

Report To:	LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	3RD JULY 2023
Heading:	LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 19: REVISED PLAN PERIOD
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	ALL WARDS
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

To consider changes to the Local Plan period and base date.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet be recommended to approve re-basing the Local Plan period from 2020-2038 to 2023-2040 for the Regulation 19 Local Plan, as set out in the Report.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Extending the end date for the Regulation 19 Local Plan from 2038 to 2040 will enable a 15 year plan period post-adoption (anticipated to be 2025). Re-basing the start date from 2020 to 2023 will mean the most up to date Local Housing Need figure can be used throughout the whole Plan Period at this stage.

Alternative Options Considered

To make no amendments to the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.

Detailed Information

Paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that strategic policies should be prepared over a minimum 15 year period from adoption of a local plan, and that a local planning authority should be planning for the full plan period. (More details set out in Planning Practice Guidance Plan Making Paragraph: 064 Reference ID: 61-064-20190315).

The Regulation 18 draft Local Plan which was the subject of public consultation in October/November 2021 set out policies for the period 2020 to 2038. At that time, this was consistent with the anticipated timeframe for adoption of the plan to enable conformity with the NPPF requirement to plan ahead for 15 years.

The timeframe for the progression of the Local Plan has now been revised and final adoption is expected in early 2025. As a consequence, it is proposed to extend the end date of the Plan to 2040 in accordance with government policy. This will need to be reflected in all relevant policies and, in particular, will require updates to the level of housing need.

In addition, it is recommended that the start date for the Local Plan is re-based to 2023 from 2020. In respect of housing requirements, the Council base the level of need on a standard methodology set out in government guidance. The Local Housing Need (LHN) generated using the standard method changes year on year as the inputs are variable, being based on a rolling 10-year household growth projection alongside affordability ratios which are updated annually. The current LHN for Ashfield (April 2023) is calculated to be 446 dwellings per annum. The LHN for years 2020 to 2023 are: 2020/21 – 482 dpa; 2021/22 – 457 dpa; 2022/23 – 467 dpa.

Re-basing the start date for the Local Plan will enable the most up to date assessment of housing need to be applied consistently throughout the whole Plan period, without having to rely on stepped levels of need in the early years. Taking this approach will also slightly reduce the District's undersupply of housing land to meet the need. Government guidance sets out that local housing need calculated using the standard method may be relied upon for a period of 2 years from the time that a plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 2a-008-20190220). In this respect, the LHN may not need to change before the final Local Plan is adopted - however this will be dependent on timescales and any future changes in the Government's approach to assessing housing need.

Another implication of the rebasing of the Local Plan is that employment land requirements will be extended for an additional period of two years. There is no specific methodology at a national level to arrive at employment land requirements. Planning Practice Guidance Housing and economic needs assessment, identifies that councils will need to develop an idea of future needs based on a range of data which is current and robust, such as:

- sectoral and employment forecasts and projections which take account of likely changes in skills needed (labour demand);
- demographically derived assessments of current and future local labour supply (labour supply techniques);
- analysis based on the past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements;
- consultation with relevant organisations, studies of business trends, an understanding of innovative and changing business models, particularly those which make use of online platforms to respond to consumer demand and monitoring of business, economic and employment statistics.

This is reflected in the Local Plan evidence base Employment Land Needs Study (Lichfields) which covers the period 2018 to 2038, Background Paper No 3 Economy and Employment Land August 2021 and the Logistics Study. It is anticipated that the existing evidence would need to be projected forward for a two year period to reflect the potential demand to 2040 and an appropriate level of supply of employment land identified to meet any additional demand.

Advice has been sought from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) who were supportive of the approach to re-basing the Plan period at this time.

Implications

Corporate Plan: Planning, and the Local Plan has a cross cutting role to play in helping to meet and deliver the six priorities identified in the Corporate Plan. In particular, the Local Plan has a key responsibility in delivering the outcomes around the supply of appropriate and affordable homes, improving town centres, facilitating economic growth especially around transport hubs, improving parks and green spaces.

Legal: The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the legislative requirements in bringing a local plan forward. Under Section 20 of The Act, an authority must not submit a Local Plan unless they have complied with any relevant requirements contained in the Regulations and the document is ready for independent examination. Under the Act a local plan is subject to an examination in public by a planning inspector. The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 35, requires the inspector to consider whether a plan is ‘sound’. Soundness includes that strategic policies in a local plan are *“Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.”* [RLD 15/06/2023]

Finance: There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. [CWH 15/06/23].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None
General Fund – Capital Programme	None
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	none

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
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If amendments are not made to the plan period the Regulation 19 Local Plan will not comply with National Planning Policy on the timescale for strategic policies in a local plan.	To amend the plan period as set out in the report.
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Human Resources: There are no direct HR implications contained within this report.

Environmental/Sustainability: Sustainability is at the heart of the planning system and the Plan has been prepared with the aim of delivering sustainable development in the District in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 7 and 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, which requires the Council to conduct an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in Local Plan and prepare a report of the findings of the appraisal.

Equalities: An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consideration of the Local Plan Publication.

Other Implications: None

Reason(s) for Urgency: Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption: Not applicable

Background Papers

Draft Local Plan Regulation 18, which is available on the Council's website.

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