressed within the consultation document is to meet the Borough's housing need, which currently stands at 520 dwellings per annum. There is a requirement to add a buffer to this number as a contingency in the event of a slower than anticipated rate of delivery. The proposal is to include a larger buffer on top of the housing need as the Council is particularly reliant on one very large site, Welborne Garden Village, as well as a number of other large greenfield sites. Adding in a large buffer should add resilience to the Local Plan and help ensure that the Council can regain and retain a five-year housing land supply on adoption of the plan.
7. With the new plan period of 2020 to 2036, this creates a requirement of 9,568 new homes across the borough. With all supply considered (taking into account existing commitments including outstanding planning permissions, resolutions to grant, adopted Local Plan allocations and estimates of future windfall permissions) there are sufficient sites to provide approximately 9,395 homes. The Council therefore needs to find an additional 175 homes over the allocations included in the 2017 draft Plan.
8. In addition to the extra housing allocations proposed in the consultation, two Strategic Growth Areas are described in the consultation document. These are not allocations at this stage but could play a role in future development in the borough either to meet the housing need in a further Local Plan review, or if the Council has to accept unmet need from neighbouring authorities. Discussions on unmet need are ongoing via the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) and are likely to continue into 2020. Further work is needed to understand the contribution these sites could make to the development needs in the borough, which would involve the production of a masterplan for the area demonstrating the community benefits that could be gained on site alongside any residential development.

Development Strategy

9. The consultation document sets out, in Chapter 2, the Revised Development Strategy proposed for the borough and how factors such as landscape, nature conservation and the need to maintain settlement identity have shaped the spatial strategy for development. Recognising the need to ensure that small development sites are part of the supply of sites coming forward, particularly within the first five years of the plan, Chapter 3 (Housing) contains a proposed new policy setting out under which circumstances small scale development would be deemed acceptable in the countryside.
10. It is of relevance to the Executive to note that when sites have been considered suitable or otherwise for development and allocation within the plan, the extent to which the development would conform to the development strategy has been considered in determining whether the site is considered developable or is discounted within the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). An updated SHELAA will be available during the consultation so that land promoters and residents can see how the Council has assessed all sites promoted to it.

Space standards for new residential development

11. Chapter 3 (Housing) also contains a new policy to implement the nationally described space standards in new developments. This policy is considered necessary based on evidence of floorspace and, in particular, bedroom sizes in recent development proposals, and will help to ensure that future developments have adequately sized bedrooms for the needs of the occupants.

Natural Environment

12. Chapter 4 (Natural Environment) contains several new policies considered necessary in response to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These include a new strategic policy on climate change, a policy on trees, woodlands and hedgerows, and air quality. There is also a proposed policy on landscape and in particular a proposal to designate Areas of Special Landscape Quality in response to recent appeal decisions where the Planning Inspector suggested that certain areas of the borough were valued landscapes.

Evidence documents

13. A number of evidence documents are being prepared to support the consultation. These are the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), a Viability study for the Local Plan, a Sustainability Appraisal of new sites, an Employment study and the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). These documents have been updated since the versions that accompanied the draft Local Plan consultation in 2017 and are considered of relevance to this consultation.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEXT CONSULTATION

14. The intention is for the next consultation to be held in the spring of 2020 and for that consultation to be on a complete draft of the new Local Plan, known as the 'Publication plan'. This means that the revised Development Strategy, new sites and new policies contained within this consultation, subject to changes post consultation, will be combined with the 2017 version of the Draft Local Plan, as amended following its consultation. This Publication Plan will be consulted upon as the new Local Plan that the Council proposes to submit to Government.
15. There are a number of important work streams that will be finalised before the consultation on the Publication plan. The first one of these workstreams is an understanding and transparency over the proposed housing numbers. Under the standard methodology, each Council's housing need changes each year with affordability ratios being revised every March. Therefore, the Publication plan will contain the final housing need figure and the proposed approach to addressing that need, including the scale of any delivery buffer. Depending upon discussions with neighbouring authorities and through the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), the housing supply approach may need to address unmet need. A related piece of work that will be presented in the Publication Plan is the outcome of the masterplanning work for the Strategic Growth Areas presented in this consultation.
16. Other evidence documents will be prepared to support this next consultation. This will include a Habitats Regulations Assessment which will detail the likely significant effect on European Protected Sites in the borough. It is anticipated at this stage that the nitrates issues currently facing the granting of planning permission across south Hampshire will be fully addressed in relation to the Local Plan.

APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

17. This consultation falls within Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Council must invite representations from a series of consultation bodies, as well as residents and businesses within the Borough. This report recommends that the Council undertakes a consultation from mid-January or early March lasting for at least six weeks. The consultation document will be in the form of a Special Edition of Fareham Today. It will be available on our website, as well as available in hard copy at public libraries in the borough and at the Civic Offices in Fareham. In addition, a copy of the Special Edition of Fareham Today will be sent to residents by post, and electronic copy sent to all approximately 700 registrants on our consultation database. Events are planned to publicise the consultation, including a series of Community Action Team (CAT) meetings across the Borough.
18. Any comments that people wish to make during the consultation period should either be submitted to the Council electronically via a dedicated web-page or on paper forms. These web-page details or paper forms will be available from the Council's web-page or requested from the Planning Reception at the Council Offices.
19. Officers will also be contactable and available at the Civic Offices throughout the consultation process for advice about how to comment on the document.
20. The consultation will be undertaken in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was adopted by the Council in March 2017.
21. The production and consultation of this document is an important stage of the plan-making process, in line with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

NEXT STEPS IN PREPARING THE LOCAL PLAN

22. In response to this consultation, and in line with the published Local Development Scheme, the Council will follow the timescale as set out below:

Spring 2019	Consultation on issues and options
Autumn/Winter 2019	Consultation on Revised Development Strategy and additional allocations
Spring 2020	Consultation on Publication Local Plan
Summer 2020	Submission of Plan to Secretary of State
Estimated Autumn/ Winter 2020	Examination
Early 2021	Adoption

23. This timescale sets out that, including this consultation, there will be further opportunities for public consultation before submission. At the examination in public, the subsequent stage of the process, there will be again an opportunity for people who have outstanding issues with the Local Plan and subsequent changes submitted by the Council to represent their views to the Inspector.

24. Following the examination, the Council will then receive a report from the Inspector on the Local Plan, and if found sound, it is likely to have a series of recommendations. In this eventuality, as soon as reasonably practical the Council should adopt the Plan.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Gayle Wootton (Ext. 4328)