

REPORT TITLE: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

12 FEBRUARY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Jackie Porter, Cabinet Member for the Built Environment and Local Plan

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WARD(S): ALL WARDS (OUTSIDE OF SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK)

PURPOSE

The Council has a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to prepare and maintain an up-to-date Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Chief Planning Officer has contacted all Local Planning Authorities and requested that they agree an updated LDS by 6 March 2025. The new LDS attached to this report (Appendix 1) would fulfil this requirement by outlining a clear and realistic timetable for the adoption of the new Local Plan 2040¹ that will shortly be the subject of an examination and it also covers the production of the next Local Plan following that.

Having an up-to-date Local Plan is extremely important as it ensures that the city council is able to demonstrate having a Housing Land Supply and so can better defend planning appeals and control where future development takes place. This report seeks approval for the adoption of an updated LDS, which replaces the previous version (August 2023).

The LDS establishes a forward-looking framework including to guide the adoption of the new Local Plan 2040 and it also covers the preparation of the next Local Plan process in line with current legislation and has been prepared to meet the request from the Chief Planning Officer. The preparation and the timing of the adoption of the next Local Plan is, however, dependent on the government issuing the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act secondary legislation which will include details about the revised plan-making system.

¹ Note – Winchester City Council has a current Adopted Local Plan consist of Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy Adopted 2013 and Winchester District Local Plan Part 2: Development Management and Site Allocations Adopted 2017. We have been preparing a new plan to replace these Local Plans. Once adopted – that plan will be known as Local Plan 2040. Further to this, we will begin preparing another new Local Plan in accordance with the latest regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the updated Winchester District Local Development Scheme February 2025, as set out in Appendix 1 to this Report, be approved and brought into immediate effect; and
2. That authority is delegated to the Strategic Planning Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan, to undertake minor updating and drafting of any amendments required prior to publication.

IMPLICATIONS:

- 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME
- 1.1 Greener, Faster
- 1.2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the preparation and adoption of the new Local Plan 2040 which is a statutory requirement of Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the programme for the next Local Plan. The preparation of the Local Plan must comply with the requirements of national planning legislation and the need to deliver sustainable development which encompasses all considerations in relation to the built and natural environment.
- 1.3 The LDS does not include any Local Plan policies on tackling the climate emergency and creating a greener district as this is the role of the Local Plan. Due to the climate emergency, it is important that the next Local Plan is also prepared through the climate emergency lens. There are a number of policies in the new Local Plan 2040 that is currently the subject of the examination will, when it is adopted, contribute towards dramatically cutting the district's carbon footprint and assist the district to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.4 Good Homes for all
- 1.5 It is the role of the new Local Plan 2040 rather than the LDS to determine where and how much residential development should be located in the district outside the South Downs National Park. The number of new homes that we need to plan for is set by the government by its standard method (currently 1,157 dwellings per year based on the new NPPF and any adjustments as a result of changes that have been made by the government to paragraph 014 in the Planning Policy Guidance under 'Housing and Economic Needs Assessment').
- 1.6 The government also requires all authorities in the country to have a five-year rolling supply of housing land (from 1 July 2026 if the Local Plan was adopted against the requirements of the previous version of the National Planning Policy Framework Local Planning Authorities will be required in effect to have a 6 year Housing Land Supply).
- 1.7 The new Local Plan 2040 includes a development strategy and identifies the quantum of housing that will be required predominantly in Winchester, the market towns, and larger villages, to meet the government target for our district.

1.8 Thriving Places

1.9 Whilst this is not a matter for the LDS, creating strong, sustainable business growth remains a really important matter for the Local Plan. The new Local Plan 2040 identifies how we will enable Winchester District to continue to have a strong vibrant economy by providing opportunities for new purpose-built employment space, the sustainable consolidation and expansion of existing businesses, and preservation of current employment floor space whilst seeking to protect and enhance our town and other centres which provide a range of facilities and services. It is important that the next Local Plan that is also based on a sound evidence base that is up-to-date and it is in line the latest requirements in the government's National Planning Policy Framework in terms of identifying land for specific employment sectors.

1.10 Healthy Communities

1.11 It is the role of the of the new Local Plan 2040 and the next Local Plan rather than LDS to identify how developers need to achieve high quality, well-designed places which remain a critical part of place making and an integral component of climate change and the city council's journey to net-zero and health and wellbeing agendas. Allied to this an important function of the next Local Plan to continue to fully consider and address how development can help meet the needs of our residents including age ranges, genders and ability.

1.12 Efficient and Effective / Listening and Learning

1.13 Whilst there is no legal requirement to consult on the Local Development Scheme, the next Local Plan will, like previous Local Plans, be developed using a variety of engagement and consultation techniques. A key part of the plan making process is to seek early and open engagement on the content and shape of the draft Local Plan which is one of the reasons the LDS must be kept up-to-date so that people are kept informed about progress on the Local Plan and the next steps.

1.14 Consultations for the new Local Plan will continue to be undertaken in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and any changes which may result from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The resources for the preparation of the various elements of the Local Plan is approved as part of the budget process.

2.2 The new Local Plan budget has been previously funded from earmarked reserves which has been topped up with a yearly

contribution of £36,700. Subject to the successful outcome of the Local Plan examination and taking into account 3 year yearly contribution from the central budget (£110,000) there would be approximately £610,000 available to fund the next review of the Local Plan. If further funding is required to support the Local Plan making process this will be dealt with via the normal budget making process.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All Local Planning Authorities (irrespective of whether or not the LDS has been updated recently or whether they have recently adopted Local Plan) have been requested by the Chief Planning Officer to agree an updated LDS by 6 March 2025. Having an 'interim' timetable for the next Local Plan will ensure that the city council will be able to demonstrate having a Housing Land Supply position and so can better avoid planning by appeal. An up-to-date LDS is also a fundamental element and statutory requirement of the Local Plan process and it is a requirement to submit the LDS at the submission stage prior to examination to the Planning Inspectorate. Maintaining an up-to-date LDS is one of the first tests of soundness to be considered at the Local Plan examination and is statutory requirement under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It is, therefore, essential that it is kept under review and updated accordingly.
- 3.2 The new Local Plan 2040 and the next Local Plan must be prepared in line with the process set out in national legislation/regulations 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 to conduct a public examination. Whilst there are ongoing discussions about devolution (see paragraph 11.32), the government has made it very clear that Local Planning Authorities should not delay the development of Local Plans whilst they implement a universal system of strategic planning within the next five years.
- 3.3 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 new Local Plan and associated documents and will also be responsible for the production of the next Local Plan. This includes commissioning consultants, visiting and assessing the suitability of sites for development, drafting the Local Plan, setting up and hosting public consultation events, analysing the results of the public consultations and making changes to the Local Plan. It also involves working with colleagues across the whole of the council, neighbouring local planning authorities under the Duty to Cooperate, statutory agencies (Natural

England, Historic England and the Environment Agency et al) and the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH).

- 4.2 The resource available to the team are kept under review to ensure the plan process remains on track culminating in adoption of the new plan. All of the Officers in the Strategic Planning team are employed directly by the Council.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Once the new Local Plan 2040 has been adopted, it will be the statutory Development Plan which means that any applications that come forward that are made by council, or involve land in our ownership, will need to be assessed against the policies and proposals in the Plan.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 There is no requirement to consult on the LDS, however, the Council is required to make it publicly available and keep it up to date. Discussions have taken place with the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan regarding the content of this revised LDS. An email alert will also be sent to Parish and Town Councils and organisations that are registered to receive updates on the Local Plan will be notified about the Cabinet meeting.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Council's declaration of climate emergency continues to be a defining issue for the next Local Plan (after the adoption of the new Local Plan) in terms of how the Plan can support the objective of dramatically cutting the district's emissions. The preparation of the Local Plan must comply with the requirements of national planning legislation and the need to deliver sustainable development which encompasses all considerations in relation to the built and natural environment.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 The LDS does not introduce new policy. However, undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a key part of preparing a 'sound' Local Plan and has been factored into the timetable that has been included in LDS. The Local Plan process needs to ensure that the issues and options that are considered during the process do not lead to direct and indirect discrimination, and 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 Consultants will need to be appointed to undertake an EqIA and Health Impact Assessment, alongside the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment cited above, under the umbrella of the IIA for the SA and EqIA.
- 8.3 The Local Plan will be subject to and required to publish equality impact assessments to ensure that the policies and proposals are consistent with the Council's Equality Policy.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Not Applicable. The LDS is a project management tool that sets out the timetable for the Local Plan.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The production of a Local Plan requires consideration of the potential risks involved in its preparation. These vary from local matters such as changes in staffing levels or political / administrative changes to those of regional or national significance including publication of revised government guidance along with a number of changes to the plan making system that on the horizon which have been outlined in the main body of this report.
- 10.2 The new Local Plan (that is the subject of a Local Plan examination) will cover the period 2020 - 2040. At the time of writing this report there is not yet new policy guidance from Government on how Local Planning Authorities should prepare a new Local Plan. Working on the basis of the current policy, the next Local Plan would also need to cover 20 years and provide for a minimum of 15 years from the date of adoption.
- 10.3 The LDS at Appendix 1 includes a matrix at Table 1 which identifies a range of potential risks involved with preparing a Local Plan, their impact and likelihood of occurrence together with contingency and mitigation measures. A more detailed risk assessment will need to be prepared as there are a several strands of work that need to align for the delivery of this revised timetable.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Funding for the preparation of the Local Plan comes out of Local Plan budget and vacancy savings across Built Environment Service.	Joint commissioning of research with neighbouring authorities for example, through the Partnership with South Hampshire (PfSH).

	Funding for Local Plan Review will be covered by the earmarked reserve and be topped up as appropriate in line with the normal budget making process.	
Exposure to challenge	Ensure the Plan making process follows current national planning legislation and any subsequent changes to planning legislation. The new Local Plan that has been submitted for examination has been reviewed by Counsel and given that the production of the Local Plan remains a corporate priority it would be prudent to continue instructing Counsel regarding the next Local Plan review.	There is great opportunity through the Local Plan making process to engage with a wide range of people on the future development of the district.
Innovation	Ensuring that the Council is creative in the way that it engages with as many people as possible and reaching out to hard to reach groups is a key part of the Local Plan process. Publicity and the methods of Local Plan engagement will be a key component of this. This needs to build on the RTPI awards that given for the local plan engagement strategy that was developed for the Strategic Issues and Priorities public Consultation. However, the engagement process for next Local Plan will	The opportunity was taken to change the presentation of the Local Plan that is examination to make it more appealing and interesting to a wide range of audiences. Further thought would need to be given as to whether the stand-alone Local Plan website could be used again for the next Local Plan to support the branding 'Your Place, Your Plan' and increase accessibility and usability.

	need to be managed against preparing a Local Plan in a 30 month timeframe.	
Reputation	Producing a 'sound' Local Plan is one of the council's biggest corporate priorities. The development of the Local Plan needs to undergo various statutory stages, and, in this respect, it is essential that there are various checks put in place to make sure that it follows the correct procedure. This would include asking for advice from a leading KC at key stages of the Local Plan process,	The preparation of the Local Plan is a great opportunity to reach out and engage with as many people as possible. Developing a new Local website and the Local Development Scheme and Local Plan are kept up to-date to ensure that the Council communicates when people can get involve and provide feedback on the Local Plan. Engaging with the local community is a real opportunity as it will clearly set out the Council vision for the district, bringing with it certainty and investment to the area. The success of this public engagement process can then be replicated by other departments within the Council.
Achievement of outcome	The Plan needs to go through various statutory stages and it will be necessary to ensure that all of the appropriate steps are undertaken in order to provide a 'sound' Local Plan. This can only be achieved if the Local Plan is underpinned by an Evidence Base and sufficient time is allowed for this to be incorporated into the Local Plan.	The Council has declared a climate emergency and there is a great opportunity to provide leadership in terms of not only the presentation and policies of the Local Plan, which seek to reduce/minimise the impact of new development on the environment, but also how the Council engages with the local community

		and other interested parties.
Property	n/a	n/a
Community Support	Develop a Local Plan programme that allows sufficient time for the consultation and assessment of responses to the consultation and other subsequent key stages that require further consultation. The Local Plan process is required to comply with several statutory stages of publication.	Ensure that the communication methods used for consultation are relevant to the task, easy to use and ensure those interested in the plan making process are kept up-to-date and are provided with opportunities to participate.
Timescales	Ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the Strategic Planning team to be able to progress the Local Plan and timings are realistic as set out in the Local Development Scheme. Using additional temporary resources to keep the Local Plan on the project timetable on track if required although this is becoming increasingly harder due to the lack of people with Local Plan experience.	The LDS needs to be kept up-to date and adjusted if necessary to take into account any new issues that may arise or new guidance on how Local Plans need to be prepared and adjusted as appropriate, to deal with the range of other changes to the planning system that are on the horizon.
Project capacity	Ensure that the necessary resources are available. See above commentary on Timescales and Financial Exposure	Work with colleagues, neighbouring authorities through joint commissioning of evidence studies including, for example, the work on PfSH.
Other	n/a	n/a

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Background

What is an LDS?

- 11.1 The LDS is effectively a project management plan tool that sets out the timetable for the production of new or revised Development Plan Documents which will form the Council's Local Plan. The LDS is required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The LDS must specify (among other matters) the development plan documents which, when prepared, will comprise the Local Plan. It must be made publicly available on the Council's website and be kept up-to-date to enable local communities and interested parties to keep track of progress. It is reviewed annually through the Council's Authorities Monitoring Report.
- 11.2 The LDS is important in the context of communication and transparency. The local community, businesses and others with an interest in the future planning of the District must be properly informed of the planning documents that the Council intends to produce and the timescale for their preparation, consultation and adoption.
- 11.3 Although consultations on the Local Plan will continue to be advertised and interested parties notified in accordance with the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the LDS provides information about when consultations are likely to happen.
- 11.4 The LDS is also a useful tool for establishing and reflecting the Council's priorities and enables work programmes to be set for the preparation of planning documents. It also provides a context for the review of planning documents once they have been prepared. It is important that the LDS is kept up-to-date as one of the key soundness tests at the Local Plan examination is whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the agreed LDS.

Why are we updating the LDS now when there are considerable changes about to happen to the Plan-making system as a result of the change in administration?

- 11.5 The Chief Planning Officer has contacted all Local Planning Authorities [Chief Planner's newsletter December 2024](#) and advised them that the Deputy Prime Minister has requested that *'all local planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, i.e. by no later than 6 March 2025. The updated LDS should include clear, realistic, and specific dates for consultation and submission of the local plan. We ask that once updated, the LDS is made publicly available, and a copy is sent to the Ministry using the following email*

address: LocalPlans@communities.gov.uk AND the key information is recorded by filling out an online form'. As the above indicates, city council is required by Ministry to prepare a submit an updated LDS. – we have no choice in the matter.

What factors need to be taken into consideration in terms of preparing an LDS?

- 11.6 Before setting out a revised LDS, it is important that Members are aware that there are a number of proposed and anticipated changes to planning legislation and policy from Government that could have important implications for the LDS. Allied to this it is also important to note that if any or a combination of the variables that have been listed in the following section of the report result in a change, the LDS would need to be reset.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 11.7 On the 30 July 2024 the government consulted on a number of fundamental proposed changes to the NPPF. The city council responded to the public consultation on the proposed changes to NPPF.

Submission of the Local Plan for examination

- 11.8 In terms of the transitional arrangements, paragraph 226 (c) in Annex 1 to the proposed changes to the NPPF in July 2024 originally stated that a Local Plan had to be submitted for examination under Regulation 22 on or before [the publication of the updated NPPF + one month]. The City Council met this original deadline as the Local Plan was submitted for examination on 15 November 2024.

Final version of the NPPF

- 11.9 On 12 December 2024 the government issued a final version of the NPPF alongside a number of other changes to the planning system in the form of updates to the Planning Practice Guide. There was an important change to the wording of the transitional arrangements in the final version of the December 2024 NPPF which now states at paragraph 234 that Local Plans can be submitted under the transitional arrangements provided they are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 12 March 2025.

Housing requirements

- 11.10 Another significant change in the revised NPPF is that the District's housing requirement has increased from 676 dwellings per year to 1,157 dwellings per year. As the new Local Plan 2040 was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on the 15 November 2024 the new Local Plan will still be assessed at examination against the previous 2023

NPPF. As the new standard method is based on housing stock, initial discussions have taken place with Officers from the South Downs National Park, Chichester, Eastbourne and Lewis and East Hants Local Planning Authorities regarding the new housing figures and the implications of this calculation and the need to work together on this. It is also important to note that the new NPPF (2024) has introduced a requirement at paragraph 78 (c) that from 1 July 2026 in the case where a Local Plan has been adopted against the previous version of the NPPF (2023) Local Planning Authorities will in effect need to demonstrate a 6 year housing land supply by including a 20% buffer.

Employment land

11.11 Paragraph 86 of the revised 2024 NPPF has included the requirement that planning policies should: *'set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration'*. This would involve identifying priority sectors for growth and support such as advanced manufacturing; clean energy industries; creative industries; defence industries; digital and technology businesses; financial services; life sciences; and professional and business services. A Local Plan review would need to identify these different priority sectors and how they can be addressed in the next Local Plan.

What are the implications of the new NPPF on the LDS?

11.12 The council is fully committed to meeting the requirements in the revised 2024 NPPF once the new Local Plan 2040 has been adopted. Officers, using delegated authority that was granted to the Strategic Planning Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan at the time of approving the Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) for public consultation in August 2024, have already put forward a Proposed Modification to the Planning Inspectorate to the wording of [Policy SP2](#) in the new Local Plan submitted for examination. Proposed Modification (PM2) states: *'The Local Plan is adopted under the 'transitional arrangements' contained at time of drafting in the proposed changes to NPPF, which mean it has to accord with the requirements of the December 2023 NPPF. The subsequent proposed changes to the NPPF relate mainly to housing provision and the transitional arrangements require local plans to review these as soon as possible after adoption. Policy SP2 commits the Council to commence such a review within 6 months of adoption and this will focus primarily on meeting any new housing requirements'*. This Proposed Modification (which would still need to be agreed by the Inspector and consulted on) reaffirms the council's commitment to meeting the NPPF's new housing requirements and commits the city council to an early review of the Local Plan.

11.13 Even if the scope of the next Local Plan review was restricted to allocating land to meet the new housing land requirements (see points below) and identifying specific priority employment sectors, there would be a considerable amount of work that would be needed to be undertaken by Officers to identify and allocate land to meet the new housing requirement in the NPPF which would include updating Infrastructure Delivery Plan that assesses the need for water, sewerage, transport, internet, mobile phone coverage etc. Work would also need to be commissioned to establish how specific employment priority sectors could be met and the associated employment need that would arise from the increase in housing.

Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities

11.14 Allied to this, all of our neighbouring Local Planning Authorities housing requirements have also changed as a result of the new NPPF (the majority of them have also experienced an increase in housing numbers). Due to the increase in housing requirements across Hampshire this will almost certainly result in the need for:

- Joined up discussions to take place between Local Planning Authorities regarding housing development that may for example, be either close to the District boundary or potentially have an impact on the District or unmet housing need;
- Discussions regarding unmet housing need under the Duty to Cooperate (this includes the South Downs National Park which is a separate planning authority that covers part of our district); and
- Responses will need to be agreed with the Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan on neighbouring Local Planning Authorities Local Plans and work would be required to update Statement of Common Grounds which are all likely to converge around the same time as work is progressing on a review of the next Local Plan.

11.15 This will have implications in terms of Officers time and involve externally commissioning consultants at a time when all of our neighbouring Local Planning Authorities will be working to a revised timetable that involves allocating additional land for housing development and they will also be using external consultants that the city council also relies on to assist us with our Local Plan review.

Local Plan Examination

11.16 The Secretary of State has now arranged for an Inspector to be appointed by the Planning Inspectorate. The appointed Inspector will examine the Local Plan to establish whether it is 'sound', taking into account all of the representations received.

11.17 R Barrett MRTPI IHBC has been appointed to hold the independent examination of the Winchester District Local Plan. No formal details of the Local Plan examination timetable have been published. However, from the exchange of correspondence with the Inspector (which is available on the Local Plan examination website) subject to confirmation from the Inspector, potentially the examination could take place in April 2025.

What could be the implications of the Local Plan examination on the LDS?

11.18 As the above indicates, there is going to be a considerable amount of work for Officers in the Strategic Planning team and other departments from across the council in the coming months associated with the Local Plan examination and moving the current Local Plan towards adoption by the Autumn of this year (see paragraph 2.2 - Resources).

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023

11.19 Paragraph 236 of the revised NPPF states that *'where the housing requirement in the plan to be adopted meets less than 80% of local housing need, the local planning authority will be expected to begin work on a new plan, under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025), in order to address the shortfall in housing need'*. This paragraph in the NPPF would apply to Winchester City Council and it does give a strong indication that there will be changes to the plan-making system at some stage in 2025 by way of secondary legislation.

What could be the implications of the LURA 2023 on the LDS?

11.20 As indicated above, is not yet known when the government intends to publish the LURA secondary legislation (anticipated in Spring/early Summer 2025) which will include details about the revised plan-making system. In the absence of this information, it has been more difficult for Officers to produce an LDS as we do not know the details of any changes to how Local Plans will need to be produced and the timeframes that need to be worked towards. As there is considerable uncertainty around when the LURA secondary legislation will be published, the advice from [Planning Officers Society](#) in their 'Frequency Asked Questions' for Local Planning Authorities is that they can add that this is an 'interim' timetable and acknowledge that the LDS may need to be reset / subject of review when the details of the new system are published.

What do we currently know about how a next Local Plan should be prepared?

11.21 The previous government administration indicated in [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - GOV.UK](#) that Local Plans would need to be prepared and adopted within 30 months. Paragraph 43 of the consultation document sets out the following stages:

- **A scoping and early participation stage** – including requirements to “notify” the public and stakeholders including statutory bodies and “invite” participation; prepare or update the local plan or minerals and waste timetable (see [Chapter 4](#)); and give a minimum of four months’ notice before they intend to formally commence the 30 month plan preparation timeframe (starting with the first gateway assessment). Participation and evidence gathering required to inform the Strategic Environmental Assessment (and its eventual replacement Environmental Outcomes Reports) also begins in this stage.
- **Plan visioning and strategy development** – including a requirement to undertake visioning about the future of the area (see [Chapter 1](#)) and the first formal public consultation on the plan.
- **Evidence gathering and drafting the plan** – including a requirement to undertake the second gateway assessment.
- **Engagement, proposing changes and submission of the plan** – including a requirement for the second public consultation on the plan and undertaking the third gateway assessment.

11.22 The previous government administration outlined the process for preparing a Local Plan within a 30 month timeframe:

23 months including:

- Gateway 1 (Advisory)
- Mandatory Public Consultation (8 weeks)
- Gateway 2 (Advisory)
- Mandatory Public Consultation (6 weeks)
- Gateway 3 (Stop/Go)
- Examination: 6 months
- Finalisation and adoption of digital plan: 1 month

11.23 As there has now been a change in government administration it is uncertain whether the above process will change and if the timeframe for preparing the next Local Plan will still be 30 months. However, there is a strong indication from the current government administration that they do want national coverage of up-to-date Local Plans. It is important to note that the new Local Plan process started in 2018 which indicates that it could be challenging in practice to produce a Local Plan within a condensed 30 month timeframe for the following reasons:

Engagement in the Plan-making process:

11.24 The Plan-making process for the new Local Plan 2040 that will be the subject of examination has involved 4 separate stages of public consultation. Whilst this process was very inclusive and it was RTPI award winning, it did take a considerable amount of Officer resources to draft the 4 versions of the documentation that were consulted on, administer the public consultation events, analyse and interpret the results of the public consultations.

What be would the implications a 30 month Local Plan timetable be on the LDS?

11.25 Whilst Officers are waiting for further details from the government on the revised Plan-making system which will be confirmed in the LURA secondary legislation, if we are required to produce a Local Plan within a 30 month timeframe one of the key consequences is that the number of times that we will be able to engage with the local community will need to alter. In accordance with the steps for producing a Local Plan that have been set out above, we will need to have a maximum of two separate stages of public consultation as otherwise it would not be practically possible to produce a Local Plan in 30 months.

National Development Management Policies

11.26 The previous government administration also indicated their intention to introduce National Development Management Policies. [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy - GOV.UK](#)

11.27 National Development Management Policies would have the same weight in certain planning decisions as policies in local plans, neighbourhood plans and other statutory plans (and could, where relevant, also be a material consideration in some other planning decisions, such as those on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects).

11.28 The introduction of National Development Management Policies would potentially have the advantage of reducing unnecessary time at examination and it would bring consistency to development management policies across the country. There would need to be

public consultation by government on the content of the National Development Management Policies prior to them coming into force.

What could be the implications of National Development Management Policies on the LDS?

- 11.29 Following the change in government administration, there is currently no formal timetable for the consultation or the introduction of National Development Management Policies. However, at a recent Planning Advisory Services webinar it was indicated that consultation on the National Development Management policies may take place in Spring 2025. In view of this uncertainty, it is difficult to understand what implications this could have on the LDS.
- 11.30 If National Development Management Policies came into force during the preparation of the next Local Plan Officers would need to assess each of the development management policies and determine whether or not they were covered by a National Development Management policy or assess whether there could be the justification for a local policy. Depending on the timing of the National Development Management policies, this could generate a significant amount of work/rewriting of the Local Plan which would result in the need for the LDS to be reset.

Devolution

- 11.31 Another added uncertainty to preparing a LDS for the next Local Plan is that on the 16th December 2024 the government issued an English Devolution White Paper [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#). The English Devolution White Paper has introduced in a short space of time the opportunity to invite proposals from Local Government quarters which points towards both “Devolution” and “Local Government Reorganisation”. Hampshire County Council has published a paper to consider this opportunity ([Agenda for Extraordinary County Council on Thursday 9 January 2025, 10.00 am | About the Council | Hampshire County Council](#)).

What could be the implications of devolution on the LDS?

- 11.32 It is too early to anticipate and to fully advise what effect the proposed devolution might have on the LDS or what model of Devolution Hampshire is pushing for. What is clear from reading the White Paper is that the proposed Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) will guide development for the Local Planning Authorities areas, and Local Plans will need to be in general conformity with the SDS. Allied to this it has been confirmed in the White Paper that Local Planning Authorities should not delay the development of Local Plans while they await the adoption of SDS. Relevant Local Plans should continue to be updated or developed alongside the SDS process. A Combined Authority Model appears, at this moment in time, to be the direction of travel and if this

does happen, this could have implications for the next Local Plan review but the timing of this is unknown.

Strategic Planning

11.33 Paragraph 24 of the revised NPPF has included the return of strategic planning across local planning authority boundaries. According to the government, will play a vital and increasing role in how sustainable growth is delivered, by addressing key spatial issues including meeting housing needs, delivering strategic infrastructure and building economic and climate resilience. There is also a requirement for Strategic policy-making authorities to collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters in their Local Plans. In Hampshire, as there are two National Parks (South Downs and the New Forest), undertaking strategic planning may be slightly more challenging.

What could be the implications of strategic planning on the LDS?

11.34 It is unclear at the time of writing this report what implications strategic planning could have on a timetable for preparing an LDS as discussions have not yet taken place with our neighbours about the role of strategic planning.

11.35 Planning and Infrastructure Bill

11.36 The government is proposing to introduce a Planning and Infrastructure Bill to *'unlock more housing and infrastructure across the country, supporting economic growth as well as the environment. The new legislation will help speed up and streamline the planning process, as well as increasing the speed of major development projects in alignment with government industrial, energy and transport strategies. This includes upgrading the national grid and boosting renewable energy'*.

11.37 What could be the implications of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill on the LDS?

11.38 There are limited details on when the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will be published and what it will contain so it is unclear at this time what the implications might be for the LDS or indeed whether it would have any implications.

Neighbourhood Planning

11.39 There are currently 4 Neighbourhood Plans being prepared in the District (New Alresford, Hursley, Curdrige and Denmead).

What are the implications of Neighbourhoods on the LDS?

11.40 Officers from the Strategic Planning team have a duty to support and provide technical advice to Parish and Town Councils on emerging Neighbourhood Plans and are responsible for making timely decisions. With the growing number of Neighbourhood Plans this is placing increasing pressure on Officers in the team.

11.41 New Towns Task Force

11.42 The government has established an independent New Towns Task Force. The role of the independent [New Towns Taskforce](#) is to advise ministers on appropriate locations for significant new communities, including large-scale urban extension and regeneration schemes, recommending locations to ministers by July 2025. The Taskforce is interested in proposals that are regionally significant for both housing numbers and economic growth. The unifying principle will be that each of the new settlements will contain 10,000 homes, at the very least, and that most, if not all, will be far larger in size. The government is aiming for a gold standard of 40% affordable housing. A core part of the Taskforce's work will be to consider how to fund and deliver new settlements.

What could be the implications of a New Towns Task Force on the LDS if a site for a new town was identified either in the District or close to the District boundary?

11.43 As indicated above, the recommendations of the New Towns Task Force will not be known until later on in the year. It is important to note that it has been reported that the government in a [Minister of State's interview](#) on *Today* that any proposals for a new town are over and above the standard housing requirement (i.e. a New Town will not count against the standard method). It is too early to assess what implications the recommendations from the New Towns Task Force may or may not have on the LDS as this will be dependent on the locations of the New Towns but it will be extremely important to keep this under review.

Local Plan timetables

11.44 As the above paragraphs indicate:

- The Chief Planning Officer has requested us to agree a new LDS which is at moment in time when the Local Plan examination has not yet taken place;
- Details of a revised Plan-making system are not yet known but there is a clear direction of travel that the government wants Local Plans to be produced much quicker than they are now; and

- There are a number of other variables such as the potential introduction of National Development Management Policies, devolution and the role of strategic planning and a range of other matters that are all potentially on the horizon.

11.45 In view of the above, Officers are recommending the following broad interim timetable for the LDS which may need to be reset if, and when, there is more certainty on the matters that have been outlined above.

Key dates

- Examination of the current Local Plan Q1 (April – June) 2025.
- TBC - Consultation on the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan - end of Q1 (April – June) / Q2 (June – September) 2025
- Commence work on a review of the next Local Plan Q2 (July – September) 2025
- Adoption of the current Local Plan Q3 (October – December) 2025
- 1st public consultation on the review of the Local Plan Q2 (July – September) 2026
- 2nd public consultation on the review of the Local Plan Q3 (October – December) 2027
- Examination of the Local Plan Q4 (January – March) 2028
- Adoption of the Local Plan Q4 (January – March) 2028 – assuming that there is no delay in the secondary legislation being published in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 It is a legal requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to have and maintain an up to date LDS and for the LDS to be accessible. The LDS is a project management tool and is able to be updated as required to ensure that it provides certainty to the local community and stakeholders about the preparation and subsequent adoption process of Development Plan Documents and it better avoids planning by appeal.
- 12.2 Whilst there a number of key variables which are unknown at this stage, as mentioned in paragraph 11.5, the Chief Planning Officer has requested that all Local Planning Authorities submit an LDS to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 6 March 2025.

- 12.3 Alternative timetables for the production of the LDS have been considered but in light of the uncertainties outlined above and need to meet the deadline of 6 March 2025, the LDS that is attached at Appendix 1 is considered to be the best option.
- 12.4 The delivery of the next Local Plan within this timeframe will also help to demonstrate to the Inspector at the Local Plan 2040 examination that we are committed to delivering the governments new housing targets and importantly, we will also be able to maintain a 6 year housing supply and as indicated in paragraph 12.1 we are not planning by appeal.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB 3419 (LP) – Revised Local Development Scheme, 10 August 2023.

Other Background Documents:-

[Local Development Scheme, August 2023](#)

[Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy - GOV.UK](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024](#)

[Letter from the Chief Planning Officer dated 13th December 2024](#)

[New Towns Taskforce](#)

[English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Winchester District Local Development Scheme, February 2025.

Appendix 2- Equalities Impact Assessment.