



**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 2 September 2021**

CABINET: 14 September 2021

Report of: Corporate Director of Place and Community

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Evans

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SUBJECT: TIMETABLE FOR LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider an updated timetable and Local Development Scheme for the preparation of a new local plan for West Lancashire, in light of the delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, changes in staffing in the Growth & Development Service and anticipated changes to what may be required of local plans under the proposals in the recent Planning White Paper.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 That the Committee consider the content of the Timetable for Local Plan Preparation report and the September 2021 Local Development Scheme within Appendix A, and that the agreed comments of Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee be passed to Cabinet for their consideration.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

3.1 That the updated September 2021 Local Development Scheme within Appendix A be approved.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan and other important planning policy documents. The most recent LDS for West Lancashire was approved by Cabinet in March 2021.
- 4.2 The proposed updated September 2021 LDS provided at Appendix A includes an amended timetable for the preparation of the new West Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2040, as follows:

Issues & Options Consultation ('Regulation 18')	November 2021 – January 2022
Development Requirements & Site Allocations Consultation	November – December 2022
Publication / Pre-Submission ('Regulation 19')	October – December 2023
Submission to Planning Inspectorate	January 2024
Examination in Public (including Hearings)	January – December 2024
Adoption	December 2024

'Regulations' refer to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- 4.3 Overall, this represents a delay in the adoption of the new Local Plan (subject to how long the Local Plan Examination may take, which is not within the Council's control), due to the delayed Regulation 18 Consultation stage, the introduction of an additional stage of public consultation in autumn 2022 on development requirements and site allocations, and allowing more time for the preparation of the Publication / Pre-Submission Local Plan document, given the anticipated changes to national guidance on Local Plan preparation following the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020).

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct implications for sustainability from the recommendations in this report.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The new Local Plan will be produced by the Council's Strategic Planning, Regeneration & Implementation Team. However, a document as wide-ranging

as a Local Plan will inevitably involve input from various parts of the Council (as well as external stakeholders and partners).

- 6.2 The costs of preparing the Local Plan will be covered by existing general revenue budgets together with the previously agreed contribution from Council Reserves for the costs of additional evidence studies and the Examination of the Local Plan.
- 6.3 For further detail, please see chapter 4 of the LDS at Appendix A, which covers the issue of resources for the preparation of the Local Plan.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Please see chapter 5 of the LDS at Appendix A, which covers the issue of risk assessment for the Local Plan and sets out a number of possible risks and mitigation measures. This now includes a risk assessment associated with the impact any further Covid-19 (or similar) lockdowns may have on Local Plan preparation.
- 7.2 By including an extra stage of public consultation in 2022, the Council will have the opportunity to carefully consider the arguments made for and against proposed development requirements and site allocations, prior to preparing the Pre-Submission (final draft) Local Plan. By allowing additional time to undertake this extra stage of consultation, and to prepare the Pre-Submission Plan, it should be more likely that the LDS timetable can be adhered to as the new Local Plan goes through its stages of preparation.
- 7.3 One risk worth flagging is the impact that changing national policy can have on the preparation of a Local Plan, sometimes causing considerable delays while whole sections or policies are re-written to reflect new national guidance. This is perhaps a significant risk for Members to note as we prepare the new West Lancashire Local Plan because of the proposals in the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020). Whilst a local plan would still be central to such a system, what goes into a local plan could be considerably different as a result of any changes the Government proposes over coming months.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct implications for health and wellbeing from the recommendations in this report.

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

Appendix A – Local Development Scheme September 2021 (revised version 03/09/21)

Appendix B – Minute of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 2 Sept 2021 (to follow)