

LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMME 2019

Head of Service/Contact: Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning

Urgent Decision?(yes/no)

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annex 1: Draft Epsom & Ewell Local Plan Programme May 2019

Other available papers (not attached): [Licensing & Planning Policy Committee Agenda Item 6 November 2018](#)

Report summary

A revised Local Plan Programme has been prepared to set the process and timetable for the new Epsom & Ewell Local Plan.

Recommendation (s)

That subject to the Committee's consideration and any changes that they introduce, the draft Local Plan Programme June 2019 be adopted taking immediate effect and be published on the Borough Council's website.

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The delivery and implementation of the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan contributes towards all of the Council's Key Priorities. The new Epsom & Ewell Local Plan is critical because it will set out how sustainable growth, particularly in relation to new housing, will be delivered during the forthcoming plan period.

2 Background

- 2.1 The purpose of the Local Plan Programme is to set out the processes and timetable for the preparation and production of the Borough Council's Local Plan. Typically the Council's Programmes have set out a rolling three-year project plan - that seeks to inform both the process and all of the interested parties and partners about how and when the Local Plan will be brought forward.

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- 2.2 Progress against the milestones identified in the Programme is monitored through our Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report. In the past we have amended and revised our Local Plan programme to take account of circumstances that have brought about a change in our plans. Previous Local Plan Programmes have typically been reviewed after being in place for two years or so. Revisions have normally been triggered by changes in national planning policies, such as the revocation of regional plans and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and consequential changes in our approach to plan-making.
- 2.3 Our last Local Plan Programme was published during June 2018. It was our ninth Programme since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2007. Following a period of significant change in national planning policy, which included the publication of the revised NPPF, the introduction of the standard method (for calculating the scale of housing need) and the housing delivery test. Collectively these changes have required the Council to revisit its approach towards planning for the future growth of the Borough. This has required the production of further technical evidence to inform the Local Plan process; including the Borough-wide Urban Capacity Study, the Strategic Viability Assessment and the Transformation Masterplan among others.
- 2.4 The consequential impact of this additional work is that we are required to undertake further public consultation under Regulation 18 Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.5 In order to respond positively a new draft Local Plan Programme has been prepared, which takes account of our available resources, the changes to national planning policy and the anticipated scale of future housing need. We are confident that the new draft Programme will help us meet our ambitions. A draft version is included under Annexe 1.

3 Local Plan Programme

- 3.1 The draft Local Plan Programme 2019 seeks to build upon its predecessor. It sets out a timetable for the preparation, production and consultation of the new Plan and associated supporting evidence. The timetable identifies key milestones during document production. We will use these milestones to monitor the performance of our Programme.
- 3.2 The timetable is realistic and requires focus. Particularly during the Autumn into the Winter 2019 when continuous progression from the Regulation 18 Final Issues and Options stage, onto the Pre-Submission Draft Consultation stage is envisaged. Our success relies on careful management and use of our resources; in terms of internal staff, and the commissioning of external expertise. The adoption and delivery of this timetable will help us reduce the risk of government intervention and unsustainable speculative approaches seeking the development of sites in unsustainable locations. Critically it ensures that we set the Borough's housing strategy and associated site allocations.

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3.3 The key milestones over the next twelve months are:

- Autumn 2019 - Final Issues & Options Consultation (Regulation 18 Part 2)
- Spring 2020 – Pre-Submission Public Consultation
- Summer 2020 – Submission to the Secretary of State
- Winter 2020 - Public Hearing
- Winter 2021 – Estimated date of Adoption

3.4 Member engagement will form a key part of the process mapped out by the key milestones identified above. Both consultation documents will be the subject of reports coming before the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee, as will the decision to progress to submission to the Secretary of State.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

4.1 The preparation and implementation of the Council's local plan imposes significant demands on staff in the Planning Policy Team. The successful recruitment of a Senior Planning Policy Officer during the Summer 2018 and retention of existing staff has made a valuable contribution towards our ability to meet the challenge of preparing our new Local Plan.

4.2 Wider teams across the Council, including legal services, procurement and communications are key to assisting with the various elements of the work programme. Contributions from these sources will be particularly valuable during the public consultation and Duty-to-Cooperate stages of the process, when their input can be optimised.

4.3 ***Chief Finance Officer's comments: none for the purposes of this report***

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

5.1 The Local Planning Authority should ensure that its Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the local plan area, and the development and infrastructure requirements of the area.

5.2 The type of evidence and assessments that may be required to justify the statements in the local plan are set out in the NPPF. This is not a prescriptive list.

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- 5.3 Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, requires a Local Planning Authority to identify and engage all those who might be interested in the development or content of the local plan at an early stage in the local plan making process. As a part of this process the Local Planning Authority must notify the specified bodies and person of emerging options and invite them to make representations and then to take into account any representations. The Local Planning Authority is also required to comply with the consultation requirements set out in its statement of community involvement at the various stages of local plan preparation.
- 5.4 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore it is important to ensure the Local Plan is up to date.
- 5.5 ***Monitoring Officer's comments: none arising from the contents of this report.***

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The new Local Plan will contribute towards delivering our objectives for maintaining and enhancing the Borough as a sustainable place to live, work and visit by providing guidance to new development proposals.
- 6.2 A Sustainability Appraisal of the policy options will form an integral part of the plan-making process. The Sustainability Appraisal Report will be subject to public consultation at an appropriate point in the process.

7 Partnerships

- 7.1 The Localism Act and national planning policy state that public bodies have a duty-to-cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. We will seek to meet this duty by working collaboratively with our partners in neighbouring boroughs and districts on issues of common interest. Potential partners in this process may include neighbouring local planning authorities; more distant authorities that either are or may become connected to our housing market in the future, the County Council and other strategic infrastructure providers.
- 7.2 This is a continuous and evolving process that will help guide future policy development. The Licensing & Planning Policy Committee considered and agreed a Duty to Co-operate Engagement Plan during November 2018, which seeks to build relationships with neighbours with the objective of securing agreed statements of common ground.

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8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan we face a number of risk areas. These include the continued absence of a 5 year housing land supply; the additional measures introduced through the outputs of the Housing Delivery Test; and the absence of strategic co-operation with neighbouring planning authorities. Should we fail to respond to these factors we could face direct intervention by the Secretary of State.
- 8.2 Having an up-to-date Local Plan Programme is a key measure in mitigating the possible risk of direct government intervention. The government encourages local planning authorities to up-date their Local Plan Programmes as often as necessary.
- 8.3 The other notable risk to our Local Plan Programme is the retention of experienced staff, and the recruitment of their replacements. The Planning Policy Team is lean which could have implications for the Local Plan timetable. Recent experiences demonstrate that recruiting new staff, regardless of their experience, may prove challenging.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to consider the draft Local Plan Programme and subject to any additions or amendments agree to its publication and implementation.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);