

LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 19 October 2021

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For Consideration, Development & Conservation Advisory Committee / For Decision, Cabinet

Also considered by:

- Cabinet - 11 November

Key Decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Julia Thornton

Contact Officer: Hannah Gooden, Ext. 7178

Recommendation to Development & Conservation Advisory Committee:

To consider the proposed Local Plan timetable and recommend its approval to Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To approve the Local Plan timetable.

Reason for recommendation: To update the Local Plan work programme to reflect the current timetable for the production of the Local Plan.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report outlines the proposed timetable for the Local Plan. This is known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the document that sets out the Council's proposals and timetable for the production of the Local Plan. The LDS no longer has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval, but has to be made available and published on the Council's website. This is so that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress.
- 3 The Council's current LDS was approved by Cabinet in 2018 and is now out of date. This revision (please see Appendix 1) has been prepared to bring the timetable up to date. This timetable will be included within an LDS

document, which will also provide details of other relevant documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposed Timetable

4 The LDS proposes the following timetable:

5 Evidence base preparation, call for sites, policy preparation (autumn 2021-spring 2022) (shown in blue). This will include ongoing work on a number of evidence base studies, including:

- Settlement Capacity Study (due to complete Sept 21)
- Targeted review of housing need (due to complete Sept 21)
- Settlement hierarchy (due to complete Nov 21)
- Town Centre Strategy (due to complete Dec 21)
- Characterisation Study (due to complete Feb 22)

We will also be commissioning updates to our existing evidence base documents to ensure that they remain up to date and indicate of current needs. A call-for-sites, initially focusing on sites within built confines, will also take place. Discussions with neighbouring authorities and statutory providers are ongoing, in relation to the Duty to Co-operate, and will continue throughout the plan-making process.

6 Informal consultation (Regulation 18) (April/May 2022) (shown in orange). An initial 6-week consultation on the draft plan is programmed to take place in late spring 2022. This will be followed by a period of further policy preparation, reviewing the representations, undertaking Duty to Co-operate discussions, concluding evidence base work and refining the policies within the Local Plan (shown in blue).

7 Pre-submission publication (Regulation 19) (Dec 22/Jan 23) (shown in brown). The plan will be published in winter 2022/23 for final representations, which are then provided to the examining Inspector. This stage of the plan making process asks for specific comments on legal compliance, soundness and whether the duty to co-operate has been met.

8 Reviewing representations / submission preparation (spring 23) (shown in green). Representations received under Regulation 19 will be reviewed and the Plan documents prepared for submission. Given the focus on legal compliance and the duty to co-operate, it is important that officers have sufficient time to consider representations on these matters and if necessary, discuss the issues with relevant parties, including those who raised concerns.

9 The timetable assumes that no significant concerns are raised at this stage and the Council can proceed to submitting the plan for adoption. Officers

will seek to meet this timescale by addressing as many issues as possible immediately after the Regulation 18 stage. However, we cannot assume a predetermined outcome. In the event that significant issues are raised, it may be necessary to consider further rounds of consultation.

- 10 Submission (Regulation 22) (April 23) (shown in yellow) The plan will be considered by Full Council for submission to the Secretary of State, for an examination which will be carried out by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).
- 11 Examination (April 23-April 24) (shown in purple) The timetable for the examination and hearings is at the discretion of PINS, but it is shown indicatively lasting for a year. Adoption (shown in grey) is shown in April 2024.

Conclusion

- 12 This report outlines the proposed update to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the work programme for the production of the Local Plan.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

The current LDS is out of date and it cannot remain unchanged. The reasons for the changes in its content and programme are explained above.

Key Implications

Financial

No additional costs to the Council arise from the amendment of the LDS. Evidence base work is funded from the Council's Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

All local authorities are required to produce an LDS to set out their timetable for the production of planning policy documents.

Local authorities are required to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place by December 2023. The government may intervene where local authorities fail to meet this deadline in accordance with the existing statutory powers, considering appropriate action on a case-by-case basis. It is suggested that provided the Local Plan is submitted before this date and that the examination is ongoing, the risk of intervention is minimal.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Sevenoaks District Council aims to effectively involve the community in the development of all Local Plan documents, in line with the Statement of Community

Involvement.

Appendices

Appendix A - LDS timetable

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services