

Committee: Local Plan Scrutiny

Date:

Title: Local Plan Project Management – Quarter 3

Thursday, 16
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Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Evans Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan

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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 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for Quarter 3 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 Government 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 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) update.

Risk Register Update

- The latest version of the Risk Register is attached as Appendix 1.
- There are nine changes since the last report to committee. One significant risk relates to the funding of the local plan (ID ref 1) in future years given Council budget pressures. Two significant risks relate to staffing (ID refs 2 and 17), a senior planner has been appointed in the local plans section and this has created a vacancy which is being covered by an interim appointment whilst recruitment takes place.
- A risk associated with the plan not being completed on time (ID ref 8) has been amended to take account of the retiming of the Regulation 18 Local Plan to allow time for a LPLG workshop. This retiming was reported to the committee in September and it is not proposed to impact on the overall timescale for the plan. One risk related to corporate matters (ID ref 20) has been reduced following the appointment of the Chief Executive and Interim Director of Planning. Local plan officers have extensively briefed these senior officers on the emerging plan. A key deadline is also the need to brief consultants on the development options (ID ref 37 and 38) that will need to be evaluated and these risks have been elevated given the need to complete the briefing before Christmas.
- Two new risks have been added in (ID refs 42 – 43). The first relates to the process of negotiations with the owners and promoters of larger development sites becoming too complex and consideration is being given to streamline this process. The second is more related to the governance stages of the plan and the primacy of making decisions on the basis of the evidence base.

11. Two additional risks have now been closed, one related to procurement processes (ID ref 35) and one related to the completion of the site assessment work (ID ref 40).

Project Plan Update

12. The format of the update follows the approach agreed at the October 2020 Scrutiny Committee which is in three parts, the overview 'Dashboard', the 'Workstream Status' and an extract from the live Project Plan.

Workplan Dashboard

13. This document is shown in Appendix 2, and provides a high level summary of what is happening. The arrow changes refer to the previous dashboard as it was reported to Committee in September. In comparison with last quarter the total number of live tasks has increased from 559 to 831. 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 34 'Amber' rated tasks that require prompt action. Details of all the tasks are summarised in the following sections.

Workstream Status

14. 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 continues to be made. Leadership Group are receiving a steady stream of reports on the evidence base. Officers have completed all the site assessment work and the technical part of this work has been subject to consultation with Parish and Town Councils, ward members and the landowners and promoters of the sites.
15. There are two main areas of risk at this point. The first is the preparation of development options for the consultants to evaluate and a workshop with the Leadership Group on 9 December will help inform the officer work to brief the consultants. The second main risk is the completion and co-ordination of the consultants work between now and March 2022 to inform the preparation of the preferred strategy which will be considered by Leadership Group, Cabinet and Full Council as part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

Project Plan Live Tasks

16. 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 all ratings to green ones.

Draft Progress Letter to MHCLG

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

Conclusions

18. The current progress on the local plan is in accordance with the revised timetable agreed with the Scrutiny Committee on 16 September 2021 with the local plan being ready for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in August 2023 as set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. The actions identified in the Risk Register and Project Plan are being actively undertaken.

Risk Analysis

19.

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.