

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 05/04/2016

Title:

WAVERLEY BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Brian Adams]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work being carried out to complete the new Local Plan Part 1 and to update the timetable for completing that work ready for the Council to approve the plan, in the light of the time required to complete some of the important transport evidence needed to support the Plan.

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

The Waverley Borough Local Plan and its policies will have an important role in supporting and delivering Corporate Priorities, including protecting the environment and delivering affordable housing.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from update report. Adequate budget is available to support the costs associated with preparation of the Plan.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal issues arising specifically from this report. When the revised local plan is submitted for examination it will be necessary to ensure that it meets the legal tests of soundness, including the 'Duty to Co-operate'.

The Council has already consulted on potential housing scenarios under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012. Unless the Council's legal advice changes, it is intended that the next step would be to publish a full proposed submission version of the Plan under Regulation 19 for formal representations to be made on the plan by the local community and other interests.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2015 the Executive agreed the provisional timetable for the completion of the new Local Plan. That identified the intention to identify a preferred spatial strategy in November and then to move forward to develop the draft Plan with a view to the Council agreeing the Plan for Publication in April 2016 followed by the associated Regulation 19 consultation on the draft plan and subsequent submission for examination.

- 1.2 Subsequently, in December the Executive considered a report on the emerging spatial strategy, which sits at the heart of the new local plan. The emerging spatial strategy included a number of principles that were intended to underpin future work on the Plan. In assessing future housing supply it was recognised that the key variables were whether or not a new settlement would be supported at Dunsfold Aerodrome and if so, how large that would be, and what extent of greenfield land would be required to meet the overall housing target.
- 1.3 Officers had previously indicated that including some development at Dunsfold Aerodrome presented the best opportunity to meet housing needs in the Borough. However, it was recognised that work still needed to be done in order to complete the assessment of the transport implications and how this fits with the process of selection the most appropriate spatial strategy for Waverley.

2. Progress with the Local Plan

- 2.1 Considerable progress has been made with the Local Plan. This has included drafting the Plan itself and pulling together the robust and comprehensive evidence base that will be required to support a sound plan. Attached as Appendix 1 is a schedule of the work demonstrating the progress made in readying the Plan for Publication.

3. Key Matters outstanding

- 3.1 It is clear from previous representations that traffic and transport are key issues to be addressed through the preparation of the plan. This is both at a local level and also in the wider context of development in Waverley and other areas impacting on the A3.
- 3.2 In terms of the local transport assessments, the work carried out on the A281 by Mott MacDonald on behalf of Waverley indicates that in terms of road traffic the impacts of development at Dunsfold Aerodrome are capable of mitigation either to improve the flow of traffic through particular junctions or at least to ensure that the situation does not get any worse. There are some matters concerning the transport implications of development at Dunsfold Aerodrome that are not covered in the Mott MacDonald work but that are currently being considered by Surrey County Council in its assessment of the planning application for the site.
- 3.3 In terms of the assessment in the Farnham area, this is nearing completion. As it stands, the consultants are looking at some specific mitigation measures to see what impact those would have in terms of reducing congestion and delays at peak times. It is expected that this work will be completed in April.
- 3.4 In terms of the wider strategic transport modelling, one of the key reasons for doing this is to address comments made by Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency) on the earlier housing scenarios. In essence Highways

England stated that the earlier strategic transport assessment did not provide sufficient information to ascertain whether traffic arising from new development in Waverley would have a material impact on the critical section of the A3 through Guildford. In order to address this it is necessary first to run the County Council's strategic transport model based on the emerging spatial strategy. In doing this, it is necessary to take into account the implications of the development in Guildford Borough that has implications for the A3.

- 3.5 The County Council had originally intended to do the modelling work for Waverley in January/February. This would have included using data for Guildford from its earlier draft Local Plan. However, Guildford Borough Council is also finalising its Local Plan ready for publication. In discussions with Guildford, Surrey County Council and Highways England it was agreed that it would be preferable to run both the Waverley and Guildford Strategic Transport Assessments (STAs) using the most up-to-date data. As a result, the STAs are now scheduled for completion in May. Whilst it is disappointing that there has been some delay in the completion of the STA, it is sensible to align the Waverley work with the equivalent work for Guildford both to utilise the most up-to-date data and in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate on strategic cross boundary issues such as this. Once the outcome from the strategic modelling is known, it will be possible to discuss matters with Highways England to establish what, if any, additional work will be required in order to address Highways England's issues regarding the impact on the A3.
- 3.6 There is also a link between the transport work and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Officers are in the process of seeking information from infrastructure providers on the infrastructure likely to be required to support the emerging spatial strategy. This includes transport infrastructure as well as matters such as school places, health facilities, drainage and other utilities requirements etc. The IDP is a key supporting document both for the Examination of the Local Plan and as part of the evidence base for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 3.7 There are some on-going areas of work that cannot be finalised until the draft Local Plan is complete. In particular, the Sustainability Appraisal, the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Viability Assessment.
- 3.8 In relation to the Duty to Co-operate, some of the on-going work includes the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground with Guildford and Woking Borough Councils regarding current and future housing delivery within the housing market area, drafting a Statement of Common Ground with Highways England regarding the A3 issues; and informal consultation/liaison with key neighbouring authorities on the evidence and the emerging strategy.
- 3.9 Officers also consider that the Council should take advantage of any opportunities for informal review of the plan before it is finally published. This includes potentially meeting with an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate, to informally review the emerging plan.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The current provisional timetable for the Local Plan Part 1 was to publish the Plan in April. Given that key evidence in the form of the new Strategic Transport Assessment is not due to be completed until May, there will be a slight delay before the plan is ready for formal publication. Whilst it is disappointing that there has been some delay in completing the strategic transport modelling, it is essential that when the Plan is published it is supported by a robust evidence base which stands up to scrutiny. Addressing these outstanding matters first will, in the officers' view, reduce the risk of the plan being found unsound.
- 4.2 Officers believe that the draft Plan should go through the committee cycles in June/July, culminating in the Council agreeing the Plan for Publication in July. Publication itself, which triggers the Regulation 19 consultation, would be in July/Aug, with submission in November 2016. This is still within the Government's timetable for producing Local Plans.

Recommendation

That the Executive notes the progress with the Local Plan and agrees the amendment to the timetable as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

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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