

Approval of Local Development Scheme (2017 – 2020)

Executive Portfolio Holder: Angie Singleton, Strategic Planning (Place Making)
Strategic Director: Martin Woods, Director: Service Delivery
Lead Officer: Jo Wilkins, Senior Policy Planner
Contact Details: jo.wilkins@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462588

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider and endorse the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the period 2017 to 2020. The LDS sets out the documents that will be produced to inform the preparation of the early review of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) and a timetable for that review.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 6 April 2017.

Public Interest

3. An LDS is a requirement under planning legislation and ensures that the public, business and other interested parties are aware of the programme of work that will be undertaken by the Council relating to planning policy and the preparation of a Local Plan. The LDS provides the organisational structure which guides the allocation and prioritisation of work which will be undertaken by the Council. The latest version, covering the period 2017 to 2020, will govern the work required to produce the early review of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).

Recommendations:

4. That District Executive:
 - a. Endorse the Local Development Scheme (2017 – 2020) and resolve that it is effective as of 6th April 2017 (**See Appendix A**).
 - b. Delegate responsibility to the Director: Service Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to make any final minor text amendments which may be necessary to enable the Local Development Scheme (2017 – 2020) to be published.

Background

5. South Somerset District Council's first LDS was adopted in September 2007 and set the approach for the period 2007 – 2010. It was updated in January 2013 to cover the period 2013 – 2016 and updated again in August 2015 to cover the period 2015 -2018.
6. In March 2015, the Council adopted the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028), which alters the perspective on what future evidence, strategies and documents should be produced to shape the future of South Somerset.
7. In adopting the local plan, the Council was aware of its commitment to carry out an "early review" of the local plan (ERLP) within three years of the date of adoption (i.e. by March 2018). The early review is a requirement set out by the Inspector who examined the plan, and is a clear conclusion

in his Inspector's Report. The reason for an early review is to clarify housing and employment provision in Wincanton¹.

8. The previous intention, once the Local Plan was adopted, was to progress to a series of related 'Development Plan Documents' and 'Supplementary Planning Documents'. However, through the LDS 2015-2018 the Council agreed to take the opportunity to make a transition into the 'all-in-one' local plan, and deliver an early review at the same time. The benefits of this approach are:
 - The ability to incorporate the most up to date evidence;
 - A more efficient use of time and resources; and
 - To have an up to date local plan for the whole district. The recently published housing white paper stresses the importance of having up to date local plans and states the intention to set out in regulations the requirement for them to be updated at least once every five years.²
9. Whilst the 2015-2018 LDS set out a work programme to complete all aspects of the early review by March 2018 it has become clear that whilst progress has been significant the March 2018 deadline will not be met. Reasons for this include:
 - Team resources being focussed on the examination and adoption of CIL, input into planning appeals and other strategic projects;
 - Working with partners such as the other Somerset Authorities to produce the Strategic Market Housing Market Assessment has meant the process has taken longer but has been more cost effective; and
 - Production of the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment has taken more time than expected due to the need to re-design the database and ensure all relevant data has been entered. This means that the document is more user friendly and transparent.
10. The LDS acts as a service planning and project management tool. It sets out a three-year timeframe for the work which will be carried out by the Spatial Policy Team. Fundamentally, the LDS sets out a schedule for how evidence will be gathered in order to shape the content of the ERLP and a timetable for the production of the ERLP itself.
11. The revised LDS identifies where evidence base work has been completed, where it is on-going, yet to commence and where it may no longer be required (Table 4.1). An indicative timetable for the production of the ERLP is also included. This is more detailed than the previous LDS as it includes anticipated dates for presentation to LDS Board, District Executive Committee and Full Council (Table 4.2).
12. Overall, it is expected that the ERLP will begin its process through public consultation in autumn 2017, with Submission to the Secretary of State identified for March 2020, Examination in June 2020, and the estimated date for Adoption is December 2020.

Financial Implications

13. If District Executive endorses the LDS, it will set a clear future work programme for the service. The proposed workload represents a major undertaking and has been tailored to maximise the use of existing resources and finances whilst ensuring that the service can deliver to time and budget.

¹ See Paragraph 100 of the Inspector's Report, dated 8th January 2015:

http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/700388/south_somerset_lp_final_report.pdf

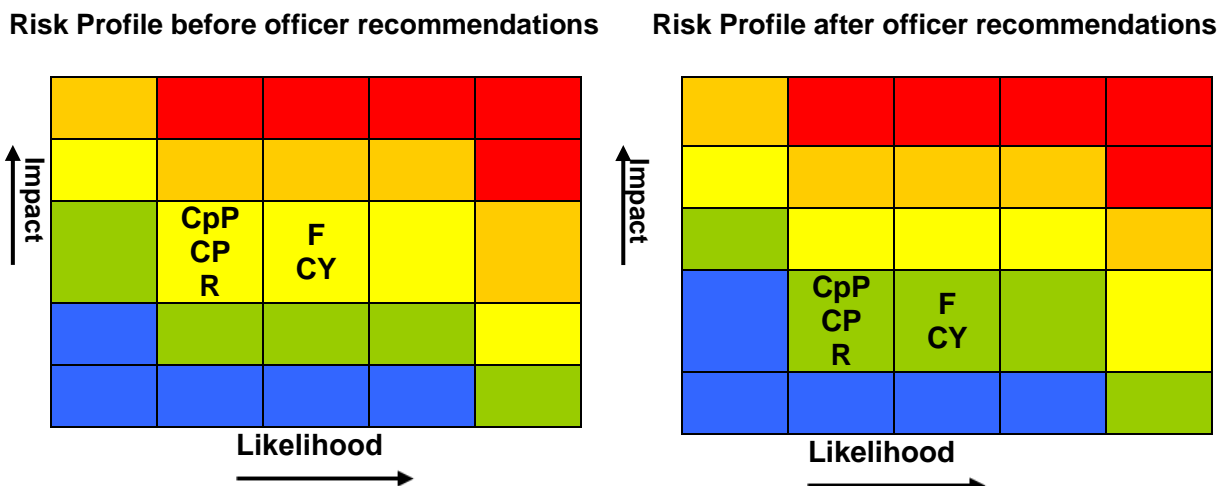
² Fixing our broken housing market, DCLG, February 2017

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590464/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_print_ready_version.pdf

14. On this basis, any additional work which is outside of the LDS programme will not automatically be undertaken by the service. Any requests for additional work which would divert from the original programme would need to be fully formulated and submitted to the LDS Board (or other appropriate committee within the Council, e.g. District Executive) to allow the request to be considered and appraised. Importantly, any additional work will need to be self-financing and deliver the additional resources required to complete the additional work without compromising the original schedule. Formal sign-off from the LDS Board or appropriate committee will be required before any additional work can progress.
15. The LDS includes a monitoring and review process, which will track the progress in achieving the milestones set out. In carrying out performance reviews an appreciation of whether the team has sufficient resources will be included.

Risk Matrix

16. The matrix below sets out the risks associated with District Executive recommending that the LDS is approved.
17. The LDS includes a monitoring and review process, which will track the progress in achieving the milestones set out. In carrying out performance reviews an appreciation of the risks to the service and the Council will be carried out.



Key

| Categories | Colours <i>(for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)</i> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R = Reputation | Red = High impact and high probability |
| CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities | Orange = Major impact and major probability |
| CP = Community Priorities | Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability |
| CY = Capacity | Green = Minor impact and minor probability |
| F = Financial | Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability |

Council Plan Implications

18. Delivering the ERLP is a high priority for the Council by virtue of the recommendation in the Inspector's Report and the acceptance of the task within the Council's adopted local plan.

19. Ensuring policies and the local plan remain up-to-date and aligned to the specific challenges and opportunities in the district will help the Council to realise economic vitality and prosperity, improve the health and well-being of citizens, create safe, sustainable and cohesive communities and promote a balanced natural and built environment.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

20. None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. The LDS will be publicised in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and normal procedures. Evidence base reports are made available on the Council's web site.
22. The ERLP will be prepared in accordance with the legislative and statutory requirements of an Equality Analysis, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.

Privacy Impact Assessment

23. No personal data handling is involved.

Background Papers

24. Appendix A – South Somerset Local Development Scheme (2017 – 2020)
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