

TITLE	Local Development Scheme 2023
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 27 July 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalitto
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The purpose of this report is to consider the adoption of a Local Development Scheme (LDS), the document which sets out the work programme for the local plans that are intended to be prepared over the next three years and when there are opportunities for engagement.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive adopts the Local Development Scheme 2023, attached as Enclosure 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decisions on planning applications are plan-led, with decisions made in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a document which sets out the work programme for the local plans, the part of the development plan the Council prepares, and when the key opportunities for engagement will be.

The recommended LDS, attached as Enclosure 1, proposes that work will be progressed on one local plan - the Local Plan Update (LPU). The LPU will set out the long-term strategy for managing development and provides an opportunity to refresh planning policy so that they reflect ambitions which go above and beyond current policies, such as achieving zero carbon development, greater levels of net biodiversity gain and greater levels of affordable housing.

Details of other policy documents are not required to be set out in a LDS, however for clarity, the recommended LDS makes reference to the intention to progress a review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.

BACKGROUND

Decisions on planning applications are plan-led, with decisions made in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Wokingham Borough comprises two types of plans - local plans which include strategic policy and neighbourhood development plans which include non-strategic policy. Local plans are prepared by the Council, whilst the preparation of neighbourhood development plans is led by the parish/town council.

Adopted local plans are:

- Core Strategy, adopted 2010.
- Managing Development Delivery, adopted 2014.
- Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, adopted 2023.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a document which sets out the work programme for the local plans the Council intends to prepare over the next three years or so, and when the key opportunities for engagement will be.

Analysis of Issues

Following the successful completion of the Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan earlier this year, the recommended LDS sets out that work will be progressed on one local plan over the next three years – the Local Plan Update (LPU).

The LPU will set out the long-term strategy for managing development, including the allocation of land to support that strategy. Importantly, progressing the LPU also provides an opportunity to refresh planning policy so that they reflect ambitions which go above and beyond current planning policies, such as achieving zero carbon development, greater levels of net biodiversity gain and greater levels of affordable housing.

Details of other policy documents are not required to be set out in a LDS, however for clarity, the recommended LDS makes reference to the intention to progress a review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.

It should be noted that the recommended LDS has been prepared at a time where national planning reforms have been proposed. Whilst this means that the Council may have to react to reforms in the future, there are clear benefits in ensuring planning policies remain effective.

BUSINESS CASE

Need for the decision

Maintaining up-to-date local plans is a requirement of national planning policy. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to set out the local plans which are to be prepared, their scope, and the timetable for preparing them in a LDS.

Risks

Maintaining up-to-date local plans ensures that planning policies continue to be effective in managing decisions by the Council, and where these are appealed, by Planning Inspectors. Without effective planning policies, it would not be possible to manage where and how new housing and other types of development take place. This could lead to development being allowed in poor locations, being of lower quality, and in places where infrastructure cannot be improved to help deal with the impacts, e.g. pressures on roads, schools and community facilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Yes	Revenue

Other Financial Information

The costs of preparing and adopting the recommended LDS are contained within the local plan special item budget.

In order to achieve a sound local plan, there are costs associated with gathering evidence, site investigation work and the statutory examination.

Cost estimates have been made for the full plan-making process. These costs are regularly monitored. Whilst there are some uncertainties around estimated costs, particularly those associated with the examination, the estimates shows that the allocated budget is sufficient.

Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)

Maintaining up-to-date local plans is a requirement of national planning policy. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to set out the local plans which are to be prepared, their scope, and the timetable for preparing them in a LDS.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

The recommended LDS has not been subject to consultation. The LDS does however ensure that residents and others are able to understand when there are opportunities for engagement.

Public Sector Equality Duty
This report relates to programme for the preparation of local plans and not the scope or approach of policy. As such an equality assessment has been screened out.
An equality assessment has and will continue to be undertaken to support the preparation of local plans themselves, with views on the assessment capable of being made as part of the consultation process.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*
There are no direct implications for climate change as a result of the recommendation of this report.
The LPU itself will contain a suite of proposed planning policies that seek the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy.

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
Not applicable.

List of Background Papers
National Planning Policy Framework, 2021
Planning Practice Guide: Plan-making, 2021

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