

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 January 2020

REVISED LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMME

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

Urgent Decision?(yes/no)

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annexe 1: Draft Local Plan Programme (January 2020)

Other available papers (not attached):

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)

The Committee considers and approves the draft Local Plan Programme January 2020.

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 2019. It was our tenth Programme since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2007. That Programme identified milestones that would have seen further public consultation under Regulation 18 over the Autumn and Winter 2019/2020.
- 2.4 However timescales have slipped. This is primarily due to requests from our local communities requesting that we give further consideration to the nature of future growth. This resulting in the adoption of the Six Principles setting the strategic direction for the new Local Plan. In response we have prepared a new draft Local Plan Programme. We are confident that the new draft Programme will help us meet our ambitions. The draft programme is included at Annex 1.

3 Local Plan Programme

- 3.1 The draft Local Plan Programme January 2020 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 proposed timetable builds upon the last Programme (June 2019). Progress on the background tasks required to implement public consultation under Regulation 18 has continued during the period of delay. Nevertheless, the proposed revised Programme will require our focus in order to meet the timetable. Particularly during Spring 2020 when we envisage making progress towards the Regulation 18 Consultation – which will effectively be a consultation on a draft Local Plan – comprised of a comprehensive suite of strategic, general and site allocation policies.
- 3.3 In order to be successful we will need to manage the process and our resources (both internal and external) carefully. The adoption and delivery of this timetable will provide the government with a degree of confidence that we are responding positively to the challenges of growth. Critically it ensures that we set the Borough's housing strategy and associated site allocations to meet our objectively assessed needs in full.

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- 3.4 The key milestones over the next twelve months are:
- Spring 2020 - Final Issues & Options Consultation (Regulation 18 Part 2)
 - Summer 2021 – Pre-Submission Public Consultation
 - Autumn 2021 – Submission to the Secretary of State
 - Winter 2021 - Public Hearing
 - Autumn 2022 – Estimated date of Adoption

- 3.5 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 production of our new Local Plan involves the Planning Policy team and various consultants engaged to assist with the production of the evidence base. 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.

- 4.2 ***Chief Finance Officer's comments:***

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

- 5.1 None arising from the contents of this report.
- 5.2 ***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.
- 6.3 The Local Plan has a key role in implementing a number of key objectives that are set out in our Climate Change Action Plan.

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7 Partnerships

- 7.1 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. The Committee will receive information on progress with the Duty at appropriate points in the process.

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 Recent experiences have demonstrated that progressing the Local Plan process is susceptible to unanticipated impacts that are outside of our control. When unforeseen matters arise we will need to respond clearly, quickly and decisively. We will need to ensure that all of our partners and interested parties (in the Local Plan) have clear understanding of actions and why we have taken them. We will need to ensure that communicate the impact of such actions on our timetable in a timely manner.
- 8.4 The other notable risk to our Local Plan Programme is the retention of experienced staff, and the recruitment of their replacements. With one of our planning policy officers leaving the authority we need to undertake a recruitment process which 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, the Programme will be published and implemented immediately.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);