

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 10
16 January 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman, Executive Director of Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport	
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REVIEW OF THE PETERBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Executive Director for Place and Economy	Deadline date: Not Applicable
It is recommended that Cabinet recommends Council:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorises officers to commence a review of the Local Plan; and 2. Approves the attached Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out a timetable for the production of a new Local Plan, and brings it into effect from 26 January 2023. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a request by the Cabinet Member.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to consider the proposal to commence preparation of a Local Plan for Peterborough and, if it is agreed a new Local Plan should be produced, seek Cabinet's recommendation to Full Council to approve an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) which outlines the timetable for preparing the Local Plan.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.14, '*To ... [make] recommendations to Council about proposed changes to the Council's major policy and budget framework.*'

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	YES	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	25 January 2023
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council has an adopted Local Plan (July 2019). National Policy requires that Local Plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary.
- 4.2 We are at a point whereby it is appropriate for the Council to decide whether the time is right to commence a review of its Local Plan. The existing Local Plan runs to 2036. A new Local Plan

would extend the plan period to at least 2041. This report sets out reasoning why it is considered to be appropriate to do so.

Advantages of commencing a Local Plan review

4.3 In short, the following reasons are advantages of commencing a Local Plan review:

- (i) To ensure that new development continues to take place in planned locations and help demonstration of a '5 year housing land supply' (a Government requirement), reducing the risk of challenge from speculative, unplanned development.
- (ii) An opportunity to identify new locations for growth in Peterborough, which in turn will meet our longer term housing and employment needs.
- (iii) Identification of additional range and choice of employment sites to accommodate increasing commercial demand. This will generate wealth, and improve local people's life chances by providing increased employment opportunities. There is evidence to suggest that the supply of employment land is tight, and a significant proportion of allocated employment land either has planning permission, is under construction, or has already been built out
- (iv) Align preparation of a new Local Plan with the review of other corporate strategies.
- (v) Continued and potentially additional income via, business rate growth and council tax income.

4.4 A review of the local plan offers the opportunity to consider whether new policies or allocations are needed to reflect changing circumstances, national policy and opportunities that were not incorporated in the adopted Local Plan, such as climate change and biodiversity net gain.

4.5 Overall, an up-to-date Local Plan, covering a longer time frame, means more certainty for everyone (the public, developers and public service providers) about where growth will take place. Infrastructure providers (e.g. Education, Highways, NHS facilities) will also have more certainty to plan for future provision contributing to the development of sustainable communities.

Other Considerations

4.6 There are other considerations which may determine that now is not an appropriate time to commence a Local Plan review. These are mainly twofold:

- **The cost:** Preparing a new Local Plan will require staff resources and financial resources to cover necessary expenses (such as examination fees). The budget setting process includes provision of a reserve, sufficient to fund £350,000 per year, for each of the next three financial years. This is to cover the costs of preparing evidence base, as well as the independent Inspector and Programme Officer's costs, all of which must be met by the planning authority. In addition, the emerging budget for 2023/24 no longer includes an income target for the local plans team, which releases the team from its work on neighbouring authorities' local plans, making them available for work directly for PCC. Taken together, these two investments into the local plans team will ensure it has sufficient resources (in terms of people and money) to complete a review.
- **The temporary uncertainty:** It is inevitable that through the preparation of a Local Plan, uncertainty and concerns will arise as to where new growth may or may not occur. However, with careful management of the process, and clear and consistent communication messages throughout, this uncertainty should be minimised (as well as the benefits of a new Local Plan clearly expressed and communicated). It is intended that a comprehensive communications plan will be prepared to support the local plan, which will help us to proactively get key messages across in a structured way.

Process for preparing a new Local Plan

- 4.7 If it is agreed that a review commences, then preparing a Local Plan is a statutory process which from start to finish will take about three to four years. There are normally three rounds of public consultation followed by public examination by the Planning Inspectorate, and finally adoption by Full Council.

Local Development Scheme

- 4.8 The first legal step, should a new Local Plan be commissioned today, is to adopt a Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the timetable for preparing a new Local Plan. It is unlawful to prepare a Local Plan without first agreeing and publishing an LDS.
- 4.9 Should Cabinet decide, therefore, to agree in principle to commencement of a new Local Plan then it is next asked to agree the attached LDS (see Appendix 1).

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The production of a new Local Plan will allow planning policies to be brought fully up to date with the Council's corporate priorities which amongst other things will maximise economic growth and prosperity in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable way; and create healthy and safe environments where people want to live, invest, work visit and play.
- 5.2 In terms of Carbon Impact Assessment, at this stage, the decision to commence work on a new Local Plan and the approval of the LDS will have neutral effects on Carbon Impacts. However, policies contained in an emerging Local Plan could result in positive impacts on carbon emissions.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The LDS is a timetable setting out the different stages involved in the preparation of a Local Plan. It identifies the different stages that the Local Plan will be available for public consultation. Therefore, the LDS itself is not required to be consulted on.
- 6.2 It is intended that a comprehensive communications plan will be prepared to support the local plan, which will help us to proactively get key messages across in a structured way.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 That Cabinet will agree to recommend the commencement of a Local Plan to Council and, if Cabinet does so, also to recommend approval of the attached Local Development Scheme which sets out the timetable for preparing a new Local Plan.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is recommended a Local Plan be commenced for the reasons stated at 4.3.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The following alternative options were considered and rejected:
- An alternative timetable (LDS) was considered which only included one round of public consultation on a Draft Plan (Regulation 18) compared to the two stages shown at Appendix 1. This option was rejected as overall this approach will not reduce the Local Plan timetable. Two rounds of consultation on the draft Plan will allow more opportunity for the parish councils, local developers and the wider community to make comments early in the process.
 - Do nothing and review the situation in 12 months. This option was rejected because it would fail to take advantage of the benefits of commencing a new Local Plan, as set out in this report.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 Preparing a new Local Plan will require staff resources and some finance to cover necessary expenses (such as examination fees). The budget setting process includes provision of a reserve, sufficient to fund £350,000 per year, for each of the next three financial years. This is to cover the costs of preparing evidence base, as well as the independent Inspector and Programme Officer's costs, all of which must be met by the planning authority. In addition, the emerging budget no longer includes an income target of £430,860 for 2023/24 for the local plans team, which releases the team from its work on neighbouring authorities' local plans through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) , making them available for work directly for PCC, focusing on preparing a new Local Plan and other functions such as Neighbourhood Planning. Taken together, these two investments into the Planning Policy team will ensure it has sufficient resources (in terms of people and money) to complete a review.

Legal Implications

- 10.2 It is a legal requirement for the Council to have an LDS in place at all times. The Council can only prepare new Development Plans (Local Plans) in accordance with the LDS. Adoption of the attached LDS would therefore enable a new Local Plan to be prepared. If it is not adopted, it would be unlawful to commence a new Local Plan.
- 10.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the decision to commence (or not) a new Local Plan has no impact on the legal status of existing adopted planning policy documents in operation in Peterborough. Such documents will continue to be used to determine planning application and similar proposals.

Equalities Implications

- 10.4 The preparation of the Local Plan will be an opportunity to positively address equality and diversity issues. Formal assessments in this regard will be undertaken as the Local Plan begins to emerge

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme 2023