

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

15 OCTOBER 2020

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Report Title	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND REVISED TIMETABLE			
	To approve an Additional Housing Options Paper for the purposes of undertaking public consultation and to approve revisions to the Local Plan Review timetable.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: a. approve the Additional Housing Options Paper set out in Appendix A for the purposes of undertaking public consultation b. approve revisions to the Local Plan Review timetable as set out in this report and to make consequential changes to the timetable on the Council's website and in the approved Local Development Scheme.			
Consultation and Feedback	Revisions to the Local Plan Review timetable and a draft Additional Housing Options Paper have been subject to discussions at Planning Review Panel.			
Report Author	Mark Russell, Head of Planning Strategy Email: mark.russell@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	The Draft Local Plan could be finalised without undertaking further public consultation.			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – Additional Housing Options Paper			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	Yes	No	No

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Council adopted the Stroud District Local Plan in November 2015. The Plan continues to provide an up-to-date planning framework to assess planning applications and identifies sufficient housing and employment land to meet needs to 2031. The Plan included a commitment to undertake an early review.
- 1.2** In September 2017 Committee approved a timetable for the Local Plan Review and approved an Issues and Options paper for public consultation. In October 2018

Committee approved an Emerging Strategy for further public consultation and in October 2019 Committee approved a Draft Local Plan for further public consultation.

- 1.3** The Council's published timetable envisaged approval of the Draft Local Plan for pre-submission consultation during Autumn 2020. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in delays to the work programme to the extent that this deadline can no longer be met and needs to be reviewed. In addition, officers consider there is a need for a further period of public consultation to address the issues set out below.

2. ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS PAPER

- 2.1** In August 2020, the Government published a consultation document which proposed changes to the way the Government calculates the minimum housing requirement for each local authority area in the country. This revised standard method has proposed increasing the requirement for Stroud District from the level set out in the Draft Local Plan of 638 homes per annum, to 786 homes per annum. If this new revised method is confirmed, the Draft Local Plan may have to identify further land within the District for housing. Current monitoring indicates that we may have to find land for an additional 1,050-2,400 homes between now and 2040.
- 2.2** In addition to the above, in the Emerging Strategy published in 2018, the Council identified that Government requirements would mean increased housing rates beyond living memory. The above figures will increase this challenge. Delivery rates are vulnerable to changes in economic cycles, brownfield sites can be complex and expensive to develop and the creation of new settlements is an ambitious undertaking. We may need to identify additional reserve sites, to ensure that the portfolio of sites in the Draft Local Plan guarantee housing at the delivery rates required. If we don't identify a reserve supply, an undersupply may trigger the need for an immediate plan review.
- 2.3** It is therefore recommended that a further eight weeks period of public consultation is carried out on the contents of an Additional Housing Options Paper to identify the best option for achieving an additional housing supply, if required.
- 2.4** There are two parts to the Additional Housing Options Paper set out in Appendix A. In the first part, four broad spatial options have been identified to address the above issues and the Paper asks for feedback to identify the most sustainable option:
- Option A - Additional housing within the boundaries of some of the sites already identified within the Draft Local Plan
 - Option B – Further housing sites at the smaller tier 2 towns and tier 3 larger villages in the District
 - Option C – A new growth point, potentially located along the main movement corridors within the District (A38, A419, A4135) where most future transport improvements will be located
 - Option D – Wider dispersal of new housing sites to include sites not just at tier 2 and 3 settlements but extending to small sites at tier 4 village.
- 2.5** In the second part, additional sites put forward by promoters in 2019/20 which may have future potential for housing are identified and views are requested on whether there are any physical constraints or potential impacts that would make them unsuitable for development.

- 2.6** The list includes a large site at Grove End Farm, Whitminster which is being promoted by a developer for up to 2,250 dwellings, 13 hectares of employment, local centre, primary school, community facilities and open space.
- 2.7** The Paper welcomes suggestions for alternative locations if a new growth point were to be considered as the most sustainable spatial option. One alternative location suggested is at Moreton Valance, where a number of sites have previously been promoted and assessed on an individual basis, but there may be potential for sites to be combined to develop up to 1,500 dwellings, employment land, local centre, primary school, community facilities and open space.
- 2.8** It is important to note that the Options Paper does not identify a preferred spatial option or a preferred site(s). The results of the consultation will help to inform the final contents of the Draft Local Plan to be considered by the Council in early 2021. However, the Options Paper and its contents are being assessed by the Council's independent Sustainability Appraisal consultants and the result of this assessment work will be published with the Options Paper for public consultation.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1** The recommendation is that the Additional Housing Options Paper and supporting documents will be subject to public consultation for eight weeks commencing w/c 19 October 2020 and ending w/c 14 December 2020. Due to the continuing and evolving restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the public consultation will of necessity have to be conducted primarily online. The following activities are proposed during this time:
- Press release and newspaper advertisements
 - Emails to groups and individuals on Planning Strategy mailing list
 - Consultation paper and supporting documents on website
 - Online presentational material
 - Online questionnaire via website
 - Online meetings with parish and town councils, key stakeholders and other groups.
- 3.2** However, it is important that the Council takes reasonable steps to ensure sections of the community that don't have internet access are involved and officers are investigating ways of publicising the consultation through use of posters and mail shots and distributing documents to those identified by local parish councils as lacking internet access.

4. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW TIMETABLE

- 4.1** Despite the delays to the work programme caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, good progress has continued to be made towards the preparation of the final Draft Local Plan. The results of the previous public consultation exercise have been analysed and are informing the final content of policies and sites. In addition, a number of studies and technical reports have been finalised to support the Plan.
- 4.2** The expectation is that the final Draft Local Plan will be available for the Council to consider and approve in early 2021. For the purposes of updating the timetable on the Council's website and in the Council's Local Development Scheme, the following milestones are now considered realistic and are recommended for approval:
- Publication of plan (Reg. 19 consultation) Spring 2021
 - Submission of plan Spring 2021

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no significant direct financial implications to this report as the decision is to approve the content for the purposes of public consultation. Future financial implications may arise after consultation if there is a delay in the progress of the Local Plan Review.

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5.2 Legal Implications

Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 requires that various bodies and stakeholders be notified by the Council that they are preparing a local plan and invite them to comment on what that plan should contain. There is nothing to legally prevent the Council from re-opening the Regulation 18 consultation to take account of new information if felt appropriate in the interests of good planning.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is required under S15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Council may revise the LDS at such time as it thinks appropriate. Any amendments to the adopted LDS must be made available to the public.

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5.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

5.4 Environmental Implications

Whilst the final Draft Local Plan will include proposals for the spatial distribution of future growth and for conserving and enhancing environmental resources, the proposed Additional Housing Options Paper is for the purposes of public consultation only, and there are therefore no current implications within this category.