

Local Plan Update

Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 1st December 2022

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

Status: For Decision

Executive Summary: This report provides an update on the consultation of Plan 2040 - the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and its associated evidence.

This report supports the Key Aims of:

Protecting the Green Belt

Supporting and developing the local economy

Supporting the wellbeing of residents, businesses and visitors

Ensuring that Sevenoaks remains a great place to live, work and visit

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Julia Thornton

Contact Officer: James Gleave ext. 7326 / Hannah Gooden 7178

Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee:

That the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee

- a) Notes the content of the report.

Background and Introduction

1. Members were updated on the progress of the emerging Local Plan on 11th October 2022. Following the approval of the recommendations set out in the October report, the Regulation 18 Plan 2040 - A New Local Plan for Sevenoaks, was issued for consultation on 16th November 2022.
2. This report focusses on the next steps of the consultation and provides information on the supporting evidence base studies. Further updates on the progress of the consultation will be provided at the meeting on 1st December 2022. An update is also provided on the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan.

Discussions with DLUHC

3. Members were updated in October on the latest discussions with DLUHC, which took place on 10th October 2022. A further catch up session will be held following the completion of the consultation in January 2023.

The Emerging Local Plan

4. Officers presented the content of the emerging Local Plan to members in October. The 'plain text' version was approved by Cabinet for consultation purposes on 13th October 2022, subject to the agreement of minor text changes and the final presentational style by the Portfolio Holder for Development and Conservation and the Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services. The fully formatted version of the Regulation 18 document was issued for consultation on 16th November 2022.
5. Cabinet also approved a recommendation to full Council for the withdrawal of the December 2018 Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan that was submitted to the Government for examination on 30th April 2019. Council duly approved the recommendation on the 15th November 2022 and this document was withdrawn in advance of the Regulation 18 Plan being issued for consultation.
6. Officers are very happy with both the content and visual appearance of Plan 2040, which is the start of a conversation on how to make best and most efficient use of land in settlements across the District. In addition to development density, it is intended that further work will be undertaken to identify potential areas of intensification, investigate the co-location of residential and employment uses and develop criteria to make better use of smaller sites in settlements. It is also anticipated that a development brief will be prepared for the land around Sevenoaks Station.
7. The Local Plan is now following an 8 week public consultation process, which will conclude on 11th January 2023. The programme of consultation events is set out in the Consultation Plan presented to members in October. The key components of the programme are as follows:
 - Consultation with members from all neighbouring authorities, commencing on 21st November 2022.
 - Public Drop in sessions in Edenbridge (30th November), Sevenoaks (6th December) and Swanley (8th December). A further online session will be held on 4th January 2023.
 - Postcard 'rush hour' handouts at railway stations across the District to publicise the consultation. These will commence at both rail stations in Edenbridge on 23rd November 2022.
 - All documents will be made available in libraries and Council offices across the District and also on the Council's website from the start of the consultation on 16th November 2022.
 - A video and Plan 2040 Summary Leaflet will be available on the website and at all consultation events.
 - Posters and leaflets with a 'QR' code to link to the online consultation materials.
 - The use of CitizenSpace software that allows residents and other representors to directly comment on specific elements of the document.

- A series of school workshop sessions to engage with students from across the District will be undertaken in accordance with the Consultation Plan presented to members on 11th October 2022.
8. Consultation activities will reflect statutory guidance and the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Officers will be able to update members at the meeting on the outcome of the first of the drop in sessions at Edenbridge. A comprehensive report on the outcome of the full consultation process will be presented to members in February.

Emerging evidence base

9. The following paragraphs provide an update on the Local Plan evidence base, which can be found at https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069131/plan_2040/691/plan_2040_%E2%80%93_evidence_base_documents.

District Wide Character Study (DWCS)

10. The DWCS is now complete. The Story Map is available as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. This is available via the link at paragraph 9.

Employment Needs Study (ENS)

11. The updated ENS is now complete and has been made available as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. This work is available at https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/3543/sevenoaks_district_economic_needs_study_-_2022

Green Belt Study

12. Members were updated on the Green Belt Study at the last meeting and will be aware that the methodology is being used by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) in its own assessment work. The Green Belt study is less significant for the current consultation process, which focusses on the opportunities to make better use of land in existing settlements outside of the Green Belt. The document will be more significant for the second Regulation 18 consultation, which is scheduled to take place next year.

Strategic Transport Study

13. This work is ongoing in conjunction with TMBC to assess the impact of proposed development on the Strategic Road Network, as managed by Highways England. The Stage 1 baseline work, which establishes the current state of congestion on the highways network, is now complete.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

14. The IDP identifies infrastructure required to support planned growth over the period of the Local Plan. The document performs a dual function, in that it will also inform any changes to the CIL Charging Schedule and the associated Infrastructure Funding Statement.
15. As a live document, the IDP will develop alongside the emerging Local Plan, gathering detail as site specific information becomes available. The first iteration is expected to provide a high level assessment of infrastructure

needs, based on discussions with infrastructure providers. The final draft, to be submitted for examination with the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan, will contain a schedule of infrastructure provision, with costs, time horizons, standards of provision and capital programme information. The level of detail will largely be dependent on responses from infrastructure providers.

16. A robust assessment of infrastructure requirements is an essential piece of evidence for the emerging Local Plan to ensure sustainable growth. Given the strategic nature of the infrastructure assessment work, Officers are discussing the production of a joint IDP with TMBC.

Sustainability Appraisal

17. Officers have appointed AECOM to undertake the on-going sustainability appraisal work to support the emerging Local Plan. The Interim Sustainability Appraisal for the Regulation 18 document has been made available for comment as part of the consultation process.

Duty to Co-operate (DtC)

18. DtC engagement has continued over recent months. Further discussions have been held with neighbouring authorities in West Kent and nearby London Boroughs, in the light of the emerging Local Plan. DtC engagement with members at neighbouring authorities and public bodies will continue throughout the consultation period.

Next Steps

19. Officers are now actively progressing the consultation activities for the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, which will continue until 11th January 2023 and further updates will be provided to members in February. Moving forwards, the Local Plan will progress in accordance with the timetable as set out in the LDS, with a view to submitting the Plan for examination in the summer of 2024.

Neighbourhood Planning

20. The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation closed on 22 September 2022. The Council has appointed David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT at Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) to examine the Neighbourhood Plan. He has provided a procedural letter, which includes a list of questions for both Sevenoaks Town Council as Qualifying Body and for Sevenoaks District Council. A joint response was sent to the examiner on 15th November 2022. The examination is likely to conclude by the end of the year and this will be followed by a referendum in the new year.

Emerging Trends

21. A member presentation scheduled on the updated NPPF has been postponed, as the Government has not published an updated version. Officers are happy to discuss member training requirements relating to the emerging Local Plan.

Key Implications

Financial

The production of the Local Plan will be funded from the Local Plan 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 the Local Plan are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

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.

Net Zero

The decisions recommended support the Council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030.

Conclusion

Officers will be happy to take any questions on the content of this report at the meeting.

<h3>Appendices</h3>
None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services