

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 October

Draft Minute 26 – Agenda Item 6 Local Plan – Local Development Scheme

The Committee received a report on the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme. Councillor Biggs, Portfolio holder for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, explained that the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and, together with the 2019 Development Management Plan, is scheduled to run until July 2027, subject to a review in 2024. Beyond July 2027 it will become an out-of-date plan and therefore it is important work is started on a new Local Plan that will set out the vision and policies for development beyond 2027. It is a statutory requirement for Local Planning authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan and will ensure that the Council remains a plan-led authority.

The first step in starting a new Local Plan is to agree a Local Development Scheme or LDS, which is the formal timetable setting out the key work programmes from evidence-gathering through to consultation, examination and then adoption.

Executive and Full Council will be asked to authorise this in the next couple of weeks, together with the anticipated budget costs over the period. A new plan takes time to prepare. Much of this time will be used to prepare the evidence, engage with stakeholders, local communities, and Members, and prepare the policies. The Local Development Scheme in Appendix 1 of the report outlines how this will be achieved, by who and when. The LDS considers the risks associated with the programme and the types of mitigation measures to minimise these. Throughout the process, all Members will be provided a variety of opportunities to engage in the process, working with officers through the different issues, consider different options and agree the draft policies. This is just the start of the process.

Members asked the following questions:

Members asked what the advantages to a one-step plan are as opposed to a two-step plan, with particular reference to the Five-Year Land Supply. It was confirmed that the Council could choose either a one-step plan or a two-step plan. The detailed planning policies contained in the part two plan or Development Management Plan, such as the environmental policies, sustainability policies and biodiversity policies are those which set out how development should be carried out and would all be reviewed to consider up to date national policy, guidance, and legislation. This part of the two-step plan would take a similar amount of time to develop as a single plan, and earlier implementation of such policies was an advantage of a single plan. The single stage plan would be less expensive than a two-step plan. With respect to the number of houses to be built, the Council could retain the current number of 460 houses until 2027.

Members felt that the contingency amount should only be used if absolutely necessary.

The Chair pointed out that other Surrey councils have taken a far longer time to develop their plans and would urge the Executive to ensure that the Council's plan was completed within the five-year period. He would also ask the

Executive to consider if a two-step plan would present less risk in ensuring that the Council had an agreed housing target in place by the end of the current plan period in 2027.

Members noted that the housing land monitor for April 2022 was 8.72 years and that it was projected to be 5.40 in April 2023; if this trajectory continued, the Sustainable Urban Extensions would be used before 2027 and there was concern for the future of green belt land. It was confirmed that the housing monitor is a forecast prediction for the following year only and that large scale permissions could change the housing supply position. When published, the housing monitor anticipated the housing number for 2023 onwards based on 640 homes rather than the 460 stated in the Local Plan but has since been reverted to the 460 figure until 2027, following Council advice. It was also clarified that sustainable urban extensions are not green belt.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Noted the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme as detailed in the Report and made observations to the Executive.