

Agenda Item 59.

TITLE	Local Development Scheme (LDS)
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 24 September 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for Environment
LEAD MEMBER	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The community will be informed of the timetable for producing Local Plans within the borough which will guide development through to 2036.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) approve the updated Local Development Scheme to be effective from 25 September 2015;
- 2) approve spend of up to £800,000 for the Local Plan Update, £300,000 for the Minerals & Waste Local Plan and note that the budget is already approved for the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan;
- 3) note that funding for Year 1 has already been approved through the Medium Term Financial Plan and that approval is given for Years 2 & 3.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Council has to maintain a programme (timetable) showing what Local Plan documents are to be produced over a three year period. Local Plan documents are very important when deciding planning applications. As the current programme covers 13 May 2013 to 12 May 2016, it requires updating.

The main changes to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) are due to:

- The Council will be producing a Local Plan Update, which will include setting a refined housing target for the Borough through to 2036 taking account of the conclusion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Berkshire area. The Council's approach to delivering growth has been through a number of strategic development locations. It is intended that this approach continues. The timescales for producing the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan have changed, mainly due to the time taken to complete the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which considers what need there is for gypsy pitches
- The timescales for producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan have changed, mainly due to the need to refine the evidence base and continued discussions with other Berkshire authorities on potential joint working.

Therefore, there is a need to update the Local Development Scheme to reflect these.

Background

The current LDS needs updating to reflect the following:

- Adoption of the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan
- Revisions in the timetable for the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan
- Revisions in the timetable for the Minerals & Waste Local Plan
- To establish a timetable for the Local Plan Update

Analysis of Issues

The Council needs to maintain an up to date 3 year programme for Local Plans in its Local Development Scheme. The timetable for Local Plans within the current Local Development Scheme need changing because:

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan

This plan was adopted on 21 February 2014 and consequently can be omitted from the LDS.

Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

The current LDS envisaged that the authority would progress a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan once the assessment of need through a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was finalised. Whilst an Initial GTAA was available in summer 2014, the finalised version was not available until Spring 2015. Following receipt of the Final GTAA, the Council from 4 June to 31 July 2015 consulted on the Preferred Options for the Plan. It is therefore necessary to establish the timetable for the remaining stages of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan through to its eventual adoption (envisaged March 2017).

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The current Local Development Scheme recognised that the authority was considering the potential to produce a joint Local Plan with at least one other Berkshire local authority. This joint work could follow the existing Joint approach on waste with Bracknell Forest and Reading Councils through re3. Although discussions on potential joint work are underway, it is nevertheless important to establish a timetable for a Minerals and Waste Plan for the Borough. Any evidence collected for a Wokingham Borough plan can be collated with that of other authorities to inform any eventual Joint Plan. To allow discussions to continue, the Scheme does not envisage an initial draft plan until late 2017.

Local Plan Update

An update of the Core Strategy and/or Managing Development Delivery Local Plans is not included within the current scheme. A focused update of these documents is needed to ensure the authority has a robust strategy for addressing the implications of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment currently underway for Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (expected late summer/autumn 2015) will detail the level of housing need required in each of the authorities from April 2013 to March 2036. A Local Plan Update will also ensure that the Council can maintain its 5 year housing land supply through to 2036. The update is likely to continue the current successful approach to delivery through Strategic Development Locations. The scheme envisages adoption in March 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	LPU circa £100,000 M&W circa £10,000 GTLP circa £20,000	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	LPU circa £375,000 M&W £100,000 GTLP circa £95,000	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	LPU circa £325,000 M&W circa £190,000 GTLP £0	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The agreement of the Local Development Scheme does not commit the Council to the production of the documents.

There is sufficient budget committed to allow adoption of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. The discussions on Joint work for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) will affect the cost of the plan since there will be opportunities for economies of scale i.e. sharing the cost of the necessary examination between several authorities. The timescale for the MWLP is in the process of being finalised so some spending may take place beyond Year 3.

A special item of up to £800,000 has been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period from 2015 – 2018 for the Local Plan Update

Cross-Council Implications

Whilst the Scheme itself does not impact upon Council Services, the Local Plans which the authority subsequently produces in line with the timetable will. This is because the Local Plans will ensure the Council has a robust strategy for well-designed development which will regenerate the borough's towns and villages, support social and economic

prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth.

List of Background Papers

Draft Local Development Scheme for 25 September 2015 to 24 September 2018.

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