

Committee:

Scrutiny

Date:

23 June 2021

Title: Local Plan Project Management – Quarter 1**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor John Evans Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan**Report Author:** Simon Payne, Local Plan Project Manager
01799 510465**Key decision:** No**Summary**

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

Financial Implications

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

Background Papers

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

Impact

- 5.

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| 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 1 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.
- There are ten changes since the last report to committee. The two most significant relate to staffing (ID refs 2 and 17 move to a higher risk), a senior planner in the local plans team has been offered career opportunities elsewhere and is leaving and this has resulted in an increased risk in relation to skills and capacity. Two risks have been closed following the successful completion of the Community Stakeholder Forum's contribution (ID ref 32) to the Issues and Options stage and also resolution of procurement support in commissioning work on the evidence base (ID ref 33).
- Four new risks have been added in (ID refs 35 – 38). The two most significant of these are risks associated with evidence base work being completed on time and officers are working closely with consultants to ensure timetables are met and that the work is effectively co-ordinated between consultants.

Project Plan Update

- 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. An additional diagram (Appendix 2) has been added which shows the overall process to prepare the Regulation 18 Draft of the Plan over the next six months.

Workplan Dashboard

11. This document is shown in Appendix 3, and provides a high level summary of what is happening. The arrow changes refer to the Quarter 1 dashboard as it was reported to Committee in February. 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 six 'Amber' rated tasks that require prompt action. Details of all the tasks are summarised in the following sections.

Workstream Status

12. This document is shown in Appendix 4 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 completion of the work of the Community Stakeholder Forum during the Issues and Options Stage. The Call for Sites period has ended and around 300 sites are currently being verified and logged. The Leadership Group and the Cabinet have discussed and agreed a draft vision and objectives for the local plan.
13. The main areas of risk that are being attended to are the loss of a senior planner and arrangements are being made to recruit to the post as soon as possible with interim arrangements to ensure no loss of cover. Other risks relate to co-ordination and management of the evidence base work which comprises seventeen studies with a range of different consultants. On the governance side it is important that the Leadership Group and Cabinet agree both the housing numbers and also the Preliminary Outline Strategy. Both of these issues are required to allow the officers to complete the site assessment work in line with the agreed local plan timetable.

Project Plan Live Tasks

14. This document is shown in Appendix 5, and is an extract from the live database in Microsoft Project for Quarter 1. 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 all ratings to green ones.

Draft Progress Letter to MHCLG

15. A draft update letter is shown in Appendix 6 based on the information above and the Committee is requested to note the contents.

Conclusions

16. 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

17.

| 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.