



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

SCRUTINY COMMISSION
COUNCIL

24 MAY 2018
12 JUNE 2018

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

DIRECTIONS FOR GROWTH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – SCOPE, ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

Report of Director (Environment and Planning)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Local Plan Review (LPR) and to set out the comments to the Scope, Issues and Options consultation exercise.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Members:

- I. Note the progress made to date on the Local Plan Review
- II. Note that an eight week public consultation exercise was undertaken between 8 January and 4th March 2018.
- III. Note the summary of comments received to the Scope, Issues and Options consultation but acknowledge that many contributions were from developers and landowners which will have been weighted towards their own interests;
- IV. Note the concerns of the Scrutiny Commission that the delivery of infrastructure needs to be given sufficient priority in all its forms be reiterated; and
- V. Agree that progress continues to be made on the Local Plan Review as set out in the Local Development Scheme

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

Scope, Issues and Options consultation (Jan-Mar 2018)

- 3.1 In December 2017, Council endorsed the revised timetable for the Local Plan Review as set out in the Local Development Scheme. The first stage of the LPR consultation invited views on the Scope of the review, the issues that ought to be taken into consideration and the broad options for growth that ought to be considered.

3.2 The consultation document set out the following key issues/questions

- The need to plan to accommodate as a minimum of 454 homes per annum for the plan period
- Recognise that under the 'duty to cooperate' we have to assist and accommodate the shortfall that is occurring in the Housing Market Area, and that the Strategic Growth Plan is our prospectus for achieving this
- The identification of 6 broad potential options for accommodating growth and the opportunities and challenges these options may provide. The broad options sought view on focussing development through the following:
 - Neighbourhood Development Plan led development
 - Existing Core Strategy approach
 - Key transport and accessibility corridors
 - New Garden Village/town
 - Proportionate growth of key rural settlements
 - A mix of the above options

3.3 The consultation document invited respondents to comment on 25 questions or to make any other comments they wished to do at this stage.

Publicity for the Consultation

3.4 In addition to using the Council's planning policy consultation database (which allows all those with an interest in planning policy to be informed about consultations) other communication channels were used, including social media.

3.5 The consultation and notifications included:

- 500+ direct letters/emails
- Articles in the Borough Bulletin (which is received by all households)
- Press release in local paper (Hinckley Times)
- Parish Council presentations
- Document deposits in libraries.
- Twitter and Facebook feeds ahead of the consultation and during the consultation
- Front page icon on the Council's website (www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk)
- During the consultation period, we launched a stand alone consultation platform called Commonplace as another channel through which to engage stakeholders

3.6 The Parish Councils that took up our offer of a briefing included:

- Burbage Parish Council
- Sheepy Parish Council
- Stoke Golding Parish Council
- Witherley Parish Council
- Twycross Parish Council (this did not take place due to bad weather)

3.7 General drop-in and themed presentations were also delivered at venues across the borough and included:

- Hinckley Town centre (Sainsburys and Atkins building)
- Community and village halls in Markfield, Bagworth, Witherley, Burbage, Market Bosworth, Groby, Sheepy and Newbold Verdon, Earl Shilton and Barwell (Age UK and George Ward Centre)

- 3.8 Engagement with Parish Councils and other bodies will be ongoing and opportunities will continue to be taken to keep them updated.

Comments received in response to the Consultation

- 3.9 Over 840 comments were received to the consultation from around 80 submissions. These have been from a range of stakeholders including statutory consultees, Parish Councils, businesses, residents, developers and interest groups.
- 3.10 Attached to this report (as Appendix A) is a summary of all the comments organised by each question for ease of reading.
- 3.11 The key comments from the consultation are highlighted in the following section, (Appendix A contains, in full, all the comments received and our proposed response to these comments):

Vision (Q1)

- There was broad support amongst the respondents for the revised vision, however, respondents suggested minor changes be made to the vision to make it more 'borough specific'. Several respondents put forward text for what should be included in the revised vision.

Objectives (Q2-Q3)

- Most respondents agreed with the objectives as they are drafted, but some respondents suggested an additional objectives for health and wellbeing; communities; health and wellbeing.
- Respondents, mainly from the development, sector suggested the 'development/land...' objective was not fit for purpose and needs to be amended to bring it into line with NPPF. On the transport objective, some respondents suggested that it is amended to improve current issues with transport and not only for new development
- A few respondents expressed scepticism of the council's ability to deliver on these objectives.

Overarching Spatial Strategy (Q4 – Q5)

- We invited consultees to rank the spatial strategy options in order of the preference they would like us to adopt and develop further as part of the Local Plan Review. Most respondents suggested a mix of the options rather than a single discreet option. The table below provides a weighted score¹ result for their preferred option for the spatial strategy:

¹ a weighting has been applied to each rank (so rank 1 = number of times ranked * 6, rank 2 = number of times ranked * 5, rank 3 = number of times ranked * 4, etc.). This ranking does not necessarily correlate with the qualitative comments received on the options.

Option	Weighted total
Proportionate growth of key rural areas	169
Key transport and accessibility corridors	162
A combination of the above options	159
Core strategy approach	147
Garden village/new settlement	116
Neighbourhood development plan led spatial distribution	115

- While consultation question 5 for each option asked “Do you think we have identified all the challenges and opportunities presented by option [x]” comments received to these questions did not always address solely the challenges and opportunities. The majority of the commentary expressed support or disagreement with the option citing multiple reasons.

The comments below with regards the options should be read with the above in mind.

Option 1 – Neighbourhood Plan led distribution

- Supportive comments to this option were received from Neighbourhood Development groups and Parishes, whilst those from the development sector did not see this as an appropriate approach to spatial distribution
- Concerns were also raised about this approach leading the plan to fail ‘soundness’ and legal tests.

Option 2 – Core Strategy Approach

- While some respondents viewed continuation of this approach into the new local plan, others expressed concern about it, especially in relation to the non-delivery of strategic sites (SUEs).
- Some were concerned about the impact on smaller villages/settlements of continued growth, without supporting infrastructure.

Option 3 – Key Transport and Accessibility Corridors

- There was broad support for this option, although some did consider that it needed to be part of a mix for the adopted spatial strategy
- Concerns were raised about not identifying the ‘northern A50 corridor’.

Option 4 – Garden Village/New Settlement

- Respondents considered this as the best option for delivering the required housing, infrastructure and services needed for the borough.
- Some questioned the borough’s ability to deliver large scale development given the non-delivery of the SUEs.

Option 5 – Proportionate growth of Key Rural Centres

- Comments received supported this option as being the most sustainable, but said this should be as part of a mix as it was not clear how it would deliver the required level of development as a standalone approach.

Option 6 – A combination of the above options

- Most comments said this was their preferred option
- Option 3 and 5 were put forward to be included as part of any mix.

Existing Core Strategy policies (Q6)

- Comments support the review of the Local Plan; including employment, green wedges, affordable housing and transport. Comments were also made on the need to take account of the emerging NPPF.
- Comments, alongside suggestions, were also made on the assessments for density, transport and key rural centres relating to Leicester.

Communities and places (Q7)

- Comments put forward the need to identify the needs of the local community, as well as for communities to understand the benefits from development, especially as rural hamlets fail to gain development benefits given their size.
- Comments were also made on the need to reflect heritage (through a strategic heritage policy), landscape and to have high quality design included in the local plan.

Housing (Q8-10)

- Most respondents recognised the need for the planned housing, but comments from the development/housing building sector suggest the identified number should be regarded as the minimum, and that once agreement had been made within the HMA, this was likely to be higher for the borough
- Comments supported our approach to affordable housing and other strategic housing matters
- Comments also supported the need to deliver a mix of different types of housing to meet needs.

Economic Development (Q11-Q14)

- Comments were made on the social and economic importance of agriculture and rural businesses, whilst also ensuring that we provide a mixed local economy on flexible sites that re fit for modern business practices.

- There is support for relating employment to key transport routes and strategic locations (for example A5, A50, A511, M1 Junctions), especially strategic distribution.
- Comments support our aim for attracting maximum investment into the Borough in a variety of employment sectors - especially aim for high-technology jobs like the well-established sites we have at MIRA and Triumph. Support was also given for employment, training skills and apprenticeships from new development.
- Many comments do not support a blanket policy for affordable workspaces in new developments, due to implications on viability, and varying market interest in areas across the borough, however some do support affordable workspaces, in particular to encourage entrepreneurial enterprises and small/medium sized businesses.

Tourism (Q15)

- Support for rural tourism and heritage based tourism, i.e. Twycross Zoo, Mallory Park, Bosworth Battlefield, Ashby Canal, National Forest – however there should be a sensitive balance to preserve rural characteristics, avoid over-development, and overcome infrastructure needs such as parking and road/congestion issues.

Infrastructure (Q16A & Q16B)

- Comments received supported the council's need to work with relevant partners/stakeholders to deliver infrastructure, as well as keeping the Infrastructure Delivery Plan up to date. Both of these are seen as being important for the success of the community.
- The A5, as well as congestion on the local roads, is seen as major pressure on the transport infrastructure, and an impediment to development. There was also recognition in the comments that public transport, in particular rail provision in the borough is weak.

Environment (Q17-Q19)

- Comments to Q17 were made both supporting national climate change aims through the local plan review and it being dealt with outside the local plan, for example through national policy or through building regulations
- There is qualified support for strengthening the Green Wedges (Q18) policy with comments stating that they as blunt policy instruments to development to others viewing these as places for nature to flourish.
- Comments supported our approach to addressing environmental issues (Q19), with air quality, action on flooding and a dedicated ecology and biodiversity policy being identified as areas to address in the next iteration of the local plan.

Design Quality (Q20 –Q21)

- Comments received (Q20) were supportive of our proposal but stressed the need to ensure future policies were sufficiently flexible to respond to development need, add (value) to the national framework, and be realistic without imposing prescriptive design standards.
- There is no broad support for introducing a minimum dwelling size, and comments expressed concern that this would be an unnecessary intervention in the housing market at the local level, particularly as guidance is already in place nationally.

Healthy Lives and places (Q22-Q25)

- Comments to Q22 put forward the need to work with health partners to develop an overarching health and wellbeing policy to ensure there are sufficient health care resources to deliver the supporting health policies.
- Comments on 'active design' stated no need for a separate policy as most developments promote walking, cycling and playing, however there is a need to consider Sport England's Active Design Document, as well as locating development in sustainable locations.
- Comments suggested the need to have an objective to improve the leisure facilities as well as access to the countryside. Comments stated that evidence from the Playing Pitch Strategy and other open space studies should be used and kept under constant review
- Athletics, cycling, improvement to rights of way and investment into the canal towpaths were all identified potential opportunities to be supported by the local plan review. Comments were also received on the need to provide leisure facilities in key rural centres and not just be Hinckley focussed.

Our response to the Consultation Representation

- 3.12 The next stage for the council is to consider how to respond to the comments. This response will, in the main, be reflected through the content of the preferred options draft local plan. We will be working up a draft document over the coming months, and once agreed, will seek to carry out consultation on it. In the interim, a proposed high level response to the comments is incorporated in Appendix A.

Housing Market Area

- 3.13 Planning for an area's housing need is undertaken at the 'Housing Market Area' and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council is part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market area. While there is an acknowledged shortfall in the housing market area, the exact figure is yet to be agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the authorities. For the scope, issues and options consultation, we set out that for the plan period we need to be planning as a minimum for 454 dwellings per annum in our borough.

- 3.14 The MOU, which is being developed, once complete will set out the quantum and distribution of development to be accommodated in the HMA and will be taken forward through individual authorities Local Plans. The draft MoU, once ready will be reported to Full Council for endorsement.

Call for Sites

- 3.15 In parallel to the Scope, Issue and Options consultation, a 'call for sites' exercise has also been undertaken. Ultimately this will provide evidence regarding land availability and potential future supply to be taken into account as progress on the LPR is made. Landowners and others with an interest were invited to suggest sites that may be available for development. However, it must be recognised that suggesting sites at this stage is not a guarantee that the land will be considered suitable for development.
- 3.16 Over 70 sites have been put forward through this exercise and these will be considered in more detail as the draft plan is prepared. Inclusion on the schedule at this stage does not mean that the council favours, endorses or otherwise encourages the development of the sites.

Engagement with Members

- 3.17 Members have been engaged through the Planning Policy Member Working Group in preparing the consultation draft documents, and all Members were invited to attend any of the drop-in sessions during the consultation exercise.
- 3.18 Members will continue to be engaged throughout the preparation of the next version of the Plan to help understand the outcomes of the scope, issues and options consultation in the context of spatial growth options; evolution of options, including discussions on place making approach, strategic site allocations and delivery strategies, and case studies/site visits.
- 3.19 Members are invited to make any further suggestions regarding issues/subjects that they would find beneficial to include as part of the ongoing engagement.

Next Steps

- 3.20 Following consideration of the comments to the scope, issues and options consultation, we are preparing a 'preferred options' draft.
- 3.21 This work will include:
- Continue to strengthen the supporting evidence base. This will include an Infrastructure Capacity Study, Housing Needs Study (HNS) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA), amongst others. While the 2017 HEDNA provides an important basis for setting the housing requirement, the HNS will provide more detailed evidence of particular needs within the borough.
 - Ongoing engagement with Members and our communities to inform the preparation of the draft plan
 - Regular ongoing engagement with our neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders, this is key to demonstrating the 'duty to cooperate'.
- 3.22 As per the published Local Development Scheme the preferred options version of the Local Plan Review is planned to go before Council later in the year to seek agreement to go out to consultation before the end of 2018.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [DW]

5.1 The following table below sets out the spending profile of the project for the years 2017-18 to 2020-21 and the LDF reserve balances being used to fund the expenditure.

	2017-18	2018-19*	2019-20	2020-21
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Opening Balance	(669)	(613.8)	(492.6)	(508.6)
Strategic Growth	25.3	28.2	0	0
Revised Local Development Scheme	29.9	193.0	84	268
Total Expenditure	55.2	221.2	84	268
Total transfers in	0	(100)	(100)	(50)
Closing Balance	(613.8)	(492.6)	(508.6)	(290.6)

*The amount shown in 2018-19 includes £83k of expenditure from 2017-18 for which a carry forward has been requested as part of the year end outturn process.

5.2 The estimated 2020/21 reserve balance above is £290,600 compared against the Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Council in February 2018 which forecast a balance of £297,700

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

6.1 None arising from this report.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The options/proposals will contribute to the delivery of the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- People
 - Give children and young people the best start in life and offer them the opportunity to thrive in their communities
- Places
 - Make our neighbourhoods safer
 - Improve the quality of existing homes and enable the delivery of affordable housing
 - Inspire standards of urban design that create attractive places to live
- Prosperity
 - Boost economic growth and regeneration...places to work and live all over the borough.
 - support the regeneration of our town centres and villages
 - support our rural communities
 - work with partners to raise...employment and home ownership

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 An eight week public consultation between 8 January and 4 March 2018 on the Scope, Issues and Options consultation document, the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
The Directions for Growth-Local Plan Review is not considered to be legally compliant	Ensure development of Local Plan follows the LDS timetable and is produced in accordance with NPPF guidance, including soundness checks. Where necessary to revise and publicise revised LDS timetable	Head of Planning
Review of the Directions for Growth-Local Plan Review falls significantly behind the published Local Development Scheme [due to aligning its timetable to the Strategic Growth Plan timetable], with the result that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• available evidence becomes dated and less reliable – requiring a need to commission updates/new studies.• Increasing challenge to 5 year land supply position, leading to speculative development proposals or more challenges of planning decisions.	Directions for Growth consultation should be launched in January 2018, and if required run for a longer period of time so that it closes at the same time as the draft Strategic Growth plan consultation.	Head of Planning
The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is not up to date. The LDS is required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory	Prepare an updated LDS and publicise this on the Council's	Head of Planning

Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011). It must be made available publically and kept up to date.	website. Seek Members agreement to delegate authority to the Director (Environment and Planning) and relevant Executive Member) to amend LDS timetable as required.	
The requirement for a Statement of Community Involvement was established as part of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and they are prepared to set out how the public and stakeholders etc will be involved in the preparation of local planning documents and planning applications.	Members agreement to delegate authority to the Director (Environment and Planning) and relevant Executive Member) to make minor drafting/presentational changes.	Head of Planning

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Directions for Growth-Local Plan Review addresses issues associated with development and will provide a framework in which to manage growth across the borough.
- 10.2 Engagement with stakeholders and other local authorities is an integral part of the plan making process, and the council is required to demonstrate this through to Examination in Public.
- 10.3 This report does not result in direct implications for Equalities, Rural Communities, and Environmental.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Appendix A Comments Analysis (due to file size, this is only available in hard copy in the Members' Room or from Planning Policy team)

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