

EPSOM & EWELL LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMME 2016

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Place Development
<u>Contact:</u>	Karol Jakubczyk
<u>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</u>	No
<u>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</u>	
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	Epsom & Ewell Local Plan Programme 2016
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	National Planning Policy Framework Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

REPORT SUMMARY

A new Local Plan Programme has been prepared to set out the process and timetable for a partial review of the Epsom & Ewell Core Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the draft Local Plan Programme and subject to any changes agrees to its publication and implementation.

Notes

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

- 1.1 The delivery and implementation of the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan contributes towards all of the Council's Key Priorities. The partial review of the Core Strategy is a critical part of the Local Plan review process as it will set out how sustainable growth will be delivered during the plan period.

2 Background

- 2.1 The primary purpose of the Local Plan Programme, or Local Development Scheme as it was previously known, is to set out the processes and timetable for the preparation and production of the Borough Council's Local Plan. It is an important project management tool 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.

LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2016

- 2.2 The progress of Local Plan production is monitored and reported through the Annual Monitoring Report. In the past we have amended and revised the Local Plan programme to take account of delays in the process and where other circumstances, such as amendments to national planning policy, have necessitated a change in direction.
- 2.3 Our last Local Plan Programme was published during the final quarter of 2014. That document included the timetables for the adoption of the Development Management Policies Document, the submission of the Site Allocations Policies Document for examination and the commencement of a partial review of the Core Strategy. Since publication we have successfully adopted the Development Management Policies Document, Parking Standards for new Residential Developments and a revised Sustainable Design Guide.
- 2.4 Whilst we have been successful in delivering some of the targets set out in the Local Plan Programme 2014, we have fallen behind in progressing the Site Allocations Document and the partial review of the Core Strategy. This was in part due to the unanticipated loss of staff within the Planning Policy Team.
- 2.5 In addition to these delays, recent reports¹ prepared to support the agendas of market housing and land brokerage interests have identified the Borough as being among a wider list of local planning authorities at risk of not having an up-to-date Local Plan. According to these reports this places the Borough at risk of either Government intervention in our plan-making process, or open to challenge from developers promoting housing developments on sites contrary to Local Plan policy.
- 2.6 Although the recent reports are flawed in some of their assumptions and conclusions, they are technically correct in stating that the Borough Council's strategic housing policies are no longer in accordance with national planning policy. Specifically, our housing target is not currently based on objectively assessed housing demand calculation. This serves as a useful trigger for a comprehensive review of our Local Plan Programme. A draft version of a new Programme is included under Annex 1.

3 Local Plan Programme

- 3.1 The draft Local Plan Programme is a comprehensive review of the 2014 document. The content of the new Programme content focuses almost exclusively on the partial review of the Core

¹ These are reports prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, and Savills.

Strategy. It sets out a timetable outlining the processes involved in the preparation, production and consultation of the revised policies and their supporting evidence. The timetable identifies key milestones during document production. We will use these milestones to monitor the progress of the Programme.

- 3.2 The timetable itself is extremely ambitious, seeking rapid progress throughout 2017 with an anticipated adoption date during 2018. Such a timetable is reliant upon an proportionate deployment of resource; in terms of internal staff, external expertise where necessary and financial support. If successful, it will reduce the level of risk of government intervention and unsustainable speculative approaches for higher levels of housing growth from the development industry. Critically it will ensure that Borough Council remains in control of the Local Plan's growth strategy.
- 3.3 A draft process map is included for Members' information under Annex 2. This sets out a more detailed timetable for delivering the partial review of the Core Strategy. A version of this process map helped to inform the preparation of the timetable contained within the draft Programme. The process map includes potential resource implications and areas of risk.
- 3.4 In order to achieve rapid progress, it will be necessary to have a single "Issues & Options" consultation stage, which considers in parallel the scale of growth and the specific site allocations needed to deliver that growth. There are risks associated with this approach both in terms of the responses to the consultation and how quickly and decisively the Borough Council responds to those representations. These areas of risk can be managed through the deployment of resources and leadership.
- 3.5 Once the partial review process passes into the Pre-Submission, our ability to manage risk (particularly delay) is reduced as control of the process is taken by the Planning Inspectorate. The key objective for the Borough Council must be to ensure that the draft document submitted for examination meets the four tests of soundness set out under National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 182. As long as these tests are comfortably met the risk of the submission document failing will be reduced.

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 need to accelerate work on the Local Plan will have a knock-on impact on other work streams. In order to address this area of risk, it will be necessary to secure additional temporary staff resources. These may take the form of a new Senior Planning

LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2016

Policy Officer post, deployed on a temporary eighteen-twenty four month contract; and/or other temporary expertise deployed on specific parts of the process (such as evidence base production). The Head of Place Development is currently working to secure these resources.

5 Equalities and Other Legal Implications

- 5.1 All statutory Local Plan documents are subject to public examination. The Council's Statement of Community Involvement addresses those equality issues related to consultation and engagement.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The partial review of the Core Strategy will contribute towards delivering the Council's 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 forms an integral part of the development management policy preparation process and has been subject to public consultation.

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 meet this duty by working collaboratively with our partners in neighbouring boroughs and districts on issues of common interest. This will be a continuous process that will help guide future policy development.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 In the absence of up-to-date planning policies in conformity with national planning policy, from 26 March 2013 the policies will be judged by their degree of conformity. Non-compliant policies will be "trumped" by the national planning policy, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

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

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All