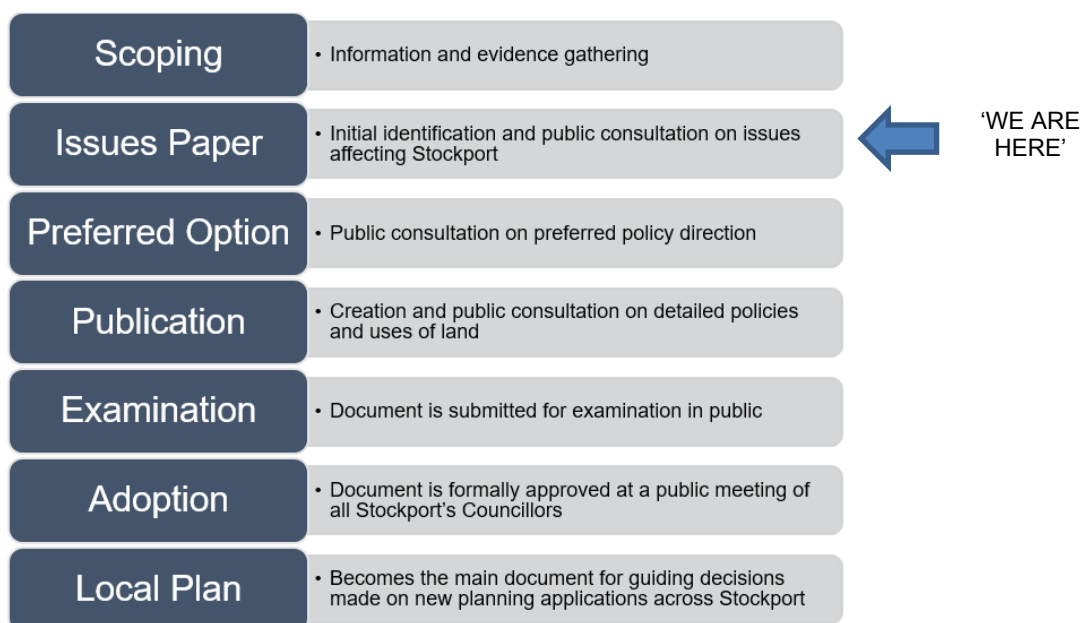


LOCAL PLAN - ISSUES PAPER

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the Council meeting in December 2016 it was agreed that the Council should commence work on a new Stockport Local Plan. The first document to be prepared in this process is the 'Issues Paper'. This report describes the broad framework for this early phase of work, including the way in which it will be presented.



- 1.2 Both the Issues Paper and the public consultation element of the report have been considered by the Local Development Framework Working Party on 21st June 2017 with a number of changes made to the draft Issues Paper. The key changes were, firstly, to more obviously address the matter of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework in the context of the Stockport Local Plan (as set out in Paragraphs 2.8-10 below) and secondly, to change wording to some questions so that they reflected better the overall approach of the document. In addition, since the LDF Working Party meeting, the Transport section has been slightly reframed to highlight the important link between the Stockport Local Plan and work taking place to refresh the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS).
- 1.3 Both elements were also discussed at the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 6th July. As a result, a number of minor amendments were made to reflect the comments of members.

2. LOCAL PLAN - ISSUES PAPER

- 2.1 One of the key aims of this work is to broaden the Local Plan beyond the traditional land-use planning themes of housing, employment, transport, etc. and to seek to address more directly matters, such as climate change, health and well-being and education. These issues will be integrated into the overall approach and alongside those more traditional planning issues in order to deliver truly sustainable development.
- 2.2 The document is framed around a number of themes:
- Jobs and the role of town & district centres
 - Health, culture and communities
 - Where we live and the type of homes we live in
 - Our green places and spaces
 - Transport and infrastructure
- 2.3 The 'green' element to the document is addressed primarily within the 'Green Place and Space' chapter, although some elements are dealt with in other sections, e.g. provision of open space in new residential development. In addition some elements are inherently addressing matters of environmental importance, such as under the Transport and Infrastructure chapter.
- 2.4 It is recognised that the environmental elements will need to be considered in the context of a number of matters that the Local Plan will need to address and this will form part of delivering sustainable development. At this stage, in keeping with approach described in paragraph 2.5 below, the intention has been to set out the various topics under the broad banner of 'green issues' largely within their own chapter for the purposes of clarity at this stage.
- 2.5 The 'Issues Paper' document is a much shorter, lighter touch document than has previously been the case and takes a broad approach. It is intended to be a scene setting document to explain the key issues that need to be considered before new policies or land use allocations can be developed or considered.
- 2.6 Rather than presenting the traditional 'high growth, medium growth, low growth' options, it is intended to present alternative means of delivery, for example: increasing densities in a smaller number of locations; spreading development around at lower densities; seeking more greenfield development; protecting open spaces. Whilst providing those options, a key issue of brownfield development will be discussed alongside the matter of balancing the density of development in urban areas against the spread of development elsewhere. The intention is also to develop, where relevant, local policies which reflect the issues within localities across Stockport. This will include the role existing large centres, including district centres, play in the lives of people living in various areas of the borough.
- 2.7 The document will still contain a number of elements which have been common to previous similar documents. This will include a spatial portrait of the borough setting out some of the important characteristics and facts as they currently stand, putting the document in the context of existing Council priorities and providing the important national and sub-regional planning background.

- 2.8 It will be necessary to acknowledge the role of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and to frame the Local Plan as dealing with detailed Stockport place shaping considerations. It will also acknowledge that the GMSF may be subject to change. Inherent to that will be an explanation of the requirement of all local authorities to meet identified need. The Local Plan provides an opportunity to deal with some of the key issues which were raised in the previous round of GMSF consultation, for example traffic congestion. An important message for the Council to get across will be that this document presents the means by which local residents can help to shape the places where they live.
- 2.9 It is also important to understand that, whilst the GMSF may change, it is not designed to deal with all issues Stockport needs to consider, as it is intended to be a high level strategic planning document. It is the role of the Stockport Local Plan to plan for what is going to happen in the borough, making it a genuinely local plan via the allocations and policies it contains and which reflect the issues affecting not just the borough as whole but also the different communities and areas within it.
- 2.10 In any event, commencing work on the Local Plan will ensure that the risk of the Council being in a position where it has no local plan is avoided. This would result in either the government intervening and imposing a local plan on the borough or relying on what is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework to inform the decision making process in Stockport.

3.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 1.4 One aim for the 'Issues Paper' stage of the Local Plan process is to improve the number, range and quality of consultation responses. The shorter document is designed to engage the public by making it more accessible and easier to understand, which will include minimising the use of planning 'jargon'. It should present a platform to enable community involvement in a place shaping plan for the future of the borough as part of a 'bottom up' approach to the development of the local plan. The result should be to improve the quality of the final adopted plan by ensuring that comments are captured the plan takes relevant concerns and community aspirations into account at an early stage well before firm proposals are in place.
- 1.5 In addition, the broad approach will be backed up in the consultation document with a relatively small number of questions that are more open and wider in their scope than previous versions of similar documents. This is intended to allow respondents to make their views known without being constrained by the questions. In particular it is hoped to encourage them to focus on the issues they face in their own local area and to provide potential solutions they might have to those issues.
- 1.6 Key matters that affect the period of time for consultation are the fact that consultation is likely to occur through August and that the GMSF is scheduled to commence consultation in September. If consultation is delayed until after August then we run the significant risk of the next stage of GMSF consultation commencing which would make undertaking consultation on our 'Issues Paper' document extremely difficult. However, the difficulty of consulting through the summer holidays is recognised.

- 1.7 Consequently a longer period of consultation than the usual 6 weeks is proposed. In terms of the start and end date for consultation there are a number of options and comments are welcomed on these. Assuming that the document is approved for consultation at this Cabinet meeting, formal consultation would commence on Friday 28th July and close on 8th October 2017 (i.e. 10 weeks).

Table 1: Engagement Plan for Local Plan - Issues Paper consultation

Dates	Engagement Method	Description
June - July	Social Media, Website and Email alerts	Preparatory messaging to encourage interest and registration
06/07/17	E & R Scrutiny	Issues Paper
18/07/17	Cabinet Meeting	Issues Paper
July TBC	Briefing for all Members (by Group)	Face-to-face briefings
21/07/17	Members e-brief special	Email Newsletter
28/07/17	Website consultation pages go live, website newsfeed, email alert and press release	Web content and press release
Consultation start – Friday 28th July		
August - September	Various face-to-face events	Young People
		Business networks
		Equality Groups
		Town Centre engagement
August - September	Member newsletters	Regular email newsletter updates
First 2 weeks in Sept	Area Forum Consultations	Local Plan public events
20/09/17	Business event	Business breakfast event, Alma Lodge
w/c 25/09/17	Area Committees	Report updating on the processes plus a call to action asking members to remind residents to participate in the consultation
Consultation end – Sunday 8th October		

- 1.8 Detailed consultation and engagement activity is still in development. Area Committees are proposed to form the basis for the face-to-face public consultation activity and it is intended that Ward Councillors play a leading role. However, as meetings fall in August and late September, there would be a risk of being seen to be avoiding full and proper consultation either by taking place during a main holiday period or being very late in the process.
- 1.9 In addition to proposed area-based consultation activity, the Council is also looking to deliver a specific consultation event for the business community and to reach those groups that do not often respond to such consultations such as young people, disability, BME and LGBT groups. There will also be engagement with those community groups in the process of preparing Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.10 This phase of work will be supported by communications activity to draw attention to the Local Plan Issues Paper consultation.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Cabinet is asked to approve, subject to comments, the Local Plan Issues Paper.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft 'Issues Paper' document attached

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Darren Pegram, Steve Johnson Tel: 0161-474 3171, 0161-474-3509 or by email on darren.peggram@stockport.gov.uk, steven.johnson@stockport.gov.uk