

Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Site Allocations Preferred Options – (Regulation 18) Consultation Document	
Report No:	LOP/FH/16/006	
Report to and dates:	Local Plan Working Group	18 February 2016
	Cabinet	1 March 2016
Portfolio holder:	James Waters Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07771 621038 Email: james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Marie Smith Strategic Planning Manager Tel: 01638 719260 Email: marie.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To endorse progress made on the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) document for consultation. The outcome of the meeting will inform the final draft of the SALP for consultation. (Member approval will be sought from Cabinet on the 1 March 2016).	
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Local Plan Working Group:</p> <p>(1) Endorses progress on the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP); and</p> <p>(2) Recommends to Cabinet that the Site Allocations Preferred Options document and accompanying SEA/SA together with supporting documents be approved for consultation</p> <p>(3) The Head of Planning and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, be authorised to make any minor typographical, factual, spelling and grammatical changes to the</p>	

	document, provided that it does not materially affect the substance or meaning.
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options for progressing the SALP were considered by LPWG on 16 October 2014. Housing Options Paper was considered and endorsed by LPWG on 22 April 2015. SALP Local Plan Document and the accompanying SEA/SA and supporting documents were considered by LPWG on 30 June 2015 and agreed by Cabinet on 14 July 2015 for consultation. Working Paper 1 sets out the reasonable alternative preferred options for further SALP consultation
Implications:	
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> There is a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to produce a Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal and to undertake consultation during its preparation under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Risk/opportunity assessment:		The Local Development Scheme includes a risk assessment of issues that could affect the Councils ability to deliver the Local Plan(s) in accordance with the programme. Actions to manage the risks have also been identified. Failure to prepare a sustainability appraisal which appraises all reasonable alternatives may result in an unsound Plan or legal challenge.	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Significant public opposition	High	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.	Medium
Loss of Staff	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.	Low
Financial shortfall	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.	Low
Changing Political Priorities	Medium	Proposals are discussed with Members of all parties via a variety of means, the Local Plan Working Group etc.). This helps build consensus and reduces the likelihood of wholesale change of direction from local politicians.	Low
Legal Challenge	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.	Medium
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards in the District.	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		<p>Forest Heath Core Strategy Development Plan Document (May 2010). http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/forestheathcorestrategy.cfm</p> <p>Forest Heath Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review – issues and Options 2012. http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/fhcorestrategysingleissuereview.cfm</p>	

	<p>Forest Heath Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review – issues and Options 2015 http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/fh-single-issue-review-sir-of-core-strategy-policy-cs7.cfm</p> <p>Forest Heath Site Allocations Local Plan – Further Issues and Options 2015 www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/fhlocalplan</p> <p>Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) – Sustainability Appraisal of housing distribution options https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIid=171&MIid=3163</p>
<p>Documents attached:</p>	<p>Working Paper 1: Site Allocations Preferred Options – (Regulation 18) consultation document</p> <p>Working Paper 2: Site Allocations Preferred Options – (Regulation 18) Policies Map</p>

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Forest Heath Core Strategy was adopted in May 2010. Following a successful High Court Challenge in May 2011, parts of policy CS7 detailing how the overall housing need would be distributed between the settlements over a 20 year period (to 2031) were quashed (removed from the Strategy). Consequential amendments were also made to policies CS1 (Spatial Strategy) and CS13 (Infrastructure and Developer Contributions).
- 1.1.2 Since then, the Council has been revisiting the quashed parts of the Core Strategy (known as the Single Issue Review) to determine the overall housing numbers and distribution, as well as developing a Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) to identify which sites should be developed, in order to achieve the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy and meet the outcomes of the Single Issue Review.
- 1.1.3 Consultation took place between August and October 2015 on an Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Site Allocations Local Plan. The purpose of the document was to stimulate debate on the most appropriate way to distribute housing need throughout the district, as well as considering sites for employment, community and leisure uses.
- 1.1.4 The consultation responses received during the 2015 consultation, and officer responses to them, were considered at the Local Plan Working Group meeting on 15 February 2016. All of the responses are available to view online at the Council's public consultation website at <http://westsuffolk.jdi-consult.net/localplan/>
- 1.1.5 The consultation responses, and other evidence, have been used to develop the council's preferred site options and the next SALP document for consultation.
- 1.1.6 **Working Paper 1** is the Site Allocations Local Plan Preferred Options document. It supersedes and updates the 2015 consultation document and sets out the Council's preferred sites for housing, employment and other uses to 2031.
- 1.1.7 The document asks questions and invites comments from both the public and statutory stakeholders. The Council is still evidence gathering at this stage and is not making a final decision on sites, but is giving an indication of its preferred strategy.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the distribution options

- 1.2.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives. Sustainability Appraisals are required for all local development documents. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)

which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

- 1.2.2 Consultants have been appointed to undertake the full SA and SEA work in relation to the next consultation draft of the SALP document. A full report setting out the findings of the SA and SEA and the proposed SALP Regulation 18 consultation will accompany the document for consultation in April 2016.

1.3 **Infrastructure**

- 1.3.1 The Council are planning for long term growth to give certainty in how and where settlements will grow within the district. This will ensure that service providers can plan and deliver the necessary infrastructure to enable the planned growth to happen when it is required. This would include such facilities as roads, sewers and water infrastructure.
- 1.3.2 A draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) accompanied the 2015 SALP consultation document. Since then, further work with infrastructure providers has taken place which has helped inform the selection of preferred sites in the SALP document.
- 1.3.3 A revised IDP will accompany the 2016 SALP Preferred Options document to further set out the infrastructure requirements to support development. Comments can also be made on this next iteration of the draft IDP.

1.4 **Policies Map**

- 1.4.1 The Policies Map (formerly known as the Proposals Map) illustrates particular land uses throughout the district including areas for protection, such as Special Protection Areas and conservation areas, as well as employment and residential activities. It also identifies key sites for development. The Policies Map encompasses all Local Plan documents and so far relates to policies in the Core Strategy (2010) and the Joint Development Management Policies document (2015).
- 1.4.2 A draft updated Policies Map has been produced for consultation alongside the 2016 SALP document to identify the preferred sites. This allows the preferred sites to be viewed alongside other already adopted policies and constraints to assist when making consultation comments.

2. **Next Steps**

- 2.1 Following this Local Plan Working Group, the final SALP document will be taken for approval for consultation by Cabinet on 1 March 2016.
- 2.2 The design and printing of the documents will take several weeks after the Cabinet meeting; therefore consultation is planned from the **4 April until 8 June 2016.**

- 2.3 Comments received during this next consultation will be considered and brought back to the Local Plan Working Group before being fed into the final consultation for the Site Allocations Local Plan in late Summer/Autumn 2016. Submission of the documents for independent examination will follow in December 2016.
- 2.4 The change in consultation date for the next consultation has meant an update to the Local Development Scheme (timetable for plan preparation) is required, which will be published on the Council's website prior to the start of the next consultation in April.