

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group
Title: Reasonable Alternatives for the Local Plan
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Date:
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Summary

1. This report sets out proposed arrangements for reporting the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan to members for formal consideration.

Recommendations

2. To support the proposed member governance arrangements for formal consideration of the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan in accordance with the details in the foregoing report.

Financial Implications

3. The approved budget for the Local Plan in 2021-22 includes sufficient provision for the work needed through to the end of March.

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.
 - a. Local Development Scheme approved by the Cabinet on 20 October 2020 https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10546/Local-Development-Scheme-2020/pdf/Local_Development_Scheme_2020_final.pdf?m=6374008621039700

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal will be subject to public consultation
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. The reasonable alternative spatial options will also be subject to sustainability appraisal.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/a

Situation

6. On 16 September the Council's Local Plan Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed a report looking at the Local Plan process around agree the regulation 18 Local Plan for formal consultation. As set out below, the programme of work on the Local Plan before members can agree the Local Plan for consultation is substantial. This report will set out an approach to ensure members have sufficient time to absorb, examine and evaluate the necessary information to make a decision.
7. There are three procedural steps prior to formal public consultation. Firstly consideration of the draft local plan and evidence base by the Local Plan Leadership Group (LPLG), then Cabinet and finally a decision by Full Council.
8. The extent of the content and supporting evidence base is considerable and there is a programme of reports scheduled to go to LPLG between September and December 2021 relating to eleven separate commissioned studies. Reports are also being provided on certain topics to the Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Group during that period.

Reasonable Alternatives to the Spatial Strategy

9. A key stage in the preparation of the draft local plan will be the generation of several reasonable alternative spatial strategies that can then be evaluated against the draft vision and objectives for the emerging plan. It is proposed that an additional meeting of LPLG is arranged in the Autumn 2021 to review the alternatives generated by officers and consultants before the evaluation takes place.
10. This step will ensure transparency of the process, as well as member input into this workstream before the evaluation of the options.

Proposed Series of Member Briefings

11. The material that will need to be considered in conjunction with the draft plan includes:

- a. Full version of the Draft Local Plan with all proposed policies and explanatory text
- b. Full set of Proposals Maps showing all proposed allocations
- c. Set of Topic Papers summarising the key elements of the draft plan
- d. Sustainability Appraisal: Final Regulation 18 Report
- e. Equalities Impact Assessment: Regulation 18 Plan
- f. Infrastructure Delivery Plan: Final Regulation 18 Report
- g. Transport Study: Final Regulation 18 Report
- h. Collaboration Partnership Statement on larger Proposed Sites

12. It is proposed that a series of specific member briefings are arranged early in 2022 and prior to the formal meetings of LPLG, Cabinet and also Full Council when the draft local plan is to be considered. The purpose of these briefings will be to allow members to receive a presentation about the findings and proposals and to ask questions in preparation for the debate and discussion which will take place in the formal meetings. In order to manage the work effectively it is suggested that there are four briefings, each of one and a half hours' duration, based on the content set out in paragraph 8 above which will be organised into subject matters/topics.

13. In addition to these briefings it is recommended that a LPLG Member Site Visit day is arranged and this will be an opportunity for members to visit the larger sites that are proposed for inclusion in the local plan. These visits will also be arranged for early in 2022.

Conclusions

14. It is considered that these additional member briefings and meetings are an important improvement to the process. There will be an implication for the local plan timetable with the preparation time for the draft Regulation Local Plan being extended by up to eight weeks however it is not anticipated that the projected Summer 2023 submission date for the local plan would be delayed as a result of these changes.

Risk Analysis

15.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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<p>Members are not sufficiently briefed on the content of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and that effective decision making does not take place.</p>	<p>2 - Medium risk given that LPLG have a programme of study reports to be received prior to the draft plan report.</p>	<p>3 - The impact would be high given that the Council is committed create a sound local plan</p>	<p>A programme of member briefings and a Site Visit Day.</p>
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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.

LOCAL PLAN - PREFERRED OPTIONS TIMETABLE

Additional Member Engagement

Officer Work 2021										Officer Work 2022			
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	
CALL FOR SITES		SITE ASSESSMENT STAGE 1			SITE ASSESSMENT STAGE 2								
PREPARE STRATEGIC EVIDENCE			COMPLETE EVIDENCE BASE										
NEGOTIATE/DISCUSS/MASTERPLAN WITH PROMOTORS & LANDOWNERS										DRAFT REG 18 WRITTEN			
CONSULT/WORK WITH DTC STAKEHOLDERS													
LPLG Work 2021										LPLG Work 2022			
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	
AGREE METHODOLOGY	AGREE STRATEGIC PLANNING OBJECTIVES	CONFIRM HOUSING NUMBERS	STRATEGIC CONTEXT	RECEIVE VARIOUS EVIDENCE STUDIES			REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES	RECEIVE VARIOUS EVIDENCE STUDIES			4 SUBJECT BRIEFING SESSIONS	CONSIDER REG 18 PLAN	
			AGREE PRELIMINARY OUTLINE STRATEGY & SETTLEMENT HIERACHY	UPDATES ON DTC & DEVELOPER DISCUSSIONS				UPDATES ON DTC & DEVELOPER DISCUSSIONS					
Cabinet Decisions 2021										Cabinet Decisions 2022			
	May 27th		July 1st		September 2nd							April	
	AGREE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		CONFIRM HOUSING NUMBERS		AGREE PRELIMINARY OUTLINE STRATEGY & SETTLEMENT HIERACHY							CONSIDER REG 18 PLAN FOLLOWED BY FULL COUNCIL	