



**CABINET: 13 June 2017**

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**Report of: Director of Development and Regeneration**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson**

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON SCOPING  
AND ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the feedback received through the Local Plan Review Scoping and Issues & Options consultations and seek authority to publish the Consultation Feedback Report so that all interested parties are able to review what comments have been submitted to the Council.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the Consultation Feedback Report on the Local Plan Review Scoping and Issues & Options consultation (provided at Appendix A) be noted and endorsed.

2.2 That the next steps in the Local Plan Review process set out at Section 4.0 of this report be endorsed.

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## **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The Local Plan Review: Scoping and Issues & Options public consultation ran for six weeks from Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and involved several strands of public and stakeholder engagement:

- A dedicated set of Local Plan webpages on the Council's website

- A Wrap-around Advertisement on the Champion Newspaper as the consultation period starts
- Letters / Emails to all contacts on the Local Plan consultation database
- Online Survey to help respondents engage with, and respond to, the consultation material
- Workshop for All Council Members and for Parish Councils
- Six Public Forum events in six different venues across the Borough
- A Developers Forum
- A Neighbouring Authorities (Duty to Co-operate) Workshop
- Engagement with student population at Edge Hill University and West Lancs College
- On-street surveys at Skelmersdale Concourse and Ormskirk Market

3.2 All aspects of the consultation went well, with positive engagement from the public and stakeholders in the process both face-to-face and in writing. 128 responses to the online issues & options and scoping surveys were received and approximately the same number of people attended the six public forums. The public forums, in particular, generated a good level of discussion and helped raise planning matters of concern to local communities in West Lancashire to the Council officers in attendance. In general, the written responses reflected the concerns raised at the public forums and the responses to the on-street surveys also highlighted similar key issues.

3.3 The Consultation Feedback Report provided at Appendix A sets out a summary of the feedback received from all aspects of the consultation exercise and the full responses to the consultation that were received in writing will be published online alongside this Consultation Feedback Report, should Cabinet endorse it. The Feedback Report does not include any Council response to the comments received.

3.4 At the current time, the urgency is to simply publish the comments and feedback received through the recent consultation exercise so that all interested parties can see the nature of the feedback that the Council has received. This, in turn, may generate more informal feedback as interested parties digest what has been submitted. This is important because, while the formal consultation on the Local Plan Review Scope and Issues & Options is now closed, Regulation 18 of the Local Planning regulations covers the whole preparation of the Local Plan until Publication stage and so Councils preparing a Local Plan are meant to be open to receiving and considering any comments submitted throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, even those received informally outside of formal consultation periods. As such, the publication of the Consultation Feedback Report is important to maintaining the transparency of the process and stimulating further dialogue with stakeholders.

- 3.5 In due course, as the feedback received is digested by Council officers and Members involved in the preparation of the Local Plan, and as the Preferred Options version of a new Local Plan is prepared ready for the next stage of formal consultation, the Council will be able to publish a response to the issues raised in the Consultation Feedback Report, but this will clearly not be possible until the Council has considered the feedback fully. It should also be noted that the Council do not respond individually to each of the written comments received and do not write back to each individual that has submitted comments, as this would not be an effective use of the Council's resources. Instead, the Council will respond collectively to each issue that has been raised and publish that response for any interested party to view.

#### **4.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 Council officers will now begin the process of preparing a Preferred Options version of a new Local Plan. This will involve close working, and regular meetings, with the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group as well as updating and briefing Cabinet and Members in general at appropriate times on the progress of, and proposals for, the Preferred Options.
- 4.2 The preparation of the Preferred Options will, firstly, involve establishing the preferred Strategic Development Option for the housing and employment land requirement, what period the Local Plan should cover and how the housing and employment land requirement should be distributed across the Borough. This can then lead to an assessment of potential site allocations to identify what land should be allocated for development to deliver the preferred Strategic Development Option. Alongside this, specific policies will be drafted to address relevant topics and issues, drawing on the specific feedback received in the recent consultation on each topic/issue and on the latest evidence available to the Council on that topic/issue.
- 4.3 As such, there is a great deal of work involved in preparing the Local Plan Preferred Options and so it is not anticipated that the final draft Preferred Options document will be brought to Cabinet for their consideration until June 2018. In turn, this means that the next stage of formal public consultation (which will be on the Preferred Options document) would not take place until at least June/July 2018.

#### **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Although the decision being considered in this report only relates to the publishing of a Consultation Feedback Report, it is part of the wider preparation of a new Local Plan and the Local Plan will have very definite implications for sustainability and for the delivery of the objectives of the Community Strategy, hopefully (overall) positive implications. However, at this early stage in the preparation of the Local Plan, it is impossible to identify what the precise implications will be. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan will be an important consideration in the preparation of the new Local Plan.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial and resource implications related to the publishing of the Consultation Feedback Report.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 There are no risks associated with the publishing of consultation feedback received through the Local Plan Review consultation.

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### **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**

The decision Cabinet are being asked to make is simply related to the publication of a Consultation Feedback Report and so there is no direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Local Plan Review: Scoping and Issues & Options Consultation Feedback Report