



## PLANNING

MEMBERS UPDATE 2018/19

ISSUE: 3

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**Article of: Director of Development and Regeneration Services**

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – UPDATE ON EVIDENCE BASE**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To brief Members on progress with the compilation of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan Review.

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### 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Preparation of a local plan document requires a comprehensive evidence base – a range of studies, reports and statistics that play a vital part in informing and justifying the policies and strategy in the emerging plan. Many of the documents that make up the evidence base can be prepared 'in-house' by Council officers using their professional knowledge and data accessible to them; other documents require specialist input from paid external consultants and involve a quotation or tender process. Some components of the evidence base require regular (e.g. annual) updating or are necessary for each stage of the Plan's preparation; others only need updating less frequently.

### 3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The following studies / documents were completed (in-house unless otherwise stated) prior to 2018:

- A review of Green Belt land around West Lancashire's settlements;
- Topic-based evidence papers (covering such things as demographics, housing, health, the natural environment, etc.);

- Area-based evidence papers, based on the six Spatial Areas of the Borough;
- Sustainable Settlement Study (2016/17 update);
- A March 2017 update to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options documents (early 2017);
- Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), 2017 Update;
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (undertaken by external consultants; completed December 2017).

3.2 So far in 2018, progress has been made with a number of other evidence base studies:

- **Liverpool City Region (LCR) Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA)** – this important study seeks to establish objectively-assessed needs for housing and employment land across the City Region. Delays were incurred following receipt of the draft final study, primarily as a result of factors associated with the establishment and governance of the LCR Combined Authority in 2017. The draft was consulted upon in autumn 2017 and a final version has been prepared, which is due to go before the next meeting of the LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Board for approval.
- **LCR Large-scale B8 Land Supply Assessment** – this joint LCR study will help inform the requirements for logistics and distribution land, including in West Lancashire. The first stage of this study has been completed, identifying the existing realistic supply of land in the LCR and West Lancs for large-scale B8 uses, and thus identifying a gap in supply compared to need for large-scale B8 identified by the SHELMA. It is anticipated that a draft Stage 2 report (looking at the potential broad locations most suitable for meeting that gap in supply) will be published by the LCR for consultation in advance of the Local Plan Preferred Options allowing us to refer to in the Preferred Options consultation.
- **Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study** (undertaken by external consultants; completed February 2018).
- **Assessment of submitted SHELAA sites for their suitability as potential Local Plan allocations** (prepared by Council officers).
- **Retail and Town Centres Study** (undertaken by external consultants) – this study looks at the need (if any) for additional retail facilities in the Borough, and will inform policy on retail, commercial leisure, and town centres. Completion of the study is expected imminently.
- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) update**, taking into account the content of the Local Plan Review Preferred Options document – the Council has continued to liaise with Infrastructure providers (IPs), advising them of possible future levels of development and possible site allocations, and

their comments are being taken on board as the Local Plan Preferred Options are prepared, and the IDP is updated. Council officers will continue to liaise with the IPs on an ongoing basis, in order to ensure that they are ready to deliver the required infrastructure when required.

- **Open Space Study** (undertaken by external consultants) – a Stage 1 Report and database of sites has been completed; it is expected this study will be finished over summer 2018.
- **Playing Pitch Strategy** (undertaken by external consultants) – the Stage 1 Assessment Report has been completed; the Stage 2 stage is underway and expected to be completed over summer 2018.
- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** – following the Issues and Options consultation, officers have refined the Level 1 SFRA and have begun to prepare the Level 2 SFRA. the Level 2 will assess the likely impacts of any proposed development on land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (the effects of flood risk on the new development itself, and the effects of new development on existing land and development elsewhere), and will need to follow the Sequential and Exceptions Tests set out in national policy. This study is being undertaken in-house with input and advice from the Environment Agency and Lancashire County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority).
- **Traffic / transport assessment of potential site allocations** – the Council, with support from the County Council, have recently appointed WYG to undertake this work. It is anticipated that the findings of this assessment will be available to publish alongside the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation to inform any representations we receive.
- **Viability Assessment of the Local Plan Preferred Options** – this study will consider the proposed policies in the Preferred Options and assess their likely impact upon the viability of future development, having special regard to the proposed site allocations in the emerging Plan. The study will inform such matters as the amount of affordable housing and other policy requirements that might be required from residential schemes. Keppie Massie were recently appointed to undertake this work. Given the timing of the work, any findings of the study which require a change to the proposed Local Plan policies will only be taken on board after the Preferred Options consultation.
- The 2018 update to the **SHELAA** is close to completion, having been undertaken by Council officers. It is anticipated that the update will be published later in summer 2018.
- The 2018 **Annual Monitoring Report** is also close to completion and should be published later in summer 2018.

3.3 In addition, the Council will shortly be inviting quotations from consultants to undertake a **Renewable Energy and Low Carbon study**, looking at the capacity for, and feasibility of, renewable energy generation in West Lancashire. Consultants were originally invited in March / April 2018 to bid for a West Lancashire-specific renewable energy and low carbon study but no

bids were received, possibly due to the timing of the invitation. There is now insufficient time to seek quotations again and still complete the study ready for the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation, and so the findings of this study will be incorporated in revisions to the proposed Local Plan after the Preferred Options consultation.

- 3.4 In relation to the need for **student accommodation**, the Council have been liaising with Edge Hill University to seek to identify how student numbers at the University may vary over the Local Plan Review period and the resulting likely accommodation requirements. Edge Hill University will be sharing their projections with Council officers shortly, enabling any anticipated needs to be planned for through the proposed policies in the Preferred Options.
- 3.5 Furthermore, the Council must prepare a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan Preferred Options document. The SA will be undertaken by Council officers in July / August 2018 and the HRA will be prepared by consultants Arcadis over the same timescale. Both reports will be available with Cabinet Papers for the Preferred Options in September.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. However, the new Local Plan being prepared will have definite implications for sustainability and the SA report being prepared for the Preferred Options will address those sustainability implications of the Local Plan.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A number of the evidence base studies referred to above involve the engagement of external consultants. (Members will recall that on 12 September 2017, Cabinet resolved that funding of £50,000 be approved from the Major Projects Reserve to fund additional evidence base studies required to inform the Local Plan Review.) The costs of the evidence base studies referred to in this report have thus already been accounted for in the Strategic Planning and Implementation budget and the additional £50,000 from Reserves, and, as such, this report has no additional financial or resource implications.

#### **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 This item is for information only and does not contain any recommendation, other than to prepare a Members Update setting out similar information. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

This report does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

None.