

TITLE	Local Development Scheme 2021
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 29 July 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement - Wayne Smith

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The purpose of this report is to seek Executive's approval to adopt an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS), the document which sets out the timetable for the preparation of local plans for the following three year period.

Amending the LDS will ensure that residents and others are able to understand when future stages in plan preparation are anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive adopt the Local Development Scheme 2021 attached as enclosure 1 to the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A review of the adopted local plans is being undertaken to ensure that the council's planning policies continue to be effective in managing decisions on development proposals.

The council is required to maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS), the document which sets out the programme for the preparation of local plans.

Between 2021 and 2022 two local plans are proposed to be produced by the Council:

1. Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan; and
2. Local Plan Update.

Since the publication of the last LDS in 2020, there has been changes in circumstances, resulting in the need to revise the programme for each of the above local plans.

The Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan is now at examination, having been submitted in February 2021. The dates provided within the recommended LDS are indicative, with actual dates being dependent on availability of the Planning Inspector appointed to examine the plan and the issues that are identified for discussion.

The programme for the Local Plan Update has been amended to reflect the need to revisit and consult on strategic options to manage growth following the extension of the

emergency planning arrangements around AWE Burghfield in March 2020. This change in circumstances meant that the strategy outlined in the Draft Local Plan (February 2020) is no longer practically achievable.

The adoption of the LDS will ensure that residents and others are able to understand when future stages in plan preparation are anticipated.

BACKGROUND

The existing statutory development plan for Wokingham Borough consists of the following alongside made (adopted) neighbourhood development plans:

- Core Strategy, adopted January 2010;
- Managing Development Delivery, adopted February 2014;
- Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire, adopted May 2001; and
- Waste Local Plan for Berkshire, adopted December 1998.

The council is undertaking a review of the above local plans. The Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery plans will be superseded by a Local Plan Update. The Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire and Waste Local Plan for Berkshire, which apply to local authorities across Berkshire, will be superseded by a new Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan covering the central and eastern Berkshire area.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a public statement of the programme for the production of local plans. The council has a duty to maintain an up-to-date LDS under national planning legislation and regulations.

Maintaining a LDS will ensure that residents and others are able to understand when future stages in plan preparation are anticipated.

BUSINESS CASE

Preparing and updating local plans is a statutory requirement. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a LDS which sets out the plans which are to be prepared, their scope, and the timetable for preparing them.

Maintaining up-to-date local plans ensures that planning policies continue to be effective in managing decisions by the council, and where these are appealed, by Planning Inspectors. Without effective planning policies, there would be no real control or influence over where and how new housing and other types of development take place. This could lead to housing and other forms of development being allowed in poor locations, being of lower quality, and in places where infrastructure cannot be improved to help deal with the impacts, e.g. pressures on roads, schools and community facilities.

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2. Local Plan Update.

Since the publication of the last LDS in 2020, there has been changes in circumstances, resulting in the need to revise the programme for each of the above local plans.

The Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan is now at examination, having been submitted in February 2021. The dates provided within the recommended LDS are indicative, with actual dates being dependent on availability of the Planning Inspector appointed to examine the plan and the issues that are identified for discussion.

The programme for the Local Plan Update has been more substantial changes. This reflects the need to revisit and consult on strategic options to manage growth following the extension of the emergency planning arrangements around AWE Burghfield in March 2020. This change in circumstances meant that the strategy outlined in the Draft Local Plan (February 2020) is no longer practically achievable.

It should be noted that this LDS is being updated at a time when national planning reforms are being proposed. These are not expected to impact on the proposed timetable which is based preparing the local plans under existing arrangements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	NA

Other Financial Information

The costs of preparing and adopting the recommended LDS are contained within the Growth and Delivery base budget.

In order to achieve a sound local plan, the projects outlined in the recommended LDS, there are costs associated with gathering evidence, site investigation work and the statutory examination. Budgets already exist for both of the outlined local plans. The costs associated with procuring evidence can be met within the associated budget items but it is not possible to robustly estimate the costs associated with the examination process and, whilst an estimate has been made, it may be necessary to seek require additional financing in a future year.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

The recommended LDS has not been subject to consultation. The LDS does however ensure that residents and others are able to understand when future stages in plan preparation are anticipated.

Public Sector Equality Duty

This report relates to programme for the preparation of local plans and not the scope or approach of policy. As such an equality assessment has been scoped out.

An equality assessment has and will continue to be undertaken to support the preparation of local plans, with views on the assessment capable of being made as part of the consultation process.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

There are no direct implications for climate change as a result of the recommendation of this report.

The Draft Local Plan (February 2020) contained a suite of proposed planning policies that seek mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

List of Background Papers

Local Development Scheme 2020

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