

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE – 6 JUNE 2017**

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**Title:**

**LOCAL PLAN PART 2: ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Brian Adams]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

This report provides the context for the attached draft Issues and Options Consultation paper. It sets out the background and progress to date of Local Plan Part 2, describes the main issues pertinent to this stage of the Plan's development, and requests that the Executive approves the document for Consultation.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

Local Plan Part 2 will contribute to meeting corporate priorities in relation to the Environment and Community Wellbeing.

**Financial Implications:**

The brought forward reserve (5541 Y1000) for the local plan is £76,900, with a budget allocation of £71,000 for 2017-18. During 2016-17 a supplementary estimate was agreed for £200,000 to be available for accelerating Local Plan part 2 by additional staffing resources.

**Legal Implications:**

Planning Solicitors in the Legal Services team are in dialogue with the Local Plans team and have perused the draft Issues and Options Consultation paper. No specific comments to make at present.

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**Background**

1. Waverley's Local Plan is being developed in two stages. Local Plan Part 1 deals with the Strategic Sites and Policies and is currently at the examination stage, with hearings planned for late June. Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) is being progressed at an accelerated but realistic timescale to ensure that its adoption does not fall far behind that of Part 1.
2. LPP2 will deliver:
  - specific housing and employment allocations to towns and villages (in conjunction with Neighbourhood Plans where they exist);
  - sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
  - specific settlement boundaries and areas to be removed from the Green Belt (as indicated in LPP1);
  - reviewed boundaries for local landscape designations;
  - reviewed town centre boundaries, and boundaries for local retail centres;
  - Detailed Development Management policies.

3. In accordance with the Council's approved Local Development Scheme, the first stage is to confirm the 'Issues and Options' for LPP2. The proposal is for a six-week public consultation starting on the 12 June, in line with Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations 2012. The focus of this consultation is to ensure that LPP2 contains all the content that it should, within the context set by the Part 1 strategy.

### **The draft Consultation document**

4. The attached paper has been prepared by Officers to provide the content of the consultation document. Officers are confident that it contains the topics required of it by Part 1, and any issues raised by the Duty to Co-operate partners following a recent tailored consultation. Officers have met with every Parish or Town Council currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and have discussed the scope of LPP2 with them in the interests of avoiding duplication of effort between the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.
5. Officers anticipate that the majority of public responses will relate to the housing sites that have come forward during a recent Call for Sites, included in this consultation in the interests of transparency but before a full assessment has been undertaken, and the consideration of sites for the Gypsy and Traveller community. In addition, many responses may concern themselves with the detail of the future Development Management policies, which will be used to assess planning applications.
6. The Consultation will run using the Council's consultation portal, Inovem, although hard copy and email responses will be accepted. Officers will review each response over the summer and then develop the themes for a further public consultation in the autumn.
7. It is proposed to timetable a press release for June 9 (following the end of the purdah period) ready for the consultation to start on June 12. The consultation will run for the majority of the time outside of the school holiday period, and end on July 24.

### **Comments from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

8. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the content of the consultation document on May 22nd. They made the following comments (see Annexe 1):
  - They recognised the need to move forward with the consultation but suggested a thorough proof-read review of the document and some improvements to the document's presentation,
  - The Committee recommended including a clear explanation on the process that had been followed to determine whether LPP2 or neighbourhood plans are doing site allocations and why there are only suggested housing sites for Godalming, Haslemere and Dunsfold.
  - They also recommended ensuring that it is clear that the new 'blue' sites had not yet been assessed by the Council.
  - There were some questions about the openness of the questions, but support for the deliberate approach to seek the views of the public. There was recognition that this approach was appropriate at this stage and was a key

difference between the Issues and Options stage and the Preferred Options stage.

### **Officers' response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee suggestions**

9. Officers were already aware of several presentational improvements that were needed, and the revised version is much more user-friendly, with improved maps and clearer paragraph numbering. In addition, a thorough proof-read has been undertaken taking advice from the Communications team, particularly to improve the wording of the questions. Additional text has been added to the introductory chapter and the housing chapter to explain the approach to the new sites and to make it clear that these sites have not yet been assessed. The map legends have also been changed to make this much clearer. The word 'promoted' has been replaced with 'suggested' sites to remove any inference that these sites are favoured by the Council. Officers are confident that these changes address the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approves the Local Plan Part 2 Issues and Options document for consultation.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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**Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments on  
Local Plan Part 2 Issues & Options**

The Committee recognised that the Council had set an ambitious timetable for the completion of the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2), and there was a need to move forward with the consultation on the Issues and Options.

The Committee was concerned about the quality of presentation of the draft consultation document, and emphasised the importance of officers carrying out a thorough review before it is published for the Executive, although recognised the planned improvements proposed by Officers. For example the version Env O&S reviewed had: no numbering of Questions; stopped numbering chapters part way through; had incorrect number referencing to tables from part way through; as well as typos. One specific suggestion for the future is that urgent projects like this have separate resources identified from non-specialist staff to proof read documents that are intended for members of the public as opposed to other specialists.

The Committee asked that the document include a very clear introductory explanation as to why only the Godalming, Dunsfold and Haslemere site allocations were described in detail in the Issues and Options document, and the process by which non-strategic sites for other settlements would be consulted upon. It was also important that the explanation of 'blue sites' was clear that these had been put forward, by developers or landowners, and had not been assessed by the Council for against any criteria that would indicate potential for development. Again it was noted that some of the material used to present/explain the document would usefully be included in the actual document as it would help the future reader better understand the document.

The Committee had some concerns that the consultation questions were so open to interpretation that the public would find it too difficult to frame a response. However, it was noted that this approach was deliberate, and distinguished this consultation from the later consultation on Waverley's 'Preferred Options' which would seek views on more specific proposals. It was expected that respondents would interpret the questions in the Issues and Options in a way that was relevant to their understanding of their local situation, and frame their response accordingly.