

**Forest Heath District Council
and
St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

**Joint Local Development
Scheme**

June 2013



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires Councils to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out what development plan documents are to be produced, their subject matter and broad timetable for their preparation including consultation, examination and adoption.
- 1.2 Previously, for Forest Heath, a Local Development Scheme was prepared and agreed by Members on the 20 June 2011. Members agreed the timetable as a 'living draft' and the last update to the timetable was prepared and made available on the website in January 2012. In the case of St Edmundsbury, the last Local Development Scheme timetable was prepared and made available on the website in September 2012.
- 1.3 A revision to the Forest Heath LDS and St Edmundsbury LDS is now required in order to reflect recent changes to the planning system, to update progress on the development plan documents currently in preparation and to roll the programme forward to 2016.
- 1.4 As Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have implemented a shared planning service, it is now appropriate to have a joint Local Development Scheme that sets out the programme for the preparation of development plan documents across both districts.
- 1.5 This document forms the first joint Local Development Scheme covering the Local Development Plan Documents being prepared either for each local planning authority area or as joint documents covering both districts.

2. How has the planning system changed?

- 2.1 The Government has introduced significant changes to the planning system under its localism agenda which have sought to introduce a simpler and more effective planning system and to strengthen community involvement. Government has revoked the existing regional spatial strategies and stresses the importance of ensuring that saved policies in adopted Local Plans are replaced quickly by new Local Plans.

3. What is the Local Plan (formerly Local Development Framework)?

3.1 The Local Plan consists of development plan documents which take account of local demands for development and growth and include planning policies to achieve sustainable development. The Local Plan may comprise a number of development plan documents and in combination this constitutes the Development Plan for the area. Development plan documents may include:

- **Core Strategy** – sets out the overarching spatial vision and the planning framework for other development plan documents;
- **Development Management Policies** – sets out policies for the management of development, against which planning applications for the development and use of land will be considered;
- Other **site specific** development plan documents – allocates specific sites and detailed policy guidance

Documents which support a Local Plan include

- **Local Development Scheme** – the timetable for the preparation of local development plans
- **Statement of Community Involvement** – sets out the Council's approach to engaging with local communities during plan preparation and when consulting on planning applications
- **Authority Monitoring Report** – sets out the progress in terms of producing development plan documents and implementing policies.

3.2 The Local Plan will also include a Policies Map which illustrates the geographic extent of policies and proposals on a map base.

3.3 The government has also introduced a system of neighbourhood plans which can be prepared by parish, town councils or by specially designated neighbourhood forums in areas without a parish. Such plans are optional but must take account of national planning policy and be in general conformity with the Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans are not local development plan documents and therefore cannot be included in this Local Development Scheme. However, if adopted they form part of the Development Plan for the area.

- 3.4 The individual documents that will make up the Development Plan are set out in the figure below.



4. The Local Development Documents scheduled for 2013-2016

- 4.1 For Forest Heath District Council, the priority is to complete the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) for Policy CS7: Overall Housing Provision and Distribution. The Core Strategy Single Issue Review undertook an Issues and Options consultation July 2012. Following consideration of representations will prepare the 'Proposed Submission' version of the Local Plan document in readiness for a period of public consultation in November 2013, (in tandem with the 'Further Issues and Options' consultation on the Site Allocations Local Plan document). Following this, it is anticipated that the SIR document will be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2014, Examined in Public, (EiP), in June 2014 with adoption in November 2014.

- 4.2 The significant stages in Forest Heath District Council's preparation of the Site Allocations Local Plan thus far can be summarised as follows:
- Evidence gathering, development and appraisal of 'Issues and Options' in consultation with a variety of stakeholders in 2006,
 - Planning Committee approval of 'Final Issues and Options', (former regulation 25), consultation document in April 2010.
- 4.3 Work on the Local Plan carried out by the former Local Development Framework Working Group, (LDFWG), and Planning Committee up to April 2010, and prior to the Core Strategy High Court Challenge, identified sites 'preferred' for a range of uses for consultation purposes, (the Site Specific Allocations 'Final Issues and Options' DPD). However, the consultation itself was held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Core Strategy High Court Challenge. The High Court Challenge was successful in quashing the majority of Policy CS7: Housing, therefore a Single Issue Review for Policy C7: Housing is being progressed. It is considered that the Single Issue Review, (SIR), process is at a sufficiently advanced stage for work on the Site Allocations Local Plan document to recommence. A Further Issues and Options consultation is anticipated November 2013 (in tandem with the 'Proposed Submission' Core Strategy Local Plan document). Following this, a Preferred Options consultation is anticipated May 2014, submission to the Secretary of State in November 2014, Examined in Public, (EiP), in February 2015 with adoption in July 2015.
- 4.4 A new Policies Map will replace the Forest Heath Local Plan proposals map when the Site Allocations development plan is adopted.
- 4.5 The St Edmundsbury Borough Council Vision 2031 documents are site specific allocation documents which identify areas of growth and the services and infrastructure required to support this growth up to 2031. Work commenced on the project in 2011 with three distinct areas, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the rural areas, forming the basis for the three documents produced. The key stages in the production of this document include the extensive Issues and Options consultation and engagement throughout March to October 2011 which involved meetings and drop-in sessions for people living in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and rural areas to launch the debate about how the borough should develop and later roadshows for people to discuss the issues affecting their neighbourhoods. In March 2012 a Preferred Option consultation was undertaken, with the 'Proposed Submission' version June 2013. Following this, submission to the Secretary of State in September 2014, Examined in Public, (EiP), in February 2014 with adoption in July 2014.

- 4.6 A new Policies Map will replace the current St Edmundsbury Local Plan proposals map when the Vision 2031 Local Plan documents are adopted.
- 4.7 The Joint Development Management Policies document sets out generic development control policies against which planning applications can be assessed. The development of this document commenced with Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury preparing the document independently, St Edmundsbury undertook three rounds of public consultation between 2008 and 2010, while Forest Heath consulted in 2006 and prepared a revised document in 2010. At this point the decision was made to proceed with the document on a joint basis. This change in approach required two further rounds of consultation on the revised joint document as follows; January - March 2012 – Preferred Options consultation; and October - December 2012 – Submission consultation
- 4.8 In February 2013 both planning authorities resolved to submit the Joint Development Management Policies document to the Secretary of State in order that it may be examined by a Planning Inspector. The joint Development Management Policies document is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State by January 2014.
- 4.9 A more detailed timetable, coverage and profiles for each development plan document are included in **Appendix 1**.

5. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 5.1 Councils may also produce Supplementary Planning Documents (which supersede Supplementary Planning Guidance) to give further guidance on their adopted policies. Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, which may be either thematic (e.g. affordable housing or open space provision) or site specific (e.g. development briefs for allocations).
- 5.2 Please note that Supplementary Planning Documents do not form part of the Local Development Scheme and those that are to be prepared are listed with the programme for information purposes (see **Appendix 1**). Supplementary Planning Documents that are adopted are available on Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Borough website which is updated regularly to provide the latest timetable for preparing new Supplementary Planning Documents.

6. How will Development Plan Documents be prepared?

- 6.1 The Government does not set out precise detail of how a Council should prepare a plan but rather considers Councils are best placed to decide the exact process and how to engage with their communities. However, the Regulations do prescribe certain stages where the public are to be consulted. Government stresses the importance of early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. The Regulations include a requirement for public participation at an early stage in plan preparation before the plan is finalised with the detail left for local authorities to determine. The Regulations also stipulate that the final document should be published for formal consultation prior to it being submitted for independent examination. The various stages of development plan document are summarised in the table below:

Development Plan Document Stage	
Early tasks	This stage involves the Council gathering evidence including concerns and proposals the community may wish to make regarding planning issues. This stage also involves consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
Pre-submission (regulation 18)	The Council will normally consult on issues and options in the early stages of this process and will continue to engage with stakeholders and the community throughout the pre-submission stage.
Pre-submission Consultation or publication stage (regulation 19)	This stage involves a formal consultation on the final version of the DPD, when the Council will invite all interested parties to submit representations.
Submission (regulation 22)	The Council will formally submit the DPD to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
Examination	Interested parties can seek to make representations to the independent Planning Inspector. Following the examination the Planning Inspector will produce a report and may recommend changes.
Adoption	This is a formal process for Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to adopt the documents as part of the Local Plan

- 6.2 After final publication local development plan documents will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and this will be set out in the Annual Monitoring Report. A structured approach to review will be adopted.
- 6.3 The above table sets out the broad stages of the process. The profiles for each of the proposed local development documents (see **Appendix 1**) set out the timetable and milestones in their preparation.

7. **The Timetable**

- 7.1 A project management approach have been adopted to preparing the various parts of the Local Plan(s) and the detailed timetable for each stage is set out in the 'profiles' for each plan attached as **Appendix 1**. Progress will be measured against 'milestones' to see whether there is any need to revise the published timetable.

8. Risk Assessment

8.1 An assessment has been carried out of the factors that could affect the ability of the councils to deliver the Local Plan(s) in accordance with the indicated programme. Actions to manage these risks have been identified.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigating Measures
Significant public opposition	High	Medium	Local Plan documents have the potential to be highly contentious. Whilst every effort will be made to build cross-community consensus, there is a high risk of significant public opposition.
Loss of Staff	Low	Medium	The structure and staffing levels within the Place Shaping Team will be constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the appropriate level of skills and resources are maintained.
Financial shortfall	Low	Medium	In the short/medium term, the Council has allocated funds through its Financial Services Planning process to allow for the preparation of the Local Plan. In the longer term, should costs increase, a review of the financial allocation will be required.
Changing Political Priorities	Low	Medium	Proposals are discussed with Members of all parties via a variety of means, the Local Plans Working Group, Sustainable Development Working Party Committee etc). This helps build consensus and reduce the likelihood of wholesale change of direction from local politicians.
Legal Challenge	Medium	High	As a measure of last resort anyone may issue a legal challenge within six week of adoption of the Local Plan. Officers will continue to seek to ensure that local plan documents are prepared within the legal framework in order to reduce the risk of successful legal challenge.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 9.1 For further information on this Local Development Scheme or any of the documents mentioned, please contact the Local Plans team using the contact details below. Information on the existing Local Plan and the new development plan process is also available on the Council's website.

West Suffolk Local Plans Team

By E-mail: fp@westsuffolk.gov.uk

By Telephone: 01638 719446 or 01284 757368

Website: www.forest-heath.gov.uk

Website: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk

Glossary of Terms

Adoption: The formal approval by a Council of the final version of a development plan document once the inspector has found it sound.

Allocation: Land identified as appropriate for a specific use.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR): A report prepared by the Council setting out progress on the Local Plan and the effectiveness of the policies it contains.

Area Action Plan: A type of development plan document focussed upon a particular location or area subject to conservation or significant change.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A standard charge levied by councils on developers towards the cost of local and strategic infrastructure to support development.

Core Strategy: The key development plan document, setting out the long term spatial vision for the area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies.

Development plan: an authority's development plan consists of the adopted Local Plans and adopted neighbourhood plans.

Development plan document: a planning document which is part of the Local Development Framework, subject to extensive consultation and independent examination.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): A management tool that makes sure that policies and working practices do not discriminate against certain groups and that opportunities are taken to promote equality.

Issues and options: an informal early stage of the development plan document preparation, aimed at engaging the public and stakeholders in formulating the main issues that the core strategy should address and the options available.

Local Development Document (LDD): A document that forms part of the Local Development framework and can be either a development plan document or a supplementary planning document.

Local Development Framework: A portfolio of Local Development Documents which set out the spatial strategy for the development of the local authority area. The term local plan is now used.

Local Development Scheme: A document setting out the timescales for the production of the development plan documents.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the area drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the

development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Core strategies, development management development plan documents and site specific development plan documents form part of the Local Plan. Policies which have been “saved” under the 2004 Act are also part of the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans: A plan prepared by a Parish Council, a Town Council or a Neighbourhood Planning Forum for a particular neighbourhood area.

Publication Draft: First full draft of the development plan document prepared for formal consultation.

Regional Plan/regional spatial strategy: Strategic plan for the region. The East of England Regional Plan was issued in September 2008 but was revoked during March 2013.

Spatial planning: spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

Spatial vision: A brief description of how an area will be changes by the end of a plan period.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A document which informs how a council will involve the community in the preparation of planning documents and on all major planning applications.

Strategic allocations: strategic sites which are fundamental to the aims of the core strategy.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Submission draft: Final draft of the development plan document submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

Supplementary planning document (SPD): Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or can be topic based for example, design.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): Examines the social, environmental and economic effects of strategies and policies in local development documents from the outset of its preparation.

Submission draft: Final draft of the development plan document submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

Supplementary planning document (SPD): Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or can be topic based for example, design.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): Examines the social, environmental and economic effects of strategies and policies in local development documents from the outset of its preparation.

Sustainable development: National planning policy defines this as being meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Profiles for each Local Development Plan Document

Forest Heath District Council Local Development Plan Documents

Core Strategy Single Issue Review: Policy CS7 Housing Provision and Distribution

Overview	
Role and Content	Sets out the Councils overall housing provision and distribution
Coverage	District wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	In accordance with legislation, case law and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	January 2012
Consultation Issues and Options	July – September 2012
Publication Version	November – December 2012
Submission	March 2014
Examination in Public	June 2014
Adoption	November 2014

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Local Plans Working Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report

Site Specific Allocations

Overview	
Role and Content	To identify land use sites needed to implement the Core Strategy.
Coverage	District wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Core Strategy and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	2006
Consultation Issues and Options	November 2012
Publication Version	May 2014
Submission	November 2014
Examination in Public	February 2015
Adoption	July 2015

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Local Plans Working Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report

Joint Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Development Plan Documents

Joint Development Management Policies

Overview	
Role and Content	To set out specific criteria against which planning applications will be considered.
Coverage	Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Core Strategy, case law and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	Progress on a single Development Plan Document covering both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury commenced 2010
Consultation Issues and Options	January 2012
Publication Version	October 2013
Submission	January 2014
Examination in Public	April 2014
Adoption	September 2014

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Local Plans Working Group, Joint Development Management Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Development Plan Documents

Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031

Overview	
Role and Content	To identify land use sites needed to implement the Core Strategy.
Coverage	Borough wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Core Strategy, case law and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	2010
Consultation Issues and Options	March-May 2011 and March-May 2012
Publication Version	June 2013
Submission	November 2013
Examination in Public	February 2014
Adoption	July 2014

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Bury St Edmunds Working Party, Sustainable Development Working Party, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report

laverhill Vision 2031

Overview	
Role and Content	To identify land use sites needed to implement the Core Strategy.
Coverage	Borough wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Core Strategy, case law and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	2010
Consultation Issues and Options	March-May 2011 and March-May 2012
Publication Version	June 2013
Submission	November 2013
Examination in Public	February 2014
Adoption	July 2014

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Haverhill Area Working Party, Sustainable Development Working Party, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report

Rural Vision 2031

Overview	
Role and Content	To identify land use sites needed to implement the Core Strategy.
Coverage	Borough wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Core Strategy and national planning policies.

Timetable and Milestones	
Starting Evidence Base	2010
Consultation Issues and Options	March-May 2011 and March-May 2012
Publication Version	June 2013
Submission	November 2013
Examination in Public	February 2014
Adoption	July 2014

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Place Shaping Manager
Management Arrangements	Rural Area Working Party, Sustainable Development Working Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Place Shaping Team, with technical and legal support from other teams including development management and housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Parish and Town Councils, Partner Organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and Review	Annual Monitoring Report