

# Local Plan update

Report of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Economic Growth & Tourism  
Councillor I. Eadie



Date: 18 September 2019  
Contact Officer: Ashley Baldwin  
Tel Number: 01543 308147  
Email: Ashley.baldwin@lichfielddc.gov.uk

Local Ward  
Members All Members

Economic Growth,  
Environment and  
Development (Overview  
and Scrutiny)  
Committee

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has now formally adopted the Local Plan Allocations. The legal challenge period has also closed. This means the Council now has a complete and up to date Local Plan.
- 1.2 Local Plan Review Preferred Options consultation is scheduled for November 2019.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress associated with the Local Plan Review.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the potential scale and distribution of growth identified within the report.
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the minutes of the Local Plan sub group meetings (**Appendix A**).
- 2.4 That the Committee recommends to Cabinet the consultation proposals identified at paragraph 3.15 of this report.

## 3. Background

### *Local Plan Allocations (ADPD)*

- 3.1 Members have received regular updates on the progress of the Local Plan Allocations. This report does not seek to repeat the history provided to previous Committee meetings but would refer members to those reports accessible via Modgov.
- 3.2 Full Council adopted the Local Plan Allocations on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. This commenced a statutory legal challenge period. No legal challenges were received and this means the Council now have a complete and up to date Local Plan.

### *Local Plan Review*

- 3.3 Members have similarly received regular updates on the progress of the Local Plan Review. Again, this report does not repeat the history provided to previous Committee meetings however as above would refer members to previous reports available via Modgov.

- 3.4 The next stage of the Local Plan Review is the Preferred Options consultation. This stage is a non-statutory stage which has been inserted into the Plan preparation timetable. Consultation on a Preferred Options enables the public and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the emerging Plan at a point where if necessary there is still significant scope to alter proposed policies and plans. Following the planned consultation in November the Council will then progress to the 'Regulation 19 stage' which is a statutory stage. At this point the Council will be setting out the version of the Plan that it intends to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination. Regulation 19 presents limited opportunity for significant changes, hence the value of having the November consultation.
- 3.5 At the time of writing the documentation for November consultation is still being drafted by officers in part also being informed by emerging evidence. **Appendix A** includes the minutes of local plan sub-committee meetings which identifies the evidence base that has been prepared to date and presented to local plan sub-committee. Further evidence will continue to be progressed and presented to the sub-committee ahead of the proposed consultation on the preferred options document. Minutes of these further sub-committee meetings will be reported to future meetings of the Economic Growth, Environment and Development Overview and Scrutiny committee.
- 3.6 The earlier consultation undertaken in January – March 2019 provides the direction for the forthcoming November consultation. The intention is to present a consultation that sets out the intentions of the Council, taking into account new and updated evidence. Ahead of the consultation the following evidence will have been completed:
- Authority Monitoring Report 2019;
  - Ecology assessment;
  - Employment Land Availability Assessment 2019;
  - Green Belt Review;
  - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment;
  - Habitat Regulation Assessment;
  - Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment;
  - Five year housing land supply paper 2019;
  - Playing Pitch Strategy – stage 1;
  - Site selection;
  - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2019;
  - Sustainability Appraisal; and
  - Urban Capacity assessment 2019.
- 3.7 Officers have been asked to consider a pro-growth plan and where possible minimise the impact on Green Belt. In recognition of this ambition officers have identified a potentially deliverable level of growth and how this could be distributed across the District across a proposed plan period of 2018-2040. The proposed plan period represents a slight change in that previously suggested in earlier Local Plan Review documents. It is suggested that changing the plan period to 2018-2040 provides the authority an opportunity to plan for growth and also aligns with the base date of a range of the evidence collected and noted at paragraph 3.6 of this report. Additionally this will start the plan period in the most recently completed financial year, a year in which the Council demonstrated a high record of delivery in terms of new homes and new employment delivery (see [Authority Monitoring Report 2019](#)).
- 3.8 Taking account of the above and the direction provided to officers in terms of considering a pro-growth plan which minimises the impact upon the Green Belt officers have identified a potentially deliverable level of growth for the District. A recommended housing requirement of approximately 11,780 new homes including a 4,500 contribution to the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market

Area shortfall, an annual requirement of approximately 536 dwellings per year. To assist with delivery of a pro-growth plan it is also suggested that an additional buffer of housing sites should be identified through the local plan review of around 20-25%. Emerging evidence suggests that alongside the suggested housing requirement approximately 670 hectares of land for employment uses will need to be provided. This is informed by the emerging evidence as well as the Local Plan previous consultation. **Members should note that this is based on emerging evidence and as such is subject to change. The level of growth identified does not represent a recommendation to Members at this point.**

- 3.9 The Local Plan Review: Scope, Issues and Options document (April 2018) and Local Plan Review: Preferred Options & Policy Directions (January 2019) set out a range of potential options for delivery across the district. The January 2019 document included a preferred settlement hierarchy, based upon evidence available at that point in time. This identified a broadly similar hierarchy to that set out within the currently adopted local plan. Officers are currently exploring a number of different settlement options to deliver the pro-growth approach noted above. These include options such as utilising the settlement hierarchy as a basis for distributing growth which would broadly follow the current local plan's approach or seeking to set a new direction for example growth of Lichfield (to the north) and growth of villages. It is acknowledged that simply utilising the existing approach may not be sustainable on a continual basis and that different approaches to growth may be required in the future. Through consideration of the evidence officers will set out the preferred options within the Local Plan Review: Preferred Options scheduled for consultation in November 2019. It should be noted that the Local Plan Review: Preferred Options and Policy Directions document suggested that growth outside of the Green Belt to the north of Lichfield should be explored as an option as part of the wider spatial strategy. Based upon current and emerging evidence, including the potential to deliver strategic infrastructure such as education facilities and improvements to then highways network, it is likely that such an option would be proposed as part of any settlement option which may be proposed.
- 3.10 With regards to potential employment land to meet the needs, identified through the emerging evidence as noted at paragraph 3.8 of this report, officers are currently considering a range of options to assist in delivering economic growth and ensure the Local Plan Review will look to positively allocate employment land. Evidence within the employment land availability assessment 2019, as noted at paragraph 3.8 of this report, suggests there are few potential options to deliver such growth, with the only options beyond the District's current employment area are located within the Green Belt around Fazeley and Bassetts Pole.
- 3.11 As stated at paragraph 3.7 of this report, officers have been asked to protect the Green Belt as part of local plan considerations. This aligns with national policy. However Members should note that the Plan must provide a mix of sites and to deliver growth it is likely to be necessary to consider some Green Belt release and/or identification of safeguarded land for future plan periods. Given the extent of green belt coverage in the district and spatial distribution of development and infrastructure it is not considered possible to deliver the pro-growth ambitions without impacting upon green belt. Any such impacts will be informed by evidence including the emerging Green Belt Review noted at paragraph 3.6 and required by the Local Plan Review Policy (Policy LPR: Local Plan Review) within the adopted Local Plan Allocations document.
- 3.12 The District has a track record of underperforming strategic sites in terms of their projected rate of delivery. Therefore possible new settlement options are unlikely to present delivery of growth in the short term. However in the longer term a new settlement option could lead to a more sustainable approach to delivering growth in the District. In addition there are other challenges associated with a new settlement which mean that the option should not be relied upon for the Review. Firstly there is a need to secure monies for significant infrastructure. There is evidence in neighbouring plans (North Warwickshire) and nationally (Colchester) where relates on national funding pots such as the Housing

Infrastructure Fund have caused problems in progressing Plans. This presents Authorities with a challenge in terms of demonstrating delivery.

3.13 It is too early to identify what specific sites will be proposed as part of the plan process. However taking forward the previous consultation the following are relevant considerations going forward:

- There is scope for Neighbourhood Plans to allocate sites in addition to those in the Local Plan;
- There is a need for the Council to meet the delivery test and therefore it is prudent to allocate strategic sites within the Review. Where a Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any residual requirement for its area it is proposed that a second part plan be developed by the Council to ensure all numbers are identified. This would need to be driven by a policy within the emerging Review which provides the Parishes with a timetable for progressing with their plans. It is proposed a date be identified where the Council would step in and take forward these remaining allocations;
- There is a clear direction of travel associated with Lichfield city towards Curborough which emerged from the current Local Plan. This stems from the previous Local Plan consultation which identified the direction of travel. This is driven by the ability of the proposed allocation to deliver infrastructure such as a secondary school, but also by the wider context of Lichfield which is bounded by Green Belt in other directions. However it should be noted that there is still a need to verify the deliverability of the scheme, in particular in highways terms;
- There is a need to verify infrastructure needs for all sites and early dialogue with providers has commenced, however there are shortfalls in provision such as secondary school provision to support any growth of Lichfield. Members should note that the benefit of progressing with a pro-growth Plan is the ability to then facilitate the development of infrastructure, especially where development is strategically located. ;
- There is a need to identify a mixed portfolio of employment sites to cater for the diverse needs across the District.

3.14 Officers will continue to develop the draft plan by completing and updating the evidence base. In addition there will be an aim to minimise Green Belt release to a low percentage of overall Green Belt. It should be noted by members that approximately 52% of the District is located within Green Belt and given the spatial distribution of settlements it is unlikely that a pro-growth approach can be delivered without some impact upon the Green Belt.

### *Consultation*

3.15 The November consultation provides the opportunity to undertake a range of consultation and community engagement. The following means of doing this are proposed for the Committee to consider and comment on:

- Drop in events including at the settlements identified in Appendix X as likely to be candidates for future growth
- Drop in sessions at the Council house
- Circulation of an Executive summary of the Plan to encourage interest
- Use of social media to highlight key themes

Alternative Options	1. Members could identify other consultation ideas to inform the November consultation.
Consultation	1. Consultation will be required on the Local Plan Review.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Officer time will be needed to undertake future consultations on the Local Plan Review.</li> <li>2. The costs of consultation will be met within approved budgets.</li> <li>3. A budget has been established to support the Local Plan Review evidence base.</li> </ol>
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports the priority of a vibrant and prosperous economy by identifying needs and opportunities for investment</li> <li>2. Supports the priority of Healthy and Safe communities by ensuring the provision of housing.</li> <li>3. Supports the priority of clean, green and welcoming places to live by assisting in allocating land for affordable housing, as well as supporting the delivery of residential and commercial developments.</li> </ol>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. An Equality Impact Assessment will accompany the draft Local Plan Review document
Crime & Safety Issues	1. None.
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	1. A privacy impact assessment was completed for the Preferred Options and Policy Directions document.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Clarity over the GBHMA shortfall is not achieved and the Council are unable to effectively progress with the Local Plan Review.	Officers continue dialogue with neighbouring authorities on this matter.	Yellow
B	Other Local Planning Authorities across the GBHMA do not adequately address the housing shortfall. This would result in additional pressure being placed on Lichfield District.	Officers continue to review neighbouring authority consultations. Where appropriate officers will recommend the Council respond to these consultations citing concern over the approach taken by the relevant Authority. This has been the case in Bromsgrove and Solihull's recent consultation documents.	Yellow

## Background documents

Local Plan Strategy 2015

Local Plan Allocations 2019

Local Plan Review: Scope, Issues & Options

Local Plan Review: Preferred Options & Policy Directions

Local Development Scheme

## Relevant web links

[Local Plan Allocations suggested main modifications](#)

[Local Plan Allocations examination and main modifications](#)

[Local Plan Strategy 2015](#)

[Local Plan Review](#)

[Local Development Scheme](#)

**Appendix A: Minutes of Local Plan Sub-Committee meetings**

## Meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee

17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 18:00

In attendance:

Councillors: Ball, Cox (Chair), Ennis, Marshall and Warburton

Also Attending: Ashley Baldwin – Spatial Policy & Delivery Manager (AB), Patrick Jervis -Principal Spatial Policy and Delivery Officer (PJ), Heidi Hollins - Spatial Policy & Delivery Officer (HH)

1. ***Apologies***

Councillor Wilcox.

2. ***Declarations of Interest***

None.

3. ***Notes of the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018***

Paper copies of the minutes of the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> December were circulated to members of the sub-committee. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

4. ***Local Plan Review***

AB presented a report on the Local Plan Review and the role of the Local Plan sub-committee. AB explained that the varied evidence base documents which support the local plan will be brought to the committee for discussion and for member sign off so that documentation can be published.

Members discussed the Local Plan Review and asked about the process and timescales moving forward with the document. AB set out the current timetable for the Local Plan Review and explained that often evidence would be produced in peaks and troughs so the committee would be required to meet during those periods to ensure the timescales associated with the Local Plan could be met.

5. ***Employment Land Availability Assessment***

PJ presented the Employment Land Availability Assessment 2019. This has been prepared to update the document produced in 2018. The purpose of the document is to provide a snapshot of land which is known to be, or has the potential to be made available for employment development within the District. Members noted that inclusion of a site within this assessment does not indicate that it will be allocated within the Local Plan or successfully obtain permission for employment uses.

Members discussed the document and noted that there were a small number of errors and inconsistencies within the site assessments. PJ noted these and explained that these would be corrected prior to final publication.

Members agreed to the publication of the Employment Land Availability Assessment 2019 subject to the minor changes to correct errors which had been discussed.

6. ***A5 Strategy***

AB introduced a report covering the A5 Partnership, of which Lichfield is a member of the A5 strategy. AB explained that the role of the strategy was similar to that of a bidding document and would allow the partnership to use this in discussions with other partners.

Members agreed to the publication of the A5 Strategy as part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan.

7. ***Cannock Chase Visitor Survey***

HH presented a report on the Cannock Chase Visitor Survey which updates the previous evidence and will support the Local Plan Review. The visitor survey was undertaken in Cannock Chase in summer through to winter 2018. It was commissioned to provide a snapshot of current levels of access, identify



the range of activities occurring and summarise visitor patterns and opinions to inform the future recreation management of Cannock Chase.

There was discussion over the importance of Cannock Chase and the need to ensure that the sensitive areas of the Chase were appropriately protected. HH explained that the Visitor Survey provides evidence which supports current and future planning policy in relation to Cannock Chase.

Members agreed to the publication of the Cannock Chase Visitor Survey as part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan.

8. ***AOB***

Councillor Ball asked if evidence relating to gypsy and traveller needs would be brought to the sub-committee. AB confirmed that evidence was being prepared and would be brought to committee in due course.

9. ***Date of next meeting***

7 August 2019 at 19:00.

The meeting ended at 19:30

## Meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee

7<sup>th</sup> August 2019 19:00

In attendance:

Councillors: Ball, Cox (Chair), Ennis, Marshall, Warburton and Wilcox

Also Attending: Ashley Baldwin – Spatial Policy & Delivery Manager (AB) and Patrick Jervis -Principal Spatial Policy and Delivery Officer (PJ)

1. ***Apologies***

None.

2. ***Declarations of Interest***

None.

3. ***Notes of the meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018***

Paper copies of the minutes of the meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> July were circulated to members of the sub-committee. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

4. ***Authority Monitoring Report 2019***

PJ presented the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2019. The purpose of the AMR is to monitor the effectiveness of the policies within the local plan. The AMR is a factual document which provides statistics and information across a range of topic areas linked to the local plan.

Members discussed the AMR and noted that the document had been streamlined this year and was now easier to use. Members identified a small number of errors within the document and also queried a number of the statistics included. Officers confirmed that they would review the errors and queries to ensure the report is accurate upon publication.

Members agreed to the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report 2019 subject to the minor changes to correct errors which had been discussed.

5. ***Five Year Housing Land Supply Paper 2019***

PJ presented the Five Year Housing Land Supply Paper 2019. This has been prepared to update the document produced in 2018. PJ explained the importance of the five year supply to the authority when determining planning applications.

Members discussed the document and noted that the increase in supply both for housing and sites to meet gypsy and traveller needs was positive. Members noted a small number of errors and inconsistencies within the document. PJ noted these and explained that these would be corrected prior to final publication.

Members agreed to the publication of the five year land supply 2019 subject to the minor changes to correct errors which had been discussed.

6. ***Housing Site Selection Methodology***

AB presented the Housing Site Selection Methodology document. AB noted that the recommendation was to publish the document. AB informed members that the document before them was in effect the first part of the paper and that once the site selection process had been undertaken and outputs identified the full document would be reported to the sub-committee prior to its publication.

Members discussed the document and noted that it set out a clear and logical approach to site selection which would be informative and useful. Members noted a small number of typographical errors. AB confirmed officers would review the document and correct the errors.

Members noted the recommendations of the report and agreed publication would follow the receipt of a supplementary report on the outputs from the site selection.

7. ***AOB***

AB provided members with an update on staffing issues within the team. Members thanked the team for their work and the reports which had been presented.

8. ***Date of next meeting***

AB to provide selection of dates for next meeting.

The meeting ended at 20:25