

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

26 March 2019

Subject: Wiltshire Local Plan Review Update

Cabinet Member: Councillor Toby Sturgis - Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

Cabinet at its meeting on 12 September 2017 approved the Wiltshire Local Development Scheme 2017 (LDS). Included in the updated LDS was a timetable for the review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, covering the plan period 2016 to 2036, to be recast as the Wiltshire Local Plan. This was accompanied by a timetable for a Joint Spatial Framework prepared jointly with Swindon Borough Council to inform the Councils respective Local Plan reviews.

Cabinet on 10 October 2017 approved the scope and content for an initial Regulation 18 consultation on the Wiltshire Local Plan Review. This included two main documents; an issues paper inviting views on the methodology, scope and objectives for a Joint Spatial Framework with Swindon Borough Council and a position statement to inform the review of development management policies as part of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

In November 2017 the initial consultation took place in accordance with the approved LDS. Since that consultation the Government have issued revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This report brings together the outcomes of the Autumn 2017 consultation and amended Government policy now included in the revised NPPF. It recommends next steps for the review of the Wiltshire Local Plan with a view to an adopted plan being in place by Summer 2021. The LDS is also updated to take into consideration progress with made and advanced neighbourhood plans at January 2019, the timetable for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan and the continued commitment to review minerals and waste plans.

Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan in accordance with the NPPF will support plan led growth across the county to support sustainable and resilient communities, safeguarding the authority from speculative and unplanned development.

The next step will be for Cabinet to consider the local housing need for Wiltshire and alternative development strategies informed by a distribution based on Housing Market Areas, to inform the strategy for the Local Plan.

Proposals

That Cabinet:

- (i) Agree that the proposed Chippenham Housing Market Area, Salisbury Housing Market Area, Swindon Housing Market Area (Wiltshire part) and Trowbridge Housing Market Area (as amended), as set out in **Appendix 1**, are an appropriate basis for housing distribution within Wiltshire and should inform the development of a preferred strategy for the Local Plan.
- (ii) Endorse the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground with Swindon Borough Council to clarify the strategic cross boundary issues between the two authorities and the future role of the Joint Spatial Framework.
- (iii) Agree the revised Wiltshire Local Development Scheme at **Appendix 2**.
- (iv) Authorises the Director for Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Cabinet Member for 'Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property', to make minor amendments to the Local Development Scheme in the interests of clarity and accuracy before publishing it on the Council's website.
- (v) Delegates authority to the Director for Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance and Procurement and Cabinet Members for 'Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property' and 'Finance, Procurement, IT and Operational Assets' to undertake subsequent reviews and updates to the LDS with any significant modifications being referred to Cabinet as appropriate.

Reason for Proposals

Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires the Council to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out a rolling three year programme to deliver local planning documents. Delegated authority allows for future updates to the LDS to be undertaken in an efficient manner.

The revisions to the LDS and use of the Housing Market Areas will allow progress to continue to be made on maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan for Wiltshire in line with revised national policy.

Alistair Cunningham

Corporate Director - Growth, Investment and Place

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to:
 - (i) Inform Cabinet on the outcome of consultations on the local plan review that took place in 2017;
 - (ii) Inform Cabinet of the implications for plan making arising from revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - (iii) Seeks endorsement for preparation of the required Statement of Common Ground with Swindon Borough Council to inform the matters to be addressed in a Joint Spatial Framework; and
 - (iv) Seek approval for a revised Wiltshire Local Development Scheme.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Business Plan 2017-2027 'Forward Thinking' seeks to create strong communities in Wiltshire. One of the four priorities, 'Growing the Economy', recognises the importance of job creation and improving housing supply to enable people to live and work locally. Delivering development where it is needed forms one of the goals of the Business Plan. This will be supported by the timely review of the Wiltshire Local Plan to ensure planning policies support sustainable development and resilient communities.

Background

3. Cabinet at its meeting on 10 October 2017 approved a Regulation 18¹ consultation on the proposed scope and content of the Local Plan Review. Reports on the consultation are available on the Council's website at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review> under Issues

¹ Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012: Consultation on the Scope of the Plan

Consultation. The outcome of this consultation is discussed further under Main Considerations below.

4. Further informal consultation took place in relation to the main towns and rural areas during Autumn 2018 (Member Briefing Note 368 Wiltshire Local Plan Review Update refers). The purpose of these events was to discuss with town and parish councils where growth could take place and what could be an appropriate scale. Rural based workshops discussed how the local plan could support the delivery of new homes to meet local needs and support neighbourhood plans. The output from this consultation will inform emerging strategy options and will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.
5. The timing of the Regulation 18 consultation Autumn 2017 was in accordance with the Wiltshire Local Development Scheme 2017, approved by Cabinet on 12 September 2017. The reports to Cabinet which accompanied the revised Local Development Scheme and the Regulation 18 consultation recognised that a consultation on proposed changes to the then National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, were anticipated early in 2018. It was recognised that changes to the NPPF may have consequences for the programme for the review of the local plan.
6. Having announced its intention to revise national policy in a housing white paper in September 2017, between 5 March and 10 May 2018 the Government consulted on a draft revised NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The final version of a revised NPPF was published on 24 July 2018 (Members Briefing Note 367 refers) and subsequently more minor amendments were published in a further revision in February 2019.²
7. Work on the local plan review was recently paused to enable officers to reflect on the implications of the new national policy for plan making. The consequences of the national policy changes introduced in the new versions of the NPPF published in July 2018 and February 2019 are discussed further under 'Main Considerations', below.

Main Considerations for the Council

Scope of the Plan Consultation, November 2017

8. Over 680 representations were received in response to the consultation. The majority related to the proposed Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework. Swindon Borough Council have reported on the responses they received separately, although there was considerable overlap in relation to the cross-boundary issues raised.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-planning-policy-and-guidance-including-the-standard-method-for-assessing-local-housing-need>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

9. Points raised in the consultation questioned the role, status and timescales for preparing the Joint Spatial Framework. Comments considered that the timetable for the review was too ambitious given the anticipated draft amendments to the NPPF³ and proposals for a standard methodology to help estimate a minimum scale of housing needs.
10. There were several specific queries about the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). For example, Mere Town Council questioned why the town had been identified in the Trowbridge Housing Market Area (HMA), rather than the Salisbury HMA, and Melksham Town Council questioned their inclusion in the Chippenham HMA, rather than Trowbridge the HMA. There were also concerns about the split positioning of the Malmesbury Community Area between the Chippenham and Swindon HMAs.
11. Few comments challenged the outcome of the Swindon and Wiltshire Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA) although some consultees asked for more detail to understand the technical work. However, there were some concerns that there was an unnecessarily cautious approach to employment growth at Swindon and a view that there is an inconsistency between the economic aspirations for the A303 Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) and the housing provision for the Salisbury HMA. The concern here was that this could lead to insufficient housing to meet the needs of workers in the south of the county. These concerns are being considered as part of developing a strategy for the two plans.
12. There were many representations from planning consultants promoting development sites on behalf of land-owners or developers.
13. A full summary of all the issues raised in the consultation is included in the appendices to the consultation report available on the website. As well as strategic comments such as those outlined above, there were detailed comments about specific towns. For example, in relation to Chippenham there is recognition that a link road from the A4 to the A350 could be beneficial but there were differences of view over the benefits and costs of possible eastern and southern routes. In relation to Trowbridge there was a view that brownfield opportunities with close proximity to employment, should be prioritised to help make the town more attractive and prevent development on greenfield land. In relation to Salisbury, there was some support for more housing to be allocated for the Salisbury HMA than proposed in the SHMA, particularly at Salisbury, to improve affordability and enable workers to live and work in the City to improve self-containment as well as to prevent a shortfall of labour and stagnation of Salisbury's economy.
14. The output from the consultation will inform emerging strategy options at the next stage of the review process.

³ The NPPF was revised in 2018. This consultation report includes commentary relevant to the situation at the time of the consultation, that is, before the revised NPPF was published in July 2018.

Revisions to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 and 2019

15. The Cabinet report which accompanied proposals to revise the Wiltshire Local Development Scheme in 2017 and the Regulation 18 consultation recognised that a consultation on proposed changes to the 2012 NPPF might have consequences for the programme for the review of the local plan. Many of the strategic issues raised in the November 2017 consultation anticipated some of the changes ultimately included in the revised NPPF.
16. In relation to plan making and housing delivery, three significant changes have been introduced particularly relevant to the local plan review.
 - (i) a standard methodology for calculating minimum local housing need based on household growth projections and local affordability ratios (house price to income);
 - (ii) Local housing need is to be expressed as a single authority housing figure replacing the previous approach to calculate local housing need on the basis of housing market areas; and
 - (iii) A raised profile on Statements of Common Ground with neighbouring local planning authorities, that agree approaches to strategic cross boundary issues, and for these to be updated as preparation progresses.
17. Although there were minor changes to the expectations in terms of planning for economic growth the evidence provided by the Swindon and Wiltshire FEMAA (2017) remains relevant to inform plan preparation.

Estimating local housing need

18. The NPPF at paragraph 60 states that: *“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance...”*. The result of the standard method is, therefore, the starting point for plan making and represents the minimum number of homes needed in the local authority area. Therefore, based on the latest Government position, around 40,500 homes would be the minimum local housing need for Wiltshire for the period 2016 to 2036.
19. The Council should consider whether actual housing need may be higher than the figure identified by the standard method. Examples of where it may be appropriate to consider planning for a higher housing need figure is set out in the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and includes:
 - (i) economic circumstances; a need for strategic infrastructure to support new homes, where growth strategies are in place; or where

an authority agrees to take unmet need from a neighbouring authority⁴.

(ii) having regard to recent assessments of need, such as Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).⁵

20. In relation to (i) one of Wiltshire's few globally competitive sectors for business is in South Wiltshire around Life Sciences at Porton Down and Aerospace at Boscombe Down⁶. In addition, the need for strategic infrastructure in Chippenham was discussed as a consequence of the evidence prepared to support the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, which identified that "*With the prospect of further growth in subsequent Plan periods it is important, therefore, to consider an approach to the longer-term network resilience of the town*"⁷.
21. In relation to (ii) there is a relatively recent assessment of local housing need in the form of the 2017 Swindon and Wiltshire SHMA. The SHMA identified a housing need of about 44,000 homes for the period 2016 to 2036 for Wiltshire and considered longer term migration trends and adjustments in need to match growth in the workforce.
22. In accordance with advice in the PPG, the Council should consider whether these factors affect the estimate of local housing need using the standardised method. Work is ongoing to sense check the minimum local housing need figure for Wiltshire and to consider whether the circumstances listed in paragraphs 20 and 21, above, suggest a different figure.
23. It should also be noted that the PPG advises that the local housing need figure should be kept under review and revised where appropriate⁸. The output from the standard method may change when new household projections and affordability ratios are published, potentially every 2 years. In fact, Government has indicated that a revised methodology will be published by 2020. The local housing need calculated using the standard method can be relied upon for a period of 2 years from the time a plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Any changes to the local housing need calculation using the standard method, between now and submission to the Secretary of State, will need to be taken into account before the plan is submitted⁹. Allowing a contingency within the local plan housing requirement, possibly in the form of a range, would help

⁴ Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20180913

⁵ Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20180913

⁶ Wiltshire Employment Land Review, 2018

⁷ <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/csapsc-position-statement-network-resilience-at-chippenham.pdf>

⁸ The Government is keeping the standard methodology under review to make sure it is consistent with the Government's ambition that, nationally, 300,000 homes are built per year by the mid 2020s. It has recently confirmed that for the short-term, the 2014-based data will provide the demographic baseline for assessment of local housing need. In the longer term the Government has committed to review the formula with a view to establishing a new method by the time the next projections are issued (2020).

⁹ Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 2a-008-20180913 and Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 2a-016-20180913

to safeguard against revised Government calculations of local housing need being higher than anticipated at the time the plan is submitted for examination, particularly as the outcome of the Government's consultation on revisions to the standard method to boost the supply of housing is not yet known.

Housing market areas

24. The NPPF requires that: "*Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period*" (Paragraph 65).
25. The NPPF also requires that land for housing should come forward where it is needed (paragraph 59) but no longer specifically references housing market areas (HMAs). The SHMA 2017 indicates where housing need is arising in Wiltshire taking into account household demand, preferences for different types of housing, key functional linkages between places and where people live and work. HMAs respond to national advice within the NPPF and PPG, which requires these factors to be considered in planning for housing.
26. It is therefore proposed to continue to inform the distribution of housing within the County on the basis of HMAs to enable a need that derives from within a specific HMA to be met within the same area to which it relates.
27. The SHMA identified four HMAs as indicated on the map at **Appendix 1**. In response to comments received during consultation (see paragraph 10 above) a review of these functional geographies has been undertaken. The review has confirmed that the Swindon HMA extends into Wiltshire but also proposes:
 - (i) Malmesbury Community Area should be confirmed as within the Chippenham HMA;
 - (ii) Mere Community Area should be located within the Salisbury HMA;
 - (iii) Pewsey Community Area should be located wholly in the Swindon HMA, rather than split between Swindon and Chippenham HMAs; and
 - (iv) Melksham Community Area should continue to be split between the Trowbridge and Chippenham HMAs.
28. These changes are included on the second map at **Appendix 1**. The justification for the proposed changes is different in each location. For example, the majority of people living in the Malmesbury Community Area live at Malmesbury Town, which has closer connections to Chippenham than Swindon. There is a more marked connection between Malmesbury

providing workers for Chippenham than Swindon, hence the recommendation to include the Malmesbury Community Area wholly in the Chippenham HMA. It was not possible to locate Melksham Community Area wholly in one HMA because of the very close relationship of the southern parishes to Trowbridge in contrast to the economic connection between Chippenham and Melksham.

Statement of Common Ground with Swindon Borough Council

29. There is a raised profile for Statements of Common Ground in the revised NPPF. It has always been the intention to work closely with Swindon Borough Council on cross boundary issues, hence the proposed Joint Spatial Framework.
30. Swindon Borough Council Cabinet are meeting on 20 March 2019 to consider their revised Local Development Scheme. Their report recognises the revisions to the NPPF also and proposes to proceed with the review of the local plan on the basis of a local housing need figure for the authority using the Government's current method, a figure of 20,460 net additional homes for the period 2016-2026. The report recognises that: *"the revised local housing need for Swindon Borough is likely to be significantly lower than indicated in the Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in October 2017. On-going work is being under-taken to sense check the local housing need figure in respect of economic forecasts and affordable housing needs, and to consider the implications for future housing need and employment that flow from the recent announcement by Honda to cease production in the town."*
31. It is understood from Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet papers that about 18,000 dwellings are already part of existing commitments in the form of either planning permissions or allocations in the adopted Local Plan and made neighbourhood plans in Swindon. Furthermore, it is reported that Swindon Borough's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment identifies residential sites for about 3,000 dwellings developable by 2036 with a further 5,000 developable subject to viability or infrastructure issues being overcome. Making an allowance for small windfall sites results in a potential remaining supply of some 27,500 dwellings. This compares favourably to the standard methodology local housing need figure of 20,460 for the period 2016-2036.
32. On this basis, there is a sufficient supply of dwellings to:
 - (i) demonstrate that housing need could be met within Swindon Borough without recourse to seek allocations in adjacent authorities;
 - (ii) allow for a choice of sites to be allocated according to sustainability appraisal criteria and informed by further public consultation; and
 - (iii) allow for flexibility in respect of viability and infrastructure issues being resolved.

33. In accordance with Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) local authorities must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any process by means of which development plan documents are prepared. This is termed the 'duty to cooperate'. It states that cooperation should take account of the most appropriate functional geographies, which would include housing market areas (HMAs) and functional economic market areas (FEMAs). This provided the momentum for joint working with Swindon and the proposed Joint Spatial Framework (see Cabinet report 10 October 2017).
34. The revised NPPF now requires local authorities to "*maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these*" (paragraph 27). The PPG outlines what a statement of common ground should contain and explains that it should be "*maintained on an on-going basis throughout the plan making process*".
35. A statement of common ground can identify matters that are agreed, yet to be agreed or further information that is required before matters can be agreed. It should identify those areas where cooperation is required to deliver the strategic policies of both authorities. To this extent it will cover many of the elements previously intended to be included within the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework.
36. A Statement of Common Ground should, therefore, be prepared between Wiltshire and Swindon to confirm the extent of joint working between the two authorities, including whether:
 - (i) the proposed housing requirements for Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council can be accommodated within each authority's boundaries and if not the extent of the shortfall in provision;
 - (ii) the proposed employment land requirement identified in the Swindon and Wiltshire FEMAA can be accommodated within each authority's boundaries and if not the extent of the shortfall in provision; and
 - (iii) there are other cross boundary strategic issues that should be addressed through joint working including infrastructure provision to support growth.
37. The Statement of Common Ground should be subject to ongoing review. The scope of the Joint Spatial Framework will be determined by the Statement of Common Ground. It may be reduced in scope compared to that previously proposed, for example, it may only focus on employment land and infrastructure delivery.
38. There are also ongoing discussions with other neighbouring authorities to understand the implications of planning for growth in our respective areas. These cross boundary discussions will also lead to the preparation of Statements of Common Ground to identify how the duty to cooperate has been discharged.

Implications for the Wiltshire Local Development Scheme (LDS)

39. The LDS is a three year rolling project plan for maintaining an up-to-date local plan for Wiltshire. It sets out the development plans prioritised for production by Wiltshire Council and a timetable for their delivery over a three year period. The LDS thereby commits Council resources to a programme of work and is a main means for stakeholders to understand key dates in the preparation of the Local Plan and key stages when they can engage in its production. It is a requirement of the section 15 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
40. The consequence of amendments to the NPPF in 2018 and 2019 for plan making and the changing relationship with Swindon Borough Council, both discussed above, will give rise to amendments to the Wiltshire LDS considered to be significant modifications outside the scope of the resolution in 2017.
41. The proposed changes to the LDS are summarised as follows, with the full LDS including timelines and scope of documents set out in **Appendix 2**:
 - (i) An updated timetable for the adoption of the Wiltshire Housing Sites Allocations DPD, which is now at examination. The scope of the plan is unchanged.
 - (ii) A revised timetable for the Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which incorporates a Statement of Common Ground with Swindon Borough Council rather than a timeline for a Joint Spatial Framework. The scope of the plan is unchanged. Broad alignment of plan preparation with Swindon Borough Council is maintained.
 - (iii) Continued commitment to a review of adopted minerals and waste plans to check consistency with national policy and identify the need for any additional policy development.
42. The LDS does not include a timetable for the preparation of neighbourhood plans as the timing and delivery of these are the responsibility of the 'qualifying bodies' which is generally the Parish Council. However, the LDS does provide a summary of those plans that have been made and now form part of the development plan and those that have progressed to examination at the time of writing the revised LDS (January 2019).
43. The programme for the LPR is broadly aligned with that for the review of the Swindon Borough Plan up until the Pre-submission consultation during the Winter 2019/20. From this point forward, the review of the Swindon Borough Plan will proceed ahead of the review of the Wiltshire Local Plan. This should enable the Borough's plan to be tested at examination before commencing the examination of the Wiltshire Local Plan. This is particularly relevant in relation to the position that new development can

be contained within the authority's boundaries and the scope and content of the proposed Statement of Common Ground with Wiltshire.

Next Steps

44. Subject to Members approval of the recommendations of this report, the next steps will be:
- (i) Wiltshire Local Development Scheme 2019 - The approved Local Development Scheme will be brought into effect and made available on the Council's website at the earliest opportunity.
 - (ii) Establishing a local housing need - Officers will report back to Cabinet on ongoing work to understand an appropriate local housing need for Wiltshire inline with advice in the NPPF and accompanying guidance (PPG).
 - (iii) Assessment of Alternative Development Strategies - Officers will report to Cabinet on the outcome of the informal Autumn 2018 consultation and how this, and the earlier consultation response, have informed the creation and assessment of reasonable alternative development strategies.
45. In addition, to the above actions a parallel piece of work is ongoing in relation to a review of the core policies and saved policies which form part of the current Local Plan. The consultation undertaken in 2017 sought views on existing saved policies and core policies and their continued compliance with national policy¹⁰.
46. The informal consultation that took place with local members, parish councils and representatives of neighbourhood plan groups in October/November 2018 included two rural workshops where current policy for the rural areas was discussed in the light of the NPPF 2018. The outcome of these workshops and the responses received during the November 2017 consultation continue to inform the review of policies.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

47. There has been no overview and scrutiny engagement at this stage.
48. The revised approach to joint working through a Statement of Common Ground and the implications of the revisions to the NPPF for the review of both the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Plans has been discussed with members within the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Working Group, a forum for informal discussion established to facilitate joint working.

Safeguarding Implications

49. There are no safeguarding implications arising from the proposal

¹⁰ Wiltshire Local Plan Review Consultation Paper November 2017 available at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/spp-wlpr-2017-11-consultation-paper.pdf>

Public Health Implications

50. Planning for sustainable development to meet the employment, housing and infrastructure needs of communities helps foster their wellbeing. Well planned development, including appropriate infrastructure, supports health and well-being of local communities, for example through the provision of green infrastructure and infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling as means of travel. Maintaining up-to-date policy for Wiltshire supports the timely delivery of social infrastructure to improve the resilience of our communities.

Procurement Implications

51. The recommendations have no direct procurement implications in themselves. However, the Wiltshire Local Plan Review continues to have procurement implications in order to gather appropriate evidence to support the plan making process. For example, officers have procured a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to inform strategy development, site selection and policy development. Where such procurement implications do arise these requirements will be undertaken in accordance with procurement and contracting Regulations, and in consultation with Strategic Procurement.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

52. The purpose of maintaining up to date planning policies in Wiltshire is to make sure growth and development in the County is positively managed. The public consultation processes and community involvement embedded in plan preparation in accordance with the Wiltshire Statement of Community Involvement ensures that everyone has an opportunity to inform the review of the local plan.
53. When the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination it will be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the review of the local plan to ensure the Council discharges its duties under the Equality Act 2010

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

54. The Wiltshire Local Plan relates to the development and use of land and will have implications for the physical, economic and social environment of Wiltshire. Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, will be undertaken as part of the local plan review to ensure that negative environmental impacts are avoided, and policies and proposals deliver development in a sustainable manner.
55. The process of plan making incorporating Sustainability Appraisal will take into consideration both the current position and predicted future considerations in relation to the local environment, for example, in relation to climate change and flood risk and in relation to future traffic growth.

56. The draft Wiltshire Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report was consulted on as part of the Regulation 18 consultation last year. The SA Scoping Report has been amended in the light of comments received and is available on the Council's website (<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review>). This will now be used to assess the proposed alternative development strategies discussed above.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

57. It is important that Wiltshire continues to maintain up-to-date policy to ensure that plan-led growth, that best meets the needs of Wiltshire, can be delivered. Failing to do so would increase the risk that growth would occur piecemeal, delivered by developers rather than as planned. The government's housing White Paper 'Fixing the broken housing market' (February 2017) and more recently the revisions to the NPPF set out the clear expectation that plans should be reviewed every 5 years.
58. The NPPF sets out the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and states that where plans are out of date, silent or indeterminate, then permission should be granted. In addition, it requires a five year land supply to be maintained and sufficient housing land to be identified. Moving forward now on the basis outlined above should maintain progress on the review of the local plan and ensure the supply of housing is maintained beyond 2026, reducing the risk of non-plan led development in the longer term.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

59. There remains a risk that the Government issue new advice on how the standard methodology will be calculated before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. Ultimately, the process will need to retain some flexibility in order to respond to any changes in the national policy approach. This is also a risk for Swindon Borough Council. Work is ongoing to sense check the minimum local housing need figure for Wiltshire to seek to minimise this risk.
60. The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) is currently at Examination. The document and its evidence is being examined in accordance with the NPPF 2012 consistent with the transitional arrangements outlined in the revised NPPF. This is following a separate process however some confusion may arise in relation to the role and purpose of WHSAP compared to the role and purpose of the LPR.
61. There is also a risk of misinformation in this period of plan development. These risks will be managed through clear and timely communications both within and outside the organisation to explain the process of plan making. This will include specific events with local members, town and parish councils and representatives of neighbourhood plan steering

groups to continue the discussion about sites and the appropriate levels of development at specific towns and in the rural areas begun last Autumn.

62. Discussions will also take place with neighbouring authorities, service and infrastructure providers and the development industry to manage future risks and uncertainties.

Financial Implications

63. The existing 2018/2019 and planned 2019/2020 budgets for the Economic Development and Planning Service will meet financial implications of continuing with the review of the local plan. New evidence will be required to support the evolving plan in the financial year 2020/21 as well as expenses relating to examination and consultation costs.
64. Acquiring additional evidence will involve commissioning work from external sources due to the technical expertise required or internal resourcing, for example, traffic modelling and assessment. Economies of scales suggest some additional evidence could be jointly commissioned with Swindon Borough Council, but this will be decided on a project by project basis. Other evidence may be prepared using 'in-house' resources of the Council, for example, the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.
65. Adoption of the Wiltshire Local Plan will help bring forward new sites for housing, thereby enabling the Council to benefit from revenue and capital associated with the delivery of new homes including contributing to the Council's 'Council Tax base'.

Legal Implications

66. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to prepare planning policy, which has been reinforced through the National Planning Policy Framework and the Localism Act 2011.
67. The Council also has a statutory duty to engage with local communities and other stakeholder bodies during plan preparation in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation in 2017 was part of ongoing discussions on the scope of the local plan under Regulation 18 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The informal engagement recently undertaken with local members, town and parish councils and representatives of neighbourhood plan steering groups referred to in this report and further consultation with the same stakeholders continues to be part of the Regulation 18 engagement.
68. Furthermore, Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 introduces a 'Duty to Cooperate' in relation to planning for sustainable development (as a new section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). This requires Wiltshire Council to engage constructively, actively and on an on-

going basis to maximise planning on strategic cross boundary issues. Such engagement will be embedded in the plan making process and will inform policy development.

69. Once adopted, the Wiltshire Local Plan and Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area and be used as such for the purpose of determining relevant planning applications across Wiltshire.

Options Considered

70. The options open to the Council are limited as Wiltshire Council is required to maintain up-to-date planning policies within the county which are compliant with national planning policy. To review the plan against out of date policy would result in a document that would fail the tests of soundness outlined at paragraph 35 of the revised NPPF.

Conclusion

71. The LDS should be periodically reviewed to keep it up to date and ensure that there is a clear programme of work to maintain an effective Local Plan for Wiltshire. Not to do so would significantly compromise the Council's ability to meet local needs and aspirations in the form of sustainable plan led development. Since the last LDS was published changes have been made to national policy that should be taken into account in how the Council progresses the Local Plan Review and the nature of joint working with Swindon Borough Council.
72. The revised HMAs provide a sound basis on which to inform the distribution of the local housing need figure, once established, for the County and should be used to inform the development of alternative development strategies. This should be reported to a subsequent Cabinet meeting.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of draft and proposed Housing Market Areas

Appendix 2: Draft Wiltshire Local Development Scheme, March 2019

Background Papers None