

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group
Title: Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation
Report Author: Stephen Miles, Local Plans and New Communities Manager
smiles@uttlesford.gov.uk
Date: Monday, 24 May 2021

Summary

1. This report summarises the first consultation on the Local Plan (also known as the Issues and Options consultation) which closed on 21 April.

Recommendations

2. That the group notes the outcome of the consultation and endorses the use of the representations received to inform the drafting of the Local Plan.

Financial Implications

3. The approved budget for the Local Plan in 2021-22 includes sufficient provision for the work needed as part of the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The draft timetable builds in three stages for people to make representations on the draft Local Plan.
Community Safety	N/a
Equalities	Forthcoming policies will be subject to an Equalities and Healthy Impact Assessment (EqHIA)
Health and Safety	N/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Preparation of a local plan is a statutory duty. It needs to meet legal tests and

	comply with regulations.
Sustainability	Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objectives of the Council and the Local Plan will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/a

Situation

6. The Council's first consultation on the Local Plan has just concluded. This consultation was run in a different way from 'normal' consultations on a Local Plan in that instead of the Council putting a document out with the Council's ideas on the issues facing the district and the options for dealing with those issues, the Council instead asked the public and other stakeholders to tell us what they thought the issues were and how they could be dealt with. This allowed people to have their say before any decisions are made and before a single line of the Local Plan is written.
7. The consultation was organised into 9 themes, with a 'mini-consultation' running on each theme. Each theme introduced by a discussion of that theme in public at an independent Community Stakeholder Forum (CSF), including a presentation from an independent expert in the field. This was intended to break up the issues into 'bite-sized' chunks and introduce them in a way that was easy for people who do not normally get involved in the planning system to understand and respond. This forum discussed the themes in order to stimulate ideas and debate in the community and ultimately encourage more and better representations. This was broadcast live as well as being put up on YouTube.
8. Each Community Stakeholder Forum was seen live by between 33 and 49 viewers. The presentations and discussions at the CSF were then viewed 3,419 times subsequently on YouTube.
9. A summary of further actions to promote this first consultation is set out below:
 - a. A leaflet promoting the consultation was sent to all households and businesses in the district at the start of the consultation;
 - b. A press release was sent out for each theme targeting the deadlines of local papers to seek exposure on the issues being discussed, this was also published on the UDC website;
 - c. After the first three themes adverts were also placed in the local papers to supplement the press releases;
 - d. Content from the themes was also put up on social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc;
 - e. Each theme was 'pushed' a number of times on social media;
 - f. A Local Plan Newsletter was sent out regularly to those that signed up on the Council's website;

- g. Members were sent promotional material at the start of each theme to aid them in promoting each consultation in their communities;
 - h. Town and Parish Councils were sent promotional material at the start of each theme to aid them in promoting each consultation in their communities as well as preparing their responses;
 - i. Two Member Forums were held to encourage discussion on the themes and assist them in promoting the consultation in their communities;
 - j. Two Town and Parish Council Forums were held to encourage discussion on the themes and assist them in promoting the consultation in their communities as well as preparing their responses;
 - k. One Forum was held with developers and agents to assist them in preparing their submissions;
 - l. The Council's Local Plan web pages were redesigned to make them easier to navigate and more attractive.
 - m. Individuals and organisations registered on the online consultation portal received email notification at the start of the consultation for each theme.
10. Responses received during the first four weeks of each consultation were summarised and brought back to the CSF and LPLG to keep members of the groups abreast of and begin considering the responses. So far, these groups have considered responses on the first six themes. To inform this report, the remaining responses to the first six themes have been summarised, furthermore all the responses to the final three themes have been summarised. These responses have been appended to this report and will be used to inform the drafting of the Local Plan.
11. In total the Council received 670 responses to the consultation. Many of these responses are detailed, and considering a broad range of issues. Officers consider that the discussion at the CSF has helped to broaden the debate and assist those preparing representations.
12. The consultation was also supplemented by a youth survey to encourage issues to be raised by younger residents, who often do not make up the usual people responding to planning consultations. This elicited 97 responses to a survey and a further 17 more detailed responses setting out how they considered development pressures may be responded to. A report summarising these responses is appended to this report.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Insufficient regard is given to the comments received on the consultation	1 Little	3 Could lead to unsound plan	Members and officers to carefully consider results of consultation, and clearly explain reasons for decisions

			made
--	--	--	------

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.