

Committee: Scrutiny (Local Plan)

Date: Thursday,
10 December 2020

Title: Local Plan Project Management –
Quarter 3

**Portfolio
Holder:** Councillor John Evans Portfolio Holder
for Planning and the Local Plan

**Report
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Summary

1. This report provides an update report on risks and project management for the local plan during Quarter 3 of the current financial year.

Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the conclusions of the report on risk and project management and endorses the proposed actions.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the attached draft letter update to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for Quarter 3 of the current financial year.

Financial Implications

2. The project management arrangements are funded from the approved local plan budget.

Background Papers

3. No additional papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	No impact
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact

Health and Safety	No impact
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact
Sustainability	No impact
Ward-specific impacts	No impact
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

- At the meeting on 7 October 2020 the Committee endorsed the arrangements for regular project and risk management reports on the local plan, including formal quarterly updates for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in accordance with a Full Council resolution. This report provides an update for Quarter 3 in accordance with the agreed arrangements and seeks any comments to the proposed MHCLG update.

Risk Register Update

- The latest version of the Risk Register is attached as Appendix 1. The format has been amended slightly to make it more informative as an update, a column has been added to identify any changes since the last report and to provide a reason.
- There are eight changes since the October report to committee. The two most significant relate to staffing (ID ref 1 and 17 move to a higher risk), two officers in the local plans team have been offered career opportunities elsewhere and are leaving and this has resulted in an increased risk in relation to skills and capacity. The risk in relation to national planning changes (ID ref 14) has been scaled down following informal responses by Government to recent consultation responses. Also the risk of inconsistencies with Neighbourhood plans (ID ref 22) has halved as officers continue to work with local communities on their proposals.
- Four new risks have been added in (ID refs 29 – 32). The most significant of these is the risk of Government intervention however this is judged to be low following the approval of the Local Development Scheme, recent discussions with Government officials and the ongoing progress of the Council.

Project Plan Update

9. The format of the update follows the approach agreed at the October Scrutiny Committee which is in three parts, the overview 'Dashboard', the 'Workstream Status' and an extract from the live Project Plan.

Workplan Dashboard

10. This document is shown in Appendix 2, and provides a high level summary of what is happening. The arrow changes refer to the Quarter 2 dashboard as it was reported to Committee in October. In comparison with last quarter the total number of live tasks has increased. It is important to note that there are currently no 'Red' rated tasks (ie critical tasks that require to be urgently resolved) but there are five 'Amber' rated tasks that require prompt action. Details of all the tasks are summarised in the following sections.

Workstream Status

11. This document is shown in Appendix 3 and is intended to provide a single assessment of the overall status of the project (with a Red/Amber/Green RAG rating) and then a commentary. Significant progress has been made since the last report with the approval of the Local Development Scheme and Project Initiation Document. The Statement of Community Involvement was also supported and is currently subject to consultation. The Community Stakeholder Forum is also now meeting regularly.
12. The main areas of risk that are being attended to are the approval of the local plan budget as part of the Council Medium Term Financial Strategy which is due to be considered shortly at Full Council and then the staffing issues described in paragraph 7 above. On this latter point arrangements are in place to maintain cover and to recruit suitably experienced and qualified staff into the two posts.

Project Plan Live Tasks

13. This document is shown in Appendix 4, and is an extract from the live database in Microsoft Project for Quarter 3. It shows all the tasks which have been or are due to be progressed within the current quarter with a description of the task, assigned officer, key dates, a RAG rating and comments which set out what needs to be done to change amber or red ratings to green ones.

Draft Progress Letter to MHCLG

14. A draft update letter is shown in Appendix 5 based on the information above and the Committee is requested to note the contents.

Conclusions

15. The current progress on the local plan is in accordance with the timetable set out in the approved Local Development Scheme and the actions identified in the Risk Register and Project Plan are being actively undertaken.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Failure to successfully Project Manage the Local Plan will result in an unsound Plan	1 – Provided robust and effective project management system established	4 - Lack of Spatial Strategy and planning policies leading to potentially unacceptable development	Establish a robust and effective project management system with appropriate oversight by the Scrutiny Committee

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.