

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

**Joint Local Development Scheme**

**June 2016**



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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 in June 2013. Members agreed the timetable as a 'living draft' and the last update to the timetable was prepared and made available on the website in February 2016. In the case of St Edmundsbury, the last Local Development Scheme timetable was prepared and made available on the website in January 2015.
- 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 2017.
- 1.4 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have implemented a shared planning service and now have a joint LDS. This sets out the programme for the preparation of development plan documents across both districts.
- 1.5 This document forms the second joint LDS covering the Local Development Plan Documents being prepared either for each local planning authority area or as joint documents covering both districts. However, it should be noted that as St Edmundsbury currently have an up to date adopted Local Plan, this LDS update relates to the remaining Local Plan documents currently being prepared by Forest Heath District Council.

## **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. National planning policy places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system and guidance is clear that it is essential that Local Plans are put in place and kept up to date.

### 3. What is the Local Plan?

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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government's preferred approach is for a single Local Plan to be produced for an area (or a joint document with a neighbouring area). Clear justification should be provided where separate Local Plan documents are produced. Where separate documents are produced, these 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;
- **Site specific** development plan documents – allocates specific sites and provides detailed policy guidance;
- **Area Action Plans** – a type of development plan document focussed upon a particular location or area.

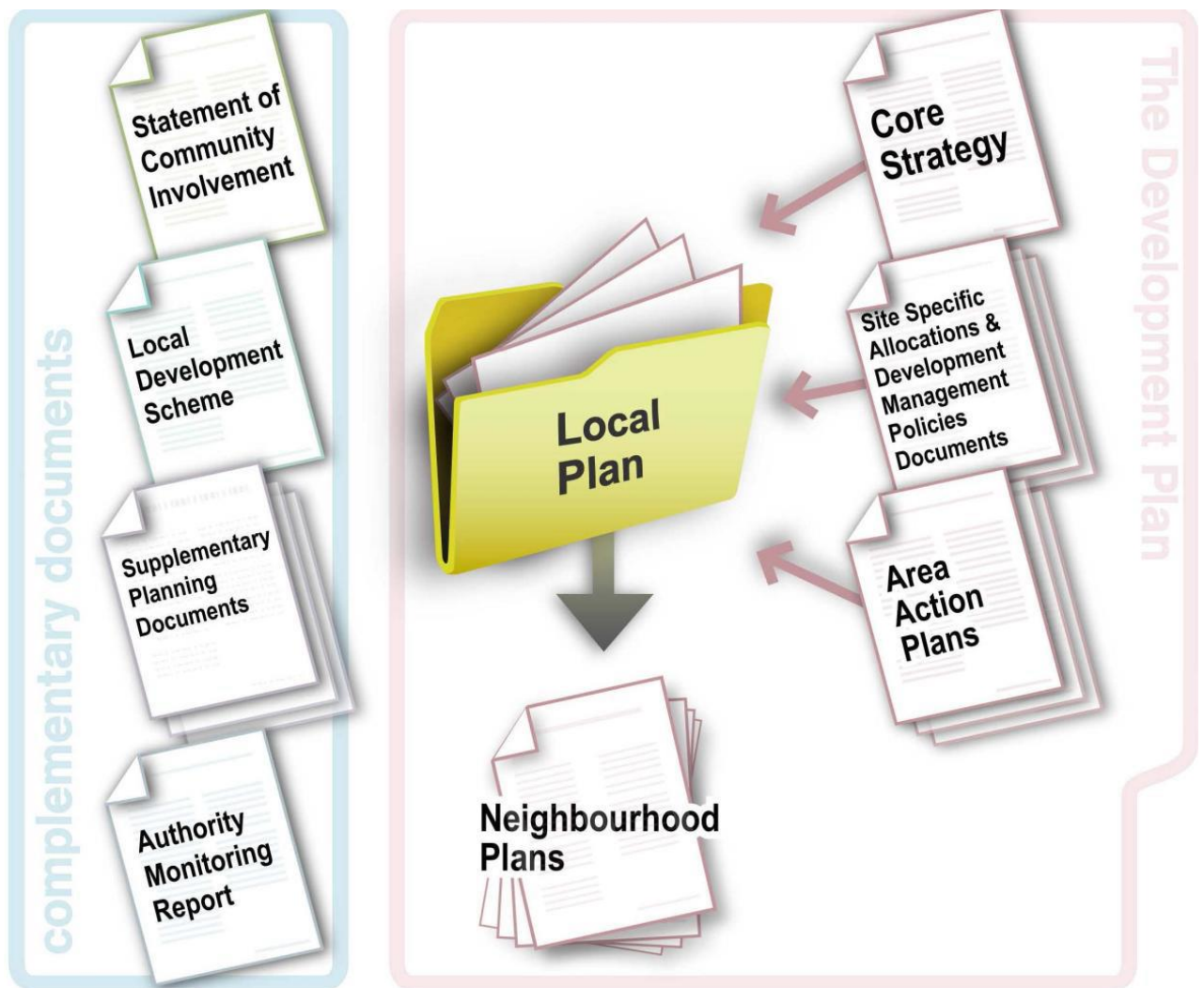
Documents which support a Local Plan include;

- **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;
- **Supplementary Planning documents** – documents which add further detail to policies in a Local Plan.

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 Local Plan for the area.

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



#### 4. West Suffolk Local Plan Documents

##### Forest Heath Local Plan

4.1 Following a successful High Court Challenge in 2011, the priority is to complete the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) for Policy CS7: Overall Housing Provision and Distribution. The key stages can be summarised as follows:

- An Issues and Options consultation on the Core Strategy Single Issue Review took place in July 2012;
- Following a period of further evidence gathering, a second Regulation 18 (Issues and Options) consultation took place between August and October 2015;
- A third Regulation 18 (Preferred Option) consultation commenced in April 2016, with an end date of 1 July 2016;

- Following the consideration of representations, the 'Proposed Submission' version of the Local Plan document will be prepared in readiness for a period of public consultation (Regulation 19) from November 2016 - January 2017;
- Following this, it is anticipated that the SIR document will be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2017, Examined in Public, (EiP) in June 2017 with adoption in December 2017.

4.2 The significant stages in Forest Heath District Council's preparation of the Site Allocations Local Plan 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. However, the consultation itself was held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Core Strategy High Court Challenge. A further Issues and Options draft Site Allocations document was approved at committee in November 2013; however, consultation was postponed pending Counsel advice and further work on supporting documentation including Sustainability Appraisal. Following a period of further evidence gathering, the Site Allocations Local Plan has been progressed in tandem with the Core Strategy Single Issue Review;
- A first Regulation 18 (Issues and Options) consultation took place between August and October 2015. A second Regulation 18 (Preferred Options) consultation commenced in April 2016, with an end date of 1 July 2016;
- Following the consideration of representations, the 'Proposed Submission' version of the Site Allocations Local Plan document will be prepared in readiness for a period of public consultation (Regulation 19) from November 2016 - January 2017;
- Following this, it is anticipated that the SIR document will be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2017, Examined in Public, (EiP) in June 2017 with adoption in December 2017.

4.3 A new Policies Map will replace the 1995 Forest Heath Local Plan proposals map, and the Forest Heath Policies Map which accompanied the 2015 Joint Development Management document, when the Site Allocations development plan is adopted.

4.4 A more detailed timetable, coverage and profiles for each development plan document still to be adopted is included in **Appendix 1**.

### **St Edmundsbury Local Plan**

4.5 The St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Plan is up to date and comprises the following documents:

- The St Edmundsbury Core Strategy, adopted in December 2010.

- Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031 and Rural Vision 2031, adopted in September 2014. These are site specific allocation documents which identify areas of growth and the services and infrastructure required to support this growth up to 2031.
- A new Policies Map replaced the St Edmundsbury Local Plan proposals map when the Vision 2031 Local Plan documents were adopted in 2014.

### **Joint Local Plan documents**

- 4.6 The Joint Development Management Policies document sets out generic development control policies against which planning applications can be assessed. The document was produced jointly by St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils and was adopted in February 2015.

### **West Suffolk Local Plan Review**

- 4.7 Upon the adoption of the Forest Heath Core Strategy Single Issue Review and Site Allocations Local Plan, it is the intention of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils to commence work on a West Suffolk Local Plan document which will cover both administrative areas. At present it is anticipated that work on the joint Local Plan will commence towards the end of 2017 or early 2018. A review of the Local Development Scheme will be undertaken after the scope of work has been completed.

## **5. Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 5.1 Councils may also produce Supplementary Planning Documents to give further guidance on their adopted policies. Supplementary Planning Documents can 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. Supplementary Planning Documents that are adopted are available on the West Suffolk website at [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/SPD](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/SPD) which is updated regularly.

## 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 preparation 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 Authority 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.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating Measures</b>
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 Strategic Planning 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 Planning Policy team using the contact details below. Information on the existing and emerging Local Plans is also available on the Council's website.

West Suffolk Planning Policy Team

By E-mail: [planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

By Telephone: 01284 757368

Website: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.westsuffolk.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 Plan should address and the options available.

**Local Development Document (LDD):** A document that forms part of the Local Plan 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 change 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.

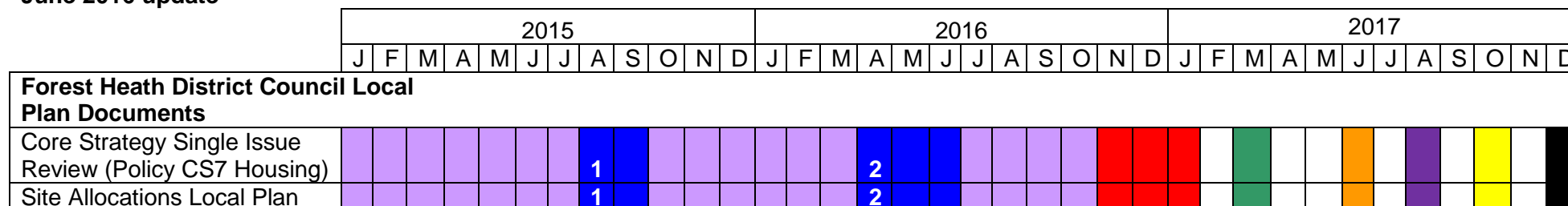
**Submission draft:** Final draft of the development plan document submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

**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.

**Appendix 1:**

**Programme Chart**

**Local Development Scheme 2016 - 2017  
June 2016 update**



KEY	
Document in preparation	
Consultation (Regulation 18) (Issues and Options / Preferred Approach)	
Consultation (Regulation 19) (Pre Submission)	
Submission to Secretary of State (Regulation 22)	
Examination in Public	
Modification report and consultation	
Inspectors Report	
Adoption of document	

N.B The FHDC Site Allocations and Core Strategy Single Issue Review will be subject to two rounds of consultation at the Regulation 18 stage to allow for separate issues and preferred options consultations

## 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 August - October 2015 April - July 2016 (Preferred Option)
Publication Version	November 2016
Submission	March 2017
Examination in Public	June 2017
Adoption	December 2017

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Service Manager – Planning Strategy
Management Arrangements	Local Plans Working Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Strategic Planning 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	Authority Monitoring Report

## Site Allocations Local Plan

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	August - October 2015 April - July 2016 (Preferred Options)
Publication Version	November 2016
Submission	March 2017
Examination in Public	June 2017
Adoption	December 2017

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Service Manager – Planning Strategy
Management Arrangements	Local Plans Working Group, Cabinet and Full Council
Internal Resources required	Strategic Planning 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	Authority Monitoring Report