

REPORT TITLE: CONSULTATION ON STRATEGIC ISSUES & PRIORITIES  
CONSULTATION

20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLLR JACKIE PORTER, CABINET MEMBER  
FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT & WELLBEING

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WARD(S) All (to the extent that they are not within the South Downs National Park)

PURPOSE

The new Local Plan is a really exciting opportunity to set out a new vision and framework for future development of the District (which lies outside the South Downs National Park). Subject to the outcome on the consultation on the White Paper, the Local Plan is likely to cover the period up to 2038. It will address local housing need, the economy, environmental considerations including the climate emergency, community infrastructure as well as strategic infrastructure needs and it has key role with assisting the Council moving towards carbon neutrality. The Plan will, at a later stage of the process, make site specific allocations to meet identified needs of the future. Once it has been through all of its formal statutory stages and we have fully engaged with the local community, it will be used to assess and determine planning applications.

The publication of the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document for public consultation is the next important stage on this journey as it is an early stage towards preparing the new Local Plan, but it is not the actual Draft Local Plan. The purpose of the document is to explore important issues that will influence how the Local Plan is developed, giving people an early opportunity to inform and shape the direction of the Plan before it is drafted.

Whilst it is not known at this stage whether the government's proposed changes to the planning system will be taken forward into primary and secondary legislation and when reforms come into effect, the preparation of the Local Plan is a corporate priority. The Strategic Issues & Priorities Document has been prepared to enable the City Council to be able to pivot between a new style Local Plan or for a Local Plan to be prepared under the existing regulations and to demonstrate that progress is being made on the local plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- (1) Approve the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document as attached to this report at Appendix 1, and publication and six week public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (2) Delegate authority to the Strategic Planning Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Built Environment & Well Being, to undertake updating, drafting of any amendments and the visualization of the Strategic Issues & Priorities document required prior to publication and consultation on the document; and
- (3) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director - Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment & Wellbeing, to amend the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to include consultation on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document in February/March 2021.

**IMPLICATIONS:****1.1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME**

- 1.2 It is a statutory requirement for the Council to have an up to date Local Plan which will, when it is adopted, contribute to achieving the broader outcomes that are expressed in the Council Plan (2020 – 2025). The production of the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document is the next important stage in the process of preparing the new Local Plan. The Local Plan will affect the way we live, work and play in District over the next 15 years and beyond.

**Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District**

- 1.3 The Strategic Issues & Priorities Document has a key role to play in moving the Council towards Carbon Neutrality and creating a greener District. The government has indicated in its consultation document on the White Paper that there will move towards national policies and local policies will only be allowed in 'exceptional circumstances' and there will be changes to the Building Regulations. This creates a real challenge as there is a great deal of uncertainty when these changes might come into effect. However, as the Council's target for carbon neutrality is sooner than the government's target this Document has identified a number of local plan policies options that could be used to address this pressing issue. This must be the golden thread that runs throughout the Document. If the changes to the planning system mean that it is not possible to include a range of local policies on climate change in a new style local plan it will be important that that issues are still woven into and taken account in the preparation of Local Design codes.
- 1.4 The consultation document can also be used to gain views on how successful the existing development management policies have been in terms of protecting the countryside and alternative ways of protecting the countryside such as Local Green Spaces and a Green Belt.

**Homes for all**

- 1.5 The Local Plan has a key role in determining where and how much development should be located in District. The Local Plan will need to provide for a range of housing including the need for affordable housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Whilst the role of the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document is not to go into specific detail like allocation of sites for development, or seek to resolve all these matters at this point in time, it in an important step in asking people key questions surrounding these issues and how we can respond to them.

**Vibrant Local Economy**

- 1.6 The Strategic Issues & Priorities Document has been informed by an Employment Land Study and Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study. The Local Plan will need to assess any of the allocations that have not come forward for development in the existing Adopted Local Plan, assess whether

they are still required, deliverable and can be rolled forward to the new Local Plan and identify allocations to meet the needs of the District until 2038. This needs to be undertaken taking into account the likely longer term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Living Well**

- 1.7 An important function of the new Local Plan will be that it fully considers and addresses the needs of all of our residents across all age ranges and abilities. The Local Plan has a key role to play in meeting this objective as it will be used to increase active travel, physical activity and create attractive and connected green infrastructure. Whilst the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document does not specifically identify how this will be achieved it is an important step as it asks people key questions surrounding these issues.

## **Your Services, Your Voice**

- 1.8 A key part of the preparing the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document is to seek early engagement on the content and shape of the draft Local Plan and the different options for a development strategy for the district. The Local Plan making process must engage with the widest possible audience and a key part of this is making a document that is not only accessible but also visually interesting and appealing so that it stimulates and encourages people to read and comment on it. This will be an important next step that will take place prior to public consultation.
- 1.9 In recognition that the White Paper is centred around allowing people to access material online, Studio Republic (consultants appointed to assist with communications relating to the development of the local plan) are now pressing ahead with preparing the branding ideas for the Local Plan and a stand-alone Local Plan website that is centred around GIS and giving the ability for people to search planning information via their postcode. This new website would go live in February. This aligns closely with the digital approach to plan making that is outlined in the White Paper.

## **2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 The resources for the preparation of the various elements of the Local Plan have been approved as part of the budget process.
- 2.2 The Local Plan had an earmarked reserve at the start of 2019/20 of £382,000. The current forecast external expenditure of approximately £602,000 for the period of 2019/20 to 2024/25 is within existing budget projections and supported by the Local Plan budget. This is in addition to in-house resources to operate the Local Plan team and a further £160,000 that has been approved to create 2 fixed terms posts for 2 years to assist with the preparation of the Local Plan. One of these posts, an additional Principal Planner, has now been filled.

- 2.3 The White Paper has made it clear that it wants local planning authorities to move away from static pdf documents on websites and in would like PropTech companies to be involved in developing technology that optimizes the way people research, and access a range of data. Whilst the City Council has a GIS system and it is creating a new stand-alone local plan website that is based on allowing people to access information at a postcode level, investment would be needed in order to deliver the new technology. Initial research has indicated that this could be in excess of £100,000. No provision for such investment has yet been included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. Further work is needed to identify specific requirements. In the absence of any national funding to support this approach, the Council will need to determine the priority for such work with potential funding sources being reserves or borrowing.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Under the current system, the Strategic Issues & Priorities consultation is an early stage in the plan making process and is not the actual Draft Local Plan which will follow on taking into account the responses received. The purpose of the Document is to explore important issues that will influence how the Local Plan is developed, giving people an early opportunity to inform and shape the direction of the plan before it is drafted.
- 3.2 The Local Plan must be prepared in line with the process set out in national legislation and can only be adopted by the Council if it is found to be legally compliant and sound by a Planning Inspector that is appointed by the Secretary of State after public examination.
- 3.3 Under the current system, Council's needs to comply with the duty to cooperate, which was created in the Localism Act 2011, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It currently places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. A failure to comply with the Duty to Co-operate can be fatal to the legal compliance of the Local Plan and could require the Local Plan to be withdrawn. A full record of the actions taken to comply with the Duty and of any necessary agreements with relevant bodies will be published alongside the submission version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19). Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Plan is the first stage of the consultation and engagement process and will follow on from the Strategic Issues and Priorities consultation covered by this report.
- 3.4 The Council must also comply with its own statutory Statement of Community Involvement, which was adopted in December 2018 and updated COVID-19 Statement.
- 3.5 There are no direct procurement implications as a result of this report.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Strategic Planning Team leads the preparation of the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and associated documents that are included in the Local Development Scheme, commissioning consultants and working with colleagues across the whole of the Council, neighbouring Local Planning Authorities under the Duty to Co-operate, statutory agencies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) and the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH).

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Once the Local Plan has been adopted it will be the statutory Development Plan which means that any applications that come forward that are in Council ownership will need to be assessed against the policies and proposals in the Local Plan.

#### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The whole purpose of preparing the Strategic Issues & Priorities document is to have an early conversation with local residents, businesses, statutory agencies and to explore important issues that will influence how the draft Local Plan is developed, giving people an opportunity to inform and shape the direction of the plan before it is drafted. Discussions have taken place with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment & Wellbeing regarding the content of the Strategic Issues and Priorities Document.
- 6.2 Consultation on the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document needs to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's updated Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-community-involvement/> and the COVID-19 SCI Statement. In order to ensure that the City Council is reaching out to as many people as possible a Local Plan Engagement Strategy is being prepared that sits alongside the SCI and will take account of other work recently undertaken by the Council including the new Winchester 2030 vision commissioned by the Town Forum.

#### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Local Plan must comply with the requirements of planning legislation and the need to deliver sustainable development which encompasses all considerations in relation to the built and natural environment.
- 7.2 The Council has appointed Consultants to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment which will be prepared alongside and feed into key stages of the Local Plan making process. These assessments will be made available for people to comment on and will be critical in supporting the decisions that are made in the Local Plan.

- 7.3 The Council's declaration on climate emergency is central feature of the Strategic Issues and Priorities document as it sets out some options that we are seeking feedback on in terms of how the Local Plan can support the objective of dramatically cutting the district's carbon footprint and assist the Council to become carbon neutral by 2024 and achieve the same position for the district by 2030. Given that this is such a key area for the Council, these discussions have involved the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment & Well Being.

## 8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a key part of preparing a 'sound' Local Plan. The Local Plan process needs to ensure that the issues and options that are considered during the process do not lead to unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), and that they should advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with a 'protected characteristic' (race, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy or maternity) and all others.
- 8.2 The same Consultants have been appointed by the Council to undertake an EqIA and Health Impact Assessment alongside the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment under the umbrella of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Any comments that are submitted will be taken into account, but must include people's name and contact details. The Council will publish names and associated representations on its website but it will not publish personal information such as telephone numbers, addresses or email addresses.
- 9.2 In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) information will only be kept for the necessary period of time required. The Council has an updated privacy policy which can be viewed on the website.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<i>Changes to the planning system</i>	The Government has consulted on a number of significant changes to the planning system which the City Council has submitted responses to. As these have major implications for the way that the Council produces a local plan, the Strategic Issues & Priorities Document has been prepared to enable the City Council to be able to pivot between either preparing a local plan under the current regulations or preparing a local plan to take into account the changes to the planning system	There is a great opportunity to move towards more digitisation of plans and with the right investment make the planning system more accessible.
<i>Property</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Community Support</i> The risk is that there is insufficient time to allow for full community engagement	Develop a programme that allows sufficient time for consultation and assessment of responses. DPDs are required to comply with several stages of publication. Develop a stand alone local plan website and a range of engagement methods that reaches out and engages with a range of people and stakeholders/community groups	Ensure communication methods are relevant to the task to ensure those interested are kept informed of progress and provided with opportunities to participate building on recent work undertaken by the Council such as the Winchester 2030 vision.



<p><i>Timescales</i> The timetable for the publication of the Strategic Issues and Priorities Document will need to be included in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is the project plan for the various stages in the production of the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the Strategic Planning team to be able to progress Local Plan and timings are realistic given the uncertainties surrounding the way that local plans need to be prepared.</p>	<p>It will be necessary to update the LDS if timescales need to be adjusted.</p>
<p><i>Project capacity</i> Medium Risk due to insufficient resources.</p>	<p>Ensure that the necessary resources are in place to progress the projects identified.</p>	<p>Working with colleagues, neighbouring authorities through joint commissioning of evidence studies through for example the work on PfSH.</p>
<p><i>Financial / VfM</i> Limited Risk that there are insufficient financial resources to deliver the projects identified.</p>	<p>Funding for ongoing projects are within the existing budget and funding for Local Plan Review is expected to be covered by the earmarked reserve.</p> <p>The new planning system does include a much greater emphasis on the use of GIS and the ability for people to access data at a postcode level. This will require corporate investment in new technology.</p>	<p>Joint commissioning research and potentially GIS accessible software with neighbouring authorities.</p>

<p><i>Legal</i> Local Plan not found sound at the Local Plan Examination as it fails the public consultation tests in Regulations 18 and 19 of the Act.</p>	<p>Update the LDS to reflect the consultation on the Strategic Issues &amp; Priorities and update it when there is greater clarity from government on the changes to the planning system. Ensure Plan making process follows national regulations.</p>	<p>There is great opportunity through the Local Plan making process to engage with a wide range of people on the future of the district.</p>
<p><i>Innovation</i> Presentation of the Local Plan fails to engender interest in the plan making process.</p>	<p>Ensuring that the Council engages with as many people as possible and it reaches out to hard reach groups is a key part of the Local Plan process especially in light of COVID-19. Publicity and the methods of Local Plan engagement will be a key component of this.</p>	<p>There is a great opportunity to make the Local Plan look appealing and interesting to a range of audiences. A stand-alone Local Plan website has been developed along with some new branding.</p>
<p><i>Reputation</i> Local Plan not being found sound would damage public confidence in Council's ability to plan for and manage development in the district.</p>	<p>It will be necessary to update the LDS to ensure that the City Council communicates when it will be consulting on the local plan.</p>	<p>Developing a new Local Plan with the engagement of the local community is a real opportunity as it will clearly set out the City Council's vision for the district up 2038 bringing with it certainty and investment to the area.</p>

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### 11.1 Introduction

- 11.2 The White Paper 'Planning for the Future' was published for consultation by the government on the 6th August 2020. The White Paper proposes significant changes to the planning system, including a change in the way in which land is allocated for development and the way in which controls over that development are implemented. The City Council responded to the White Paper consultation and put itself forward as a potential pilot authority for the new system (CAB3262 refers). To date no response has been received as to whether our Local Plan is likely to be a pilot for the new way of plan making.

- 11.3 The government has also published a new technical guidance consultation on the calculation of housing numbers for local authorities. From the proposed new formula Winchester's housing requirement could increase from about 692 dwellings per annum (under the existing Standardised Methodology) to something in the region of 1024 dwellings per annum. The City Council has responded to this consultation (CAB3261 refers).
- 11.4 The Government has now recently clarified that its 'Standard Methodology' for calculating local housing needs will continue for the time being (692 dwellings per annum). However, it is not clear whether the Planning White Paper's proposals to change the calculation will be taken forward and this still remains a possibility.
- 11.5 A Local Plan Action Plan was agreed at Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (CAB3274 refer) which identified what progress could be made on producing a new local plan whether under the current regulations or a reformed system
- 11.6 Production of a Local Plan under the existing system
- 11.7 Producing a Local Plan is, and will still remain under the proposed changes that are outlined in the White Paper, one of the most important obligations for a local authority. Local Plans set out a long-term vision for how an area will develop in the future, with policies that will shape future development. They address a wide range of issues, from strategic planning matters that affect the whole local authority area right through to finer details on the design of development on individual sites. The Government currently requires each local planning authority to produce a Local Plan and then review it at least once every five years to ensure that it is kept up to date. Plans which are out of date make managing development difficult and can result in unplanned development being permitted.
- 11.8 Subject to the outcome on the consultation on the White Paper, the Local Plan is likely cover a period from 2018 through to 2038 and sets out the policies and proposals that will guide and control the future development of the District over that time. It will identify where future development will take place, and allocate land for housing, employment, mixed-use and other development. It will also seek to protect the most important characteristics of the District, by preserving our unique natural and historical assets from development. It also has a key role to play in assisting the Council's move towards carbon neutrality as it addresses the Climate Emergency.
- 11.9 Status of this document
- 11.10 Under the existing system, the Strategic Issues & Priorities consultation is an early stage in the planning system towards preparing the new Local Plan, but it is not the actual Draft Local Plan. The purpose of the Document is to explore important issues that will influence how the Local Plan is developed, giving people an early opportunity to inform and shape the direction of the plan before it is drafted.

11.11 Content of the document

11.12 Consultation on the Strategic Issues and Priorities document is an invitation for a wide range of people to become involved in the next important stage of a conversation about our new Local Plan. The decisions made through the Local Plan will be of strategic importance for the district over the next 15 years and beyond.

11.13 Following the launch of the new Local Plan process in 2018, and building on what our research is telling us (our evidence base), this consultation document sets out the priorities that we think the new Local Plan needs to address. In order to do this, the document includes a number of key questions that we are inviting comments on.

11.14 The proposals that are contained in the Strategic Issues & Priorities document must be published for consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which requires that:

11.15 (1) A local planning authority must—

(a) notify each of the bodies or persons specified in paragraph (2) of the subject of a local plan which the local planning authority propose to prepare, and

(b) invite each of them to make representations to the local planning authority about what a local plan with that subject ought to contain.

(2) The bodies or persons referred to in paragraph (1) are—

(a) such of the specific consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan;

(b) such of the general consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider appropriate; and

(c) such residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area from which the local planning authority consider it appropriate to invite representations.

(3) In preparing the local plan, the local planning authority must take into account any representation made to them in response to invitations under paragraph (1).

11.16 The Strategic Issues & Priorities document is based upon evidence studies about the economic, social and environmental needs of the District that have been either been completed or are currently underway.

One of the key issues in the Strategic Issues & Priorities consultation document is to invite views on the different spatial options for the distribution of growth. The

evidence shows that housing is the land use that needs most additional land so meeting the need for housing inevitably drives the development strategy options. The various approaches are set out below and can be summarised as:

- Approach 1: Development Strategy based on the approach in the existing Local Plan of distributing development to the sustainable hierarchy of settlements;
- Approach 2: To focus development on Winchester itself as the largest most sustainable settlement;
- Approach 3: A strategy that includes one or more completely new strategic allocation or new settlement; and
- Approach 4; To disperse development around the district largely in proportion to the size of the existing settlements

**11.17 Approach 1: Development Strategy based on the approach in the existing Local Plan of distributing development to the sustainable hierarchy of settlements**

11.18 The existing Local Plan was developed with considerable public input and working with local communities to allocate sites. Given the fact that it has been tested through the plan making process before and is delivering a sustainable strategy for development across the district, it is included as an option in the consultation.

**11.19 Approach 2: To focus development on Winchester itself as the largest most sustainable settlement**

11.20 A significant way in which the Local Plan can help reduce carbon emissions is through the location of new development. This suggests that one option that we should consider is to focus new development towards Winchester as this has the best range of jobs, facilities and services to enable people to avoid long journeys and to use walking and cycling more easily and is best served by public transport.

**11.21 Approach 3: A strategy that includes one or more completely new strategic allocations or new settlements**

11.22 Major 'urban extensions' or a free-standing 'new settlements' could accommodate large numbers of new homes along with other uses supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

**11.23 Approach 4: To disperse development around the district largely in proportion to the size of the existing settlements**

- 11.24 An alternative to concentrating development in various locations as set out in the options outlined above, is to disperse it to a wider range of settlements, roughly in proportion to where people currently live. This may enable residents to remain in their local areas, avoid long journeys or use walking and cycling.
- 11.25 The Strategic Issues & Priorities document will summarise the key findings that have come out of the Local Plan evidence base <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/winchester-district-local-plan-2018-2038-emerging/local-plan-2038-evidence-base> and more recently, from the Winchester Vision 2030 commission <https://www.onegreatwin.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Winchester-Vision-2030-Part-3.pdf>
- 11.26 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- 11.27 Alongside the consultation there would be another ‘Call for sites’ (new SHELAA sites) for a range of housing (general market housing/self build and custom build homes) and employment uses. The Call for Sites would be widened to include ‘Green sites’ (i.e. sites that might be suitable for green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement/net gain, nitrate mitigation or renewable energy) and a call for Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 11.28 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- 11.29 The intention was to review the CIL alongside the Local Plan which would in part be informed by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). In the White Paper the Government has made it clear about its intention to replace CIL with an Infrastructure Levy and is silent on the role and need for IDPs. In view of this uncertainty this work will be put on hold until further information is available.
- 11.30 Local Development Scheme
- 11.31 The City Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS) would need to be updated to reflect this consultation. The recommendation is to authorise the Strategic Director – Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment & Well Being, to update the LDS to refer to consultation on the Strategic Issues & Priorities consultation in February/March 2021 and to update the LDS again after the consultation period has closed.
- 11.32 Next steps - presentation and consultation
- 11.33 A key part of the consultation on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document is to ensure that it is presented in a way that creates interest across a wide range of audiences in both a creative and engaging way that actively encourages people to read and engage with the Local Plan making process. This means using eye catching images, effective visualizations, icons, creative illustrations in order to bring the document to life and to give the Local Plan a strong Winchester brand identity which can then be carried through the whole Plan-making process to adoption.

- 11.34 In approving the Strategic Issues & Priorities document, Members are approving the main content of the document. The presentation will then be finessed and be worked up to make it visually appealing and interesting before it goes out to consultation in February/March so that it really engenders interest and actively encourages people to respond across a wide range of groups. This will be undertaken by working with a local external graphic design Consultant on the style and presentation of the Document in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment & Well Being.
- 11.35 The Council's updated Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the updated COVID-19 Statement, sets out the expected methods of community involvement for Council's Local Plan and demonstrating that you meet the requirement in the SCI will be tested on the Local Plan Examination. Whilst the exact details of how we are going to consult are being developed there will be a wide range of engagement methods. This will include Press Releases, publicity on the Local Plan website, information posted in Parish Connect, attendance at online meetings, emails sent to Parish Councils/Town Forum and anyone on the Local Plan database, a website consultation portal available where anyone who wishes can view and submit comments on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document.
- 11.36 Any responses that are received as a result of the consultation process will be taken into account in preparing the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) which will include identifying areas where development can take place to deliver the vision and the distribution of development. It is expected that, subject to the approval of the attached Strategic Issues and Priorities document, Members will be updated on the outcome of the consultation in Summer 2021 when it is anticipated that there might be more clarity on the outcome of the government's consultation on changes to the existing system and wider reforms.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 The government is very clear that in order to be effective plans need to be kept up-to-date. The National Planning Policy Framework states policies in Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies, should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary. Current guidance is that Local Plans should cover a minimum of 15 years from the date of adoption. The time period that the Local Plan covers therefore needs to align itself with the above requirement or any changes arising from new local plan requirements.
- 12.2 Under the current system there is no formal statutory requirement to prepare a Strategic Issues & Priorities document for consultation prior to the Draft Local Plan. However, in order to be as inclusive as possible, and to be able to demonstrate to an Inspector at the Local Plan Examination that there has been every opportunity for people to be able to engage with the Local Plan, it is considered good practice to undertake this first step in process.

- 12.3 The government continues to make it very clear that all Council's must have an up-to-date Local Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and hence why there is need to press on with work that would be used to inform either a local plan under the current system or a new style local plan. Failure to make progress with the Local Plan is not an option as the Council will not be able to demonstrate a 5 year Housing Land Supply, policies in the existing Local Plan will be given less weight in the determination of planning applications and at appeals. In these circumstances, decisions on planning applications will have to be made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework. There is also a risk of Government intervention if it is considered that the Council is not making significant progress with developing a new Local Plan itself but it is acknowledge that this is a real challenge given that the government has recently consulted on some major changes to the way that local plans need to be prepared.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

##### Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3226 – REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

##### Other Background Documents:-

[Winchester City Council - Local Development Scheme 2020](#)

#### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Strategic Issues & Priorities Document