

LOCAL PLAN WORK PROGRAMME

Planning Advisory Committee - 13 October 2015

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of Protecting the Green Belt

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

Contact Officer Antony Lancaster, Strategic Planning Manager Ext.7326

Recommendation: To consider progress with the work programme for preparing a Local Plan

Reason for recommendation: In order to enable discussion and advice on progress with the work programme for the preparation of a Local Plan.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council currently has two development plan documents (DPD) providing statutory planning policy to guide consideration of development proposals in the District; these are a Core Strategy (adopted February 2011) and an Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (adopted February 2015). Member drop-in sessions were held on 17, 22 and 23 July following adoption of the ADMP.
- 2 This report is concerned with providing an update on the Local Plan work programme agreed by the Planning Advisory Committee on 7 July 2015. The work plan was concerned with the initial stages of plan making until September 2016 focussing on preparation of a proportionate and robust evidence base and effective co-operation with other authorities.
- 3 An independent technical ‘critical friend’ peer review has now been undertaken by Planning Officer Society enterprises (POSe) facilitated via the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). This has provided a useful position statement and potential issues and pitfalls drawing on experiences from other authorities. The report will be made available on the Council’s website and will form a useful part of the Local Plan evidence base. In order to provide for further Member engagement with the Local Plan work programme a PAS facilitated presentation will be arranged via the Planning Portfolio holder which will be open to all Members of the Council to attend.

- 4 The updated Local Plan work programme is set out in appendix A. Key areas of progress are as follows:
- 5 **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).** The SHMA, prepared jointly with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, was completed in September and is the subject of a separate report to this meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee (see agenda item 9). Appendix B indicates the stage now reached in moving towards a housing target.
- 6 **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA and ELAA).** The call for sites for both items of evidence began on 30 September. Following discussion with the portfolio holder it was agreed to hold a single call for sites effectively moving the call for sites for employment land forward by six months to match that of housing. The initial call for sites will run for six weeks until 11 November to enable the SHLAA and ELAA documents to be created. Thereafter the call for sites will remain open allowing updates to be made to the documents when justified. Any updates would be brought to a future meeting of this committee for consideration. Updates are likely to become more frequent as preparation of the Local Plan approaches the examination stage. The call for sites has been advertised via 'In Shape' and direct communication with relevant parties on the Local Plan database.
7. **Economic Needs Study.** Agreement has been reached with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to commission a shared study. There are significant benefits in this approach, not just in terms of potential cost savings, but also in terms of alignment with the jointly commissioned SHMA work and the nature of housing market areas and functioning economic areas in West Kent. This has delayed slightly the commissioning of the study while the brief is finalised. The Economic Development team has also been consulted on the brief and it is being made available to the Planning Portfolio Holder and deputies.
8. **Swanley and Hextable Area Action Plan (AAP).** As a first step towards including an AAP as part of the new Local Plan a consultants brief is being prepared for the production of a masterplan, in conjunction with the Economic Development team, to form a key part of the Local Plan evidence base. The brief is also being made available to the Planning Portfolio Holder and deputies. Such an approach is considered to provide an appropriate means of providing cohesion and vision for the regeneration of Swanley and Hextable. Draft timescales are set out in appendix C.
9. **Infrastructure Plan.** The Infrastructure Plan update was completed in August and is presented to this meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee for consideration (see agenda item 10).
10. **Settlement Hierarchy.** The review of the settlement hierarchy was discussed with the Portfolio holder and deputies on 14 July. As part of the discussion some useful suggestions were made as to how the hierarchy might be adjusted when forming the evidence base for the Local Plan going forward (see agenda item 11).
11. **Duty to Cooperate.** Officers have now had meetings with all eight adjoining authorities and established mechanisms for future quarterly meetings, given that Duty to Cooperate is a continuous process. Groupings have been established for

West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells), North Kent (Sevenoaks, Dartford and Gravesham) and South-East London fringe (Sevenoaks, Bromley and Bexford). Meetings have also commenced with other key stakeholders including the Environment Agency and the Homes and Communities Agency. Going forward, there is the potential, where Duty to Cooperate issues become significant, for cross boundary Member meetings and signed memoranda of understanding.

12. **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).** At the Duty to Cooperate meeting with the Environment Agency officers were advised that the updated Catchment Management Plan for the Medway would be completed by the end of 2015. It was also suggested that an update/appendix to the existing SFRA is likely to be appropriate, rather than a completely new study. As the Catchment Management Plan will include the Eden, and therefore Edenbridge) it is considered appropriate to delay the SFRA update until 2016.
13. **Conservation.** In order to prepare conservation evidence in house, agreement has been reached to double the Conservation resource by employing another officer. An interview process in August has unfortunately been unsuccessful and the post is therefore being re-advertised. This has meant some delay in bringing through this part of the evidence base, but is not considered to be a key concern at this stage.
14. **Gypsies and Travellers.** The preparation of a Gypsy and Traveller Plan has been awaiting a response to a Government consultation on how accommodation needs should be met in the future. The Government response has now been received changing the definition to be applied to Gypsies and Travellers. Given the change in definition and the need to update the evidence base caused by the delay in progress it is recommended that Members support absorbing the identification of sites for Gypsies and Travellers into the work plan for the Local Plan rather than having a separate document.
15. **Climate Change/Renewables.** Work has begun on the Climate Change Evidence base. This includes sourcing energy and carbon use data for the District and researching up to date guidance. The evidence paper will consider all aspects of climate change including mitigation and adaptation. The need to adapt to the effects of climate change is likely to have an impact on a number of policy areas within the new Local Plan including sustainable drainage and flooding, green and blue infrastructure as well as the design of developments. The evidence base will also include investigation of low carbon and renewable technologies as part of climate change mitigation.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. Not preparing a local plan will leave the Council vulnerable to unwanted planning applications and appeal decisions. Recent Government announcements also indicate that the Government will intervene to prepare plans where not being prepared in a timely manner locally.

Key Implications

Financial

Production of the Local Plan will be funded from the LDF reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment.

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The preparation and adoption of a Local Plan will directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusions

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. The current Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Plan are to be updated and combined in a new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District ensuring compliance of policy with any changes in national planning policy since their adoption. This report provides an update on the project plan for the work needed to achieve an adopted Local Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A – Local Plan Work Programme – Evidence Base studies

Appendix B – Proposed process for addressing housing need in the Local Plan

Background Papers:

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee – 7 July 2015 – Local Plan work programme](#)

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Appendix A

Local Plan Work Programme – Evidence Base updated October 2015

Task	Month>	5/15	6/15	7/15	8/15	9/15	10/15	11/15	12/15	1/16	2/16	3/16	4/16	5/16	6/16	7/16	8/16	9/16
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (consultants)		Red																
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (in house)					Green	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red								
Appraisal of non Green Belt land options																		
Economic Needs Study including offices (consultants)			Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red					
Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELAA) (in house)											Red	Red	Red	Red	Red			
Affordable Housing Viability update (consultants)															Green	Red	Red	Red
Commercial Development Viability update (consultants)															Green	Red	Red	Red
Green Belt Review (consultants)											Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Housing for older people (consultants)								Green	Red	Red	Red	Red						
Landscape Character Assessment (consultants)												Green	Red	Red	Red	Red		
Retail Study (consultants)									Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red				
Hotel Study (consultants)		Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red											
Settlement Hierarchy (in house)		Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red											
Sports Facilities/Open Space/Green Infrastructure (consultants)						Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red							
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and consideration of Water Cycle Study/Surface Water Management Plan (consultants)										Green	Green	Red	Red	Red				
Climate Change/Renewables (in house)						Red	Red	Red	Red									
Conservation evidence (in house)										Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Justification for planning standards (in house)												Red	Red	Red				
Infrastructure Plan		Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red											
Duty to Cooperate Statement		Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red										
Swanley and Hextable Masterplan (consultants)						Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red		
Gypsies and Travellers accommodation needs (consultants)											Green	Red	Red	Red				

Green Preparation of brief/appointment of consultant where relevant Red Carrying out of study/evidence base work Blue Call for sites

Appendix B

Proposed process for addressing housing need in the Local Plan

Step 1 Understanding Need Undertake Strategic Housing Market Assessment with Tunbridge Wells BC (SHMA) Understand other adjacent authorities need via Duty to Cooperate discussions	
Step 2 Maximising supply Undertake Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) including a call for Sites* Explore potential for increased site densities Explore potential for focussed increased site densities such as near railway stations Assess quantum of under-utilised employment land Assess potential contribution of windfalls Assess potential contribution of empty properties Assess potential contribution of office conversions Discuss supply options in other authority areas under the Duty to Cooperate	
Step 3 Understanding shortfall Match steps 1 and 2 findings for need and supply to understand level of any shortfall	
Step 4 Assessment of Green Belt Options Undertake full Green Belt Review of the District– assess parcels of land against the five purposes of Green Belt designation. Undertake detailed assessment at settlement boundaries and broad level assessment elsewhere	
Step 5 Other considerations Assess potential land options against other criteria, including: Category 1 constraints (national/international) Category 2 constraints (county/district) Landscape Character Assessments undertaken in neighbouring authorities	
Step 6 Identification of land options for further consideration	
Step 7 Housing target identified	

*note at 1 April 2014 total housing supply for the current Core Strategy plan period 2006-26 was 4,732 (including 450 at Fort Halstead)

Appendix C

Initial programme for preparation of Draft Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable.

September 2015	Consultants Brief prepared and issued.
October 2015	Bids received
November 2015	Interviews (if required) and successful bidder selected.
December 2015	Initial stakeholder workshop(s)
March 2016	Draft Masterplan prepared for consultation
April - May 2016	Consultation
July 2016	Masterplan to Planning Advisory Committee