

Preparation of the Local Plan Review

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of our current position, and to stimulate discussion with Members on the content of the Plan, and the process required to take the Plan through to adoption.

Introduction - Setting the scene.

- We are at the final stages of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan, and anticipate the Inspectors Final Report in July 2016.
- During the Examination a new policy was inserted which commits us to an early review of the Local Plan. The policy specified;

DM2A Early Review of the Local Plan

An early review of the Local Plan will be undertaken, commencing with the publication of a consultation document (a Draft Local Plan) in 2016. This is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). An early review will ensure a set of deliverable and achievable housing sites for the duration of the Plan period, with the most up to date policy framework to secure continuity for the longer term.

The review will identify the full, objectively assessed housing needs for the District and proposals to ensure that this is met in so far as this is consistent with national policy (National Planning Policy Framework).

- Local Plan practice has changed, and continues to evolve.
- There is an expectation that we prepare one plan (rather than the two that are currently in place/ emerging).
- There is also an expectation that the process is not as lengthy this time, and so an adopted Plan will be in place within a couple of years.

Discussion Points

1. Explanation of the process to prepare a new Local Plan.
 - i. Evidence gathering / update studies
 - ii. Format of the Plan
 - iii. Plan-making processes

Please refer to Appendix 1 – Outlines the elements of the new plan and background evidence needed.

2. Discussion on the continued relevance (or otherwise) of the existing Core Strategy Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy. What should our Strategy include?

Could Members please consider the Objectives / Vision / Strategy attached and bring to the Task Group Meeting some suggestions for change, to contribute to the discussion.

Please refer to Appendix 2 – Core Strategy Visions and Objectives, and Spatial Strategy.

Appendix 1: Local Plan Review – steps and subjects requiring consideration

Format of the Plan

- Combining of the Core Strategy and the Sites / DM policies plan
- Part 1 – strategic policies / vision etc (Updated from current 2011 CS)
- Part 2 – Detailed policies as from SADMP 2016
- Relevant appendices

Significant revision points

- Housing numbers
- Housing / settlement strategy
- Settlement hierarchy and outside of settlements
- Role of Neighbourhood Plans

Impact of new / emerging Government policies

- Development in and around villages
- Brownfield land
- Development on brownfield / underused employment land
- Starter homes
- Affordable housing

Evidence

- Very much required, but also pressure for a light touch
- Employment
- Housing (SHMA, HELAA, availability, viability)
- Habitats
- Green infrastructure
- Retail
- Gypsies
- Transport (capacities)
- Historic environment
- Strategic Flood Risk

Testing

- HRA
- Sustainability Appraisal (Update needed for our base material)
- Viability – new harder Govt requirement
- Duty to Co-operate

Process

- Previously 5+ stages
- Endless consultation on incremental stages (Issues and Options, Preferred Options, Publication...etc)
- Suggest one draft plan prepared and consulted on before 'Publication' i.e. the final draft for Examination
- Plan supported by evidence

- Role of Members and the Task Group
 - Very resource intensive to work up a Plan line by line in a committee
 - Presentation and explanation of evidence
 - Site visits
 - Monthly / more frequent meetings / notes / actions
- Public involvement / engagement and value added

Timings – ideas to consider

- Prepare evidence and background documents to autumn 2016
- Draft plan October 2016
- Agree and consult December 2016
- Consider / amend to March 2017

Conclusions / way forward

- More detailed paper to a Cabinet Briefing / Task Group
- Assess evidence requirements
- Test possibilities for the shorter process
- Clear willingness and acceptance of a necessarily shorter preparation period
- This must be tempered by the risks of shortcutting on evidence and 'consultation'.
- Member reaction.

Appendix 2: Extracts from Core Strategy (adopted 2011)