

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group
Title: LPLG draft Local Plan Policy Chapters
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Summary

1. The preparation of a new Local Plan involves a number of stages, including public consultation. This is to ensure that it is robust and comprehensive.
2. The Preferred Options consultation stage is the public and other stakeholders' first opportunity to comment on the emerging spatial strategy and policies.
3. Consultation on the Preferred Options version of the plan is programmed to commence in June and run for at least six weeks.
4. This report includes the policy chapters in the emerging plan, the chapters on the spatial strategy and sites are set to come to a forthcoming meeting of the group.

Recommendations

5. The group are recommended to:
 - a. Consider the draft policy chapters for the emerging Local Plan; and
 - b. Recommend on to Cabinet that these chapters form part of the 'Preferred Options' consultation of the Local Plan.
 - c. Note that any amendments to the draft chapters prior to Cabinet are agreed with the Portfolio Holder.

Financial Implications

6. The Preferred Options consultation is within the 2022/23 budget.

Background Papers

7. None

Impact

- 8.

Communication/Consultation	The timetable builds in three stages for
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	people to make representations on the draft Local Plan. The Preferred Options consultation is the second of these stages.
Community Safety	N/a
Equalities	The draft 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	The draft 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

9. Uttlesford District Council last adopted a Local Plan in 2005. It set out a vision, policies and proposal for future development and land use in the district to 2011. The Local Plan is now more than a decade out of date and there have been significant changes to national policy since 2011. The Council needs to get in place a new Local Plan to guide development in a coordinated way.
10. The preparation of a Local Plan involves a number of stages including public consultation. This is to ensure that it is robust and comprehensive. Key stages in the development of the Uttlesford Local Plan are:
 - a. *Preparation of evidence base* – preparation and completion of various studies which will be used to inform policy development and site allocation;
 - b. *Issues and Options (regulation 18) consultation* – identification of relevant Issues and Options for the future development and protection of the district. Consultation with relevant stakeholder groups and with the wider public. The Issues and Options consultation for the Uttlesford Local Plan was undertaken during 2020/21, and won a regional RTPI award for excellence;

- c. *Preferred Options (regulation 18) consultation* – development of a preferred strategy and suite of policies and consultation thereon (this is the stage the Council is approaching);
- d. *Publication of a submission version (regulation 19) of the plan* – development of a version of the Local Plan that the Council considers should be submitted to the Secretary of State, and publication of this document to invite representations on it.
- e. *Submission* – submission of the plan to the Secretary of State.
- f. *Examination* – an independent Government Inspector considers the ‘soundness’ of the document in a public examination and produces a report; and
- g. *Adoption* – the plan is formally adopted by the Council.

11. The Local Plan Leadership Group has undertaken a significant amount of work on the emerging Local Plan since the close of the Issues and Options consultation. Including:

- a. The development of a draft vision and objectives, taking into account the representations received during the Issues and Options consultation;
- b. The development of a preliminary outline strategy, which started to put spatial considerations on the draft vision and objectives; and
- c. Receiving and considering evidence base on a variety of topics over the autumn and winter.

12. Officers have been using the draft vision, objectives and preliminary outline strategy drafted by the members of the Local Plan Leadership Group, alongside the emerging evidence base to inform the drafting of the Local Plan. Also, informing this work has been discussions with our partners and other stakeholders; and workshops with members of LPLG.

13. It is vital that the plan addresses Climate Change, which is the Council’s top priority, with appropriate policies on sustainable design and construction, providing opportunities for people to reduce their use of the motor car. The plan will allow for reductions in emissions to allow new development to assist the Country achieve its net zero carbon commitment.

14. The Council is currently at the preferred options stage indicated above, and appended to this report are the draft policy chapters recommended to form the preferred options plan. The chapters with the emerging spatial strategy and site allocations, as well as those policies and supporting text which make reference to specific sites, will be brought to the LPLG meeting next week on 18 May. Below are the chapters of the preferred options plan and an indication as to which meeting they are being brought:

Chapter Title	Which meeting of LPLG?
1. Introduction	This meeting (12 May)
2. Climate Change	This meeting (12 May)
3. Spatial Strategy	Next meeting (18 May)
4. How and where future growth will be accommodated	Next meeting (18 May)
5. Transport and Movement	Next meeting (18 May)
6. Protecting and Enhancing Uttlesford	This meeting (12 May)
7. Delivering Jobs and Supporting a Vibrant Economy	This meeting (12 May)
8. Housing	This meeting (12 May)
9. Provision of Services and Facilities	This meeting (12 May)
10. Infrastructure	This meeting (12 May)
11. Delivering and Monitoring the Local Plan	This meeting (12 May)

15. The Preferred Options draft of the Local Plan must not be thought of as the final version of the plan. The purpose of consultation is to listen and respond to points made by consultees, therefore the Council must keep an open mind as to the potential for changes following the consultation. A further reason for not thinking about the Preferred Options draft as a final version of the plan is because further work is planned to work up the detail and deliverability of the plan. The Preferred Options draft should be considered a first draft setting out the Council's preference for where development should go and what policies should support it but recognise that further work will be necessary following the consultation.
16. The consultation will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This will appraise the plan against a range of social, environmental and economic topics in order to help identify any significant effects and against 'reasonable alternatives' to the options proposed. The SA will be subject to consultation alongside the draft plan. Consultees will be able to draw on the findings of the SA to inform their representations to the plan. They will also be able to make comments on the findings of the SA.
17. Public bodies have a duty to cooperate (DTC) on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those that relate to strategic priorities. The has met some DTC bodies at workshops set up to discuss the infrastructure implications of the plan, and a further 'round-table meeting' is proposed to be set up once the Preferred Options consultation gets underway.

18. In March 2021, Cabinet approved the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Community Engagement Strategy for the Local Plan. These documents are being used to develop a specific engagement strategy for the Preferred Options consultation. The Community Engagement Strategy states that for the draft regulation 18 consultation the following methods of engagement will be considered:

- a. Publication on the consultation portal;
- b. Exhibitions / Virtual Exhibitions / pop-up exhibitions;
- c. Attractive and engaging Website storyboard;
- d. Workshops / Zoom meetings with key groups;
- e. Topic based focus groups comprising representatives from different groups • Area focused engagement activities

19. Once consultation on the Preferred Options report is complete, all the representations received will be considered and used to develop the Council's Submission draft plan.

20. The Submission draft plan will be published in the following year and representations invited before submitting to the Secretary of State for examination.

Risk Analysis

21.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Preferred Options draft is not approved in a timely manner impacting on the ability of the Council to keep to the timetable for the Local Plan	2	3 – any delay in the Local Plan timetable extends the period of time that the district is vulnerable to speculative development as well as increasing the risk of government intervention	LPLG members have been involved in the production of the plan through the development of the draft vision and objectives and preliminary outline strategy, as well as receiving reports on the emerging evidence

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.