

Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	10 November 2020

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To note the contents of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- This report provides an update on the progress of the development of the Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- None, for information only.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

- The Central Lancashire Local Plan Issues and options consultation ran from Monday the 18th November 2019 until Friday 14th February 2020. A total of 1,606 stakeholders responded to the consultation, equating to 25,000 individual responses to the questions posed through the document. In addition to residents of Central Lancashire, the types of organisations that responded are listed below:

- Government Agency
- Non-Government Organisation
- Local Planning Authority
- Planning Consultant
- Developer
- Private Landlord
- Registered Social Housing Provider
- Land Agents
- Parish Council
- Community Group

- Not all residents who responded provided details of where they lived, however, for those that did the majority (46%) were from Chorley, 32% South Ribble and 4% from Preston.
6. A significant proportion of the responses were in relation to the site suggestions in Section 8 (Location for Future Development) of the consultation document. Of these questions there was most interest in sites located in Chorley, with 65% relating to the sites presented in Annexes 1 and 5 of the Issues and Options Consultation. 31% of responses related to sites in South Ribble (Annex 3) and 4% related to Preston sites (Annex 4).
 7. The sections on housing and site allocations received the most comments overall in the consultation, with the section on climate change and resource management seeing the lowest responses.
 8. The majority of responses, as expected, were around discussions on what the number of homes should be that Central Lancashire is planning for and where those sites should be located. There is significant concern that the homes being built are not affordable and are not being built in mind of providing a home to those people who currently live in the area.
 9. There was support for the provision of more employment opportunities, and in future to plan these nearer housing developments to reduce the need to travel and to promote sustainable modes of travel.
 10. In all areas there is concern that education provision at all levels is inadequate, and local infrastructure is insufficient to cope with current levels of population and traffic, therefore new developments will exacerbate this.
 11. A detailed outcomes report on the consultation has been prepared and is currently with officers at the 3 homes teams for sign off.
 12. To engage younger generations on the development of the Local Plan, a Youth Questionnaire was prepared, and this ran alongside the issues and Options. We received responses from 593 11-21year olds, mainly high school students to this consultation which is a positive step to engaging this sector on the development of the Local Plan. 407 responses (69%) were from the Preston area, 126 (21%) from South Ribble and 26 (4%) from Chorley with 34 (6%) not specifying.
 13. The issues of most concern to the youth were access to a good range of indoor and outdoor activities, safe environments for travelling around, less little (cleaner neighbourhoods) and good access to higher/further education. This latter point was the main reason they would consider leaving the area as many do not feel there are the opportunities for them here. However, there is good awareness of apprenticeship schemes and a real interest in gaining qualifications by this route, with 71% of those who responded saying this is something they would consider.
 14. There was also general concern about the wider environment and how we protect this and make better use of it. Many who responded commented on being lucky to live in such a beautiful area and wanted to protect it. Again, an outcomes report has been prepared regarding this and is currently with officers at each of the 3 home teams for sign off.

CALL FOR SITES AND SITE ASSESSMENT WORK

15. Alongside the issues and Options Consultation, a third call for sites stage was opened up. This generated 209 additional submissions, a 100 of which are in Chorley, 37 Preston and 72 in South Ribble. Of the total 209, 73 are completely new sites, with the remainder intercepting in some way with existing proposals. 36 of the completely new sites are within Chorley, 17 in Preston and 20 in South Ribble. No work has yet commenced on assessing these sites in detail, as such it is not known how many are currently in the Green Belt or on other land currently excluded from consideration in the site assessment process.
16. The sites received will be assessed against the criteria in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Following feedback received to the Issues and Options consultation there were comments received which suggested that the methodology is not in line with national policy. To reflect these concerns, the approach to site selection is being revised to ensure it does align with national policy and guidance, in particular to ensure that sites are not excluded from the assessment process prematurely. The fluid nature of the SHELAA process allows for this. As we are only just starting work on the site assessment, this allows us the opportunity to amend the methodology set out in the current version of the SHELAA (known as iteration 1) to ensure that we are applying a policy compliant approach to site assessment. The amendments to the criteria will be incorporated in an addendum to Iteration 1, rather than in a new document which would become Iteration 2.
17. The main changes to the SHELAA methodology to be set out in the SHELAA addendum are to include bringing back into consideration sites lying partially within protected areas / flood zones; sites in open countryside / area of other open countryside / protected open land; and wholly brownfield sites in the Green Belt. All remaining sites in the database will then be assessed in more detail as to their suitability, availability and achievability, taking into account identified site constraints, and making adjustments to site capacity where necessary. In accordance with national policy and guidance, this approach will mean that all sequentially preferable options for meeting local housing need will have been fully explored before alternative options are considered
18. Sites already received through Call for Sites 1 and 2 were initially looked at by each of the home teams during spring/summer 2019 and each team is currently reviewing the new sites from call for sites 3 and any others which now need to be considered due to the change in approach to the criteria as discussed above, against the SHELAA. Once this work is complete, we will have an initial indication of the amount of land that is potentially available for development, and we can then start to look at its suitability in more detail through site assessment work and site visits.
19. The comments received on sites through the consultation process will also be used to assist in the assessment of sites. Information has been received on a number of the suggestions from local communities close to the sites as well as statutory consultees and land promoters.
20. In relation to site assessments, work is ongoing to piece together Central Lancashire wide GIS data layers that will be used to undertake a desk-based assessment of all the suggested sites before moving on to sites visits as necessary. It is hoped this work can commence in Autumn.
21. In addition, work has also been undertaken to ensure that sites which have been parked or are duplicated are identified. This has ensured that time is focussed on assessing

those sites that need to be assessed. It is currently hoped that we can start detailed site assessment work in Autumn once the home teams have finished their initial assessment.

PLANNING WHITE PAPER

22. The Government published its Planning White Paper “Planning for the Future” in August for consultation. The Central Lancashire Team is considering its implications for the work being undertaken, but that work is continuing.

EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)

23. A separate presentation will be given at the meeting by the Council’s consultants JBA Consulting.
24. The SFRA has identified Strategic Recommendations for each of the site suggestions put forward. These findings will be used by the Central Lancashire and planning Home Team officers as they review the list of sites suggestions against the SHELAA to assist them in recommending which suggestions are taken forward to the Local Plan. As such, the SFRA will be an important part of the evidence base to inform Members’ decisions regarding site allocations in the new Local Plan.

HOUSING STUDY

25. The Housing Study, prepared by Consultants Icen, was updated following the consultation on the MOU. Further updates are planned this year to reflect the economic growth aspirations of the region and any changes proposed through the Planning White Paper and updates to the Standard Method. These updates will only be undertaken once the evidence base work being done at the County level and the update to the Standard method numbers has been finalised.

HOUSING NEEDS STUDY

26. Preston and Chorley Councils are partnering to commission a Housing Needs Study, South Ribble having undertaken a similar study in 2019. This study will look in more detail at housing needs of specific areas of Chorley and Preston and of the type of housing that is required. Commissioning of this work is in progress and is expected to begin in the Autumn.

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE TRANSPORT MASTERPLAN

27. Lancashire County Council (LCC) have now shared with us the findings of the first stage of work from consultants Jacobs in the form of an interactive baseline report which is in a digital format. We can now start to work with County to feed in the sites suggestions and look at the sites in more detail to understand any issues which may be apparent for potential allocation in the Local Plan, and identify any infrastructure improvements which could be required to overcome them.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

28. Agreement has been reached to procure consultants to advise the Councils on policies to be developed through the Local Plan which will address climate change and carbon reduction measures, as well as looking at the potential for renewable energy generation across Central Lancashire and the areas where this could be achieved most efficiently. A budget of up to £30,000 has been identified for this work and will need to be added to the Central Lancashire local Plan budget.
29. Work to commission this study had been paused to allow for the outcomes from work which County have been leading on entitled “Measures Required to Reduce Lancashire’s Carbon Emissions to Net Zero by 2030 or 2050”, as the results of this work will directly relate to any work commissioned locally.
30. However, as result of the current epidemic, work on commissioning the study by County has been delayed. Initial results from this work had been expected in the summer. We are currently liaising with County over this, and other pieces of work, to understand better when to expect them and to assess what impact these delays may have on our own timetable and how we progress with work in this area.

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA)

31. HRA is a process which identifies the likelihood of significant effects of the plan on designated habitat sites, and any mitigation measures. The findings from the HRA will feed into the draft policies and sites for Preferred Options, and ultimately the submission Local Plan. There are essentially two separate stages to the HRA process. The initial stage will involve identifying habitat sites and their special characteristics and then screening them to identify whether there are likely to have any significant effects. If significant effects are identified, an Appropriate Assessment will then also be required, which will consider mitigation measures.
32. Given the specialist nature of this work, the joint authorities are seeking to procure experienced professionals to undertake all stages of the HRA, and a specification has been circulated to the Home Teams. Following conclusion of the procurement process it is hoped that the appointed consultants will be in a position to commence work on the HRA early in the new year.

LOCAL PLAN VIABILITY

31. As stated previously, we propose to appoint consultants to undertake work on assessing viability of the Local Plan. Consultants will be appointed to undertake work on plan viability and a Community Infrastructure Levy review (subject to the White paper Planning for the Future changes). This will be a jointly commissioned piece of work and run concurrently with the Local Plan Timetable. Procurement of this work will commence following completion of the initial assessment of sites by the home teams.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

32. The Local Development Scheme was been agreed by all 3 Councils. No changes to the timetable have been made to reflect any potential delays as a result of Covid 19. The Central and Homes teams are liaising regularly to progress work. If it is clear that there are impacts on work as a result of the current crisis, any changes required will be

reported to members and the timetable updated accordingly. Delays to work to date, since lockdown began, have affected the SFRA and Site Assessments programme of works. The key milestones for the Local Plan are set out below.

Key Stage	Timescale
Stage one Issues and Options Consultation	November 2019 to February 2020
Stage two Preferred Options Consultation	June 2021 to August 2021
Stage three Publication Draft	October 2022 to December 2022
Stage four Submission	March 2023
Adoption	December 2023

DUTY TO COOPERATE DISCUSSIONS

33. To ensure that we meet our duty to cooperate (DtC) requirements we are continuing to engage with relevant bodies on the development of the Local Plan. LCC continue to be a key partner and discussions with them on a number of issues will continue throughout plan preparation. We have also had received requests for DtC agreements with neighbouring areas to discuss housing numbers, we will continue to engage with these authorities as necessary to ensure we meet this requirement.

34. We have also had initial discussions with Stagecoach around how we can improve bus services across Central Lancashire and the need to ensure that the feasibility of how we can provide routes to new developments/settlements is considered at the Local Plan stage.

Contact for Further Information:

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Central Lancashire Local Plan Team