

**Committee:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date:**

**Title:** Local Plan Project Management - Quarter 1

Thursday, 30 June  
2022

**Report Author:** Stephen Miles, Local Plans and New  
Communities Manager  
smiles@uttlesford.gov.uk

---

## 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. That the Committee note the conclusions of the report on risk and project management and endorses the proposed actions.
3. That the Committee notes the attached draft letter update to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for Quarter 1 of the current financial year

## Financial Implications

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

## Background Papers

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

## Impact

- 6.

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 1 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 ten risks identified with new comments and six others with comments. Two key risks relate to the plan being overtaken by events and the risk of running additional rounds of consultation / publication (ID refs 8 and 44). There are new comments on these risks relate to the fact that an additional option has emerged late in the process and the council requires more time to evaluate this so it can be potentially included in the plan. A report is going to Cabinet on 7 July to update the Council's Local Development Scheme – this extends the timetable so that the regulation 18 preferred options consultation takes place in the autumn, instead of the summer. Officers and key members consider that this option is a realistic option that is worthy of exploration and it is best to include it in the regulation 18 consultation rather than it potentially appear in the regulation 19 publication period without previously being consulted upon.
- A number of briefings of members, including LPLG and subsequently all members have taken place on the emerging spatial options. These have been intended to give members sight of the emerging options prior to their publication and allow for questions to understand the logic of the options. One of the benefits of the extended timetable is giving members and officers extra time to review all the potential sites and further evidence base ahead of the regulation 18 plan being published for consultation. Two examples of the benefits of this extra time to review, is the barrister review of sites previously refused at appeal and the subsequent officer review, and workshops to be set up over the summer. Lack of political consensus has always been identified as a risk (ID 21), and the inclusion of additional workshops is identified in the comment column.
- The government's publication of the Regeneration and Levelling Up bill is identified as a risk (ID 16). Currently it appears that there may be less scope for inclusion of DM policies in the Local Plan, there are also numerous other changes relating to design codes, a proposed infrastructure levy. The Council

should keep an eye on these changes and consider how they will impact the emerging plan. The availability of evidence is also a risk (Risk ID 37 and 38), a final draft of the transport evidence will not be finalised to inform the drafting of the plan, although it will be ready to publish for the consultation. This is being mitigated, by keeping in close contact with the transport consultants and the draft evidence will be sufficiently advanced to inform the plan.

## **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 March. In comparison with last quarter the total number of live tasks has increased slightly from 722 to 746. It is important to note that there are currently no 'Red' rated tasks (i.e. critical tasks that require to be urgently resolved) but there are 12 '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. As mentioned above, an additional option has emerged late in the process and the council requires more time to evaluate this so it can be potentially included in the plan. A report is going to Cabinet on 7 July to update the Council's Local Development Scheme – this extends the timetable so that the regulation 18 preferred options consultation takes place in the autumn, instead of the summer. Officers and key members consider that this option is a realistic option that is worthy of exploration, and it is best to include it in the regulation 18 consultation rather than it potentially appear in the regulation 19 publication period without previously being consulted upon.
15. Regarding recruitment a new Planner was recruited in March to fill the monitoring post. A Principal Planner has recently been recruited on a 6-month contract to fill in a vacant post. The new Director of Planning and Building Control has been appointed and starts on June 29th. It is vital that all staff changes related to the LP preparation are managed promptly and effectively given the demanding timescales and the current crucial stages of the process.
16. Eight draft chapters of the emerging plan relating to development management policies were taken to Local Plan Leadership Group in May. The group made comments on the chapters and voted to recommend them onto Cabinet.

## Project Plan Live Tasks

17. This document is shown in Appendix 4, 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 DLUHC**

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

### **Conclusions**

19. There is a significant amendment to the timetable for the Local Plan. A report is being taken to Cabinet in July to agree an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS). The reasons for this change are set out above and in the appendices to this report.

### **Risk Analysis**

20.

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.