

Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	22.06.2021

## Central Lancashire Local Plan Update

### Recommendation(s)

1. To note the contents of this report.

### Executive Summary of Report

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

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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### Reasons for Recommendation(s) (If the recommendations are accepted)

3. None, for information only.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4. None.

### Local Development Scheme Update

1. We are currently in the process of reviewing and updating the Local Development Scheme. The next Milestone for the Local Plan is the consultation on the Preferred Options Document. This is currently timetabled for consultation commencing June 2021, however delays in development of key aspects of the evidence base have meant this date was not achievable.
2. As previously noted, we felt it pertinent to wait for completion of work being undertaken at the County level to inform the Greater Lancashire Plan (GLP). This work has the potential to directly impact the Local Plan, particularly the work looking at the economic aspirations of Lancashire and the areas which will be the focus of those growth aspirations, and any decision from that will need to be implemented through the Local Plan.
3. Work to support the GLP also includes wider issues of the environment, including a carbon assessment of Lancashire. The findings of this work will help inform the development of policies and actions needed through planning to help deliver on the 2030 target for carbon neutrality and will provide the baseline position for monitoring delivery of the local plan.
4. Further information on changes to the process of preparing Local plans as proposed under the Planning White Paper have still not come forward, and uncertainty on this has impacted on work to date. However the Queens Speech did provide an indication that the planning

reforms are expected to start to come forward this year, although these will take time to implement and LPA's are encouraged to continue to prepare plans under the current system.

5. All the above have in part led to changes being required into the current LDS, resulting a need to revise the current key milestones for the Local Plan process. However, with the Government deadline for delivering Local Plans by 2023 still in place, we will do what we can to seek delivery by that time. We are currently working on a revised plan for delivery, with an aim for consultation on a Preferred Options document towards the end of 2021.

## **Planning Reforms and the Local Plan**

6. As noted above, the Queens speech indicated that changes to the planning system will start to come forward this year, however no timeframe for when any new system may be in place have been suggested to date. As such we are committed to delivering the current Local Plan under the existing system to enable all three councils to have an up to date Local plan in place and to ensure we meet the housing requirements for Central Lancashire.
7. The main changes proposed through the reforms were summarised in the Queens speech, noting the need to transform the current system to a more efficient digital and map-based service, with simpler frameworks for assessing infrastructure needs and environment impacts.
8. The new system will aim to speed up the preparation of plans, presenting information in a way that is easier to use and provides certainty to both communities and developers on what is permitted where. The new system is also set to enable more meaningful engagement, increasing average response rates on Local Plans from 3% of the local population and for planning applications from an average position of 1 %.
9. One of the key changes proposed through the White Paper for local plans was the introduction of three categories of land, Growth, Renewal and Protection, under which all development must be classed. To ensure the Local plan is compatible with any new system developed on adoption, we are suggesting that work on sites should be undertaken with the proposed system of Growth, Renewal and Protection areas in mind. This will mean that work on identifying land for future development across Central Lancashire and the overall spatial strategy for Central Lancashire should link to these proposals, indicating the extent of coverage of each category across Central Lancashire along with the type, scale and design of development we expect to take place within them.
10. By doing this we hope to ensure the work on the plan accords with future proposed planning reforms, enabling a simpler adaptation to this regime and reducing the work required in any future updates needed to the plan to move to the new system.

## **Preferred Options Development**

11. The Local Plan team have been progressing work on developing the Preferred Options plan. The focus of work to date has been on assessing the sites to identify if sufficient land is available to meet local needs. We are close to completion of this work, and are in the process of setting up meetings with County on education and transport to bring in their expertise to further assess these sites, and with our flood risk consultants to start to consider the need to undertake sequential test on any proposed sites. This is to assist in identifying any issues with sites early in the process to ensure they can be adequately addressed.
12. Once the potential sites have been assessed, the Central Team will review the land requirements for Housing and Employment needs and assess whether there is sufficient land identified to meet this need. Should insufficient land be available we will need to revisit the approach set out in the SHELAA to consider other land options. On completion of this work we

will engage with members across each Council to discuss the findings, setting out how proposals will assist in delivering local requirements.

13. We have reviewed and updated the Vision and Objectives, seeking to make these simpler and more concise and will be able to share these with members in the coming months. Work has also been progressing on identifying growth areas, and we are seeking to tie this in with the work that has been commissioned to support the Greater Lancashire Plan in identifying growth priorities for Lancashire.
14. Work has also commenced on developing draft policies, with initial focus on design, spatial strategy development, infrastructure planning, greenbelt and countryside areas designations. Work on design is being updated to reflect the design guides published earlier this year, and to draw on work in areas developing draft design guides to enable us to make use of best practice in this area.

## **Evidence Documents**

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

15. The findings of the Level 1 SFRA are being used to inform work on assessing the sites, specifically the information on the strategic recommendations under which all sites received through the call for sites process have been categorised. The following broad Strategic Recommendations (SR) are used:
  - SR A – consider withdrawal based on significant level of fluvial/tidal or surface water flood risk (if development cannot be directed away from areas at risk),
  - SR B – Exception Test required,
  - SR C – detailed consideration of site layout and design around flood risk,
  - SR D – development could be allocated subject to an FRA,
  - SR E – development could be allocated on flood risk grounds subject to consultation with the LPA / Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).
16. All sites received through the call for sites process have been assessed within the SFRA Level 1. This includes sites which may not be taken forward however assessing all sites to date provides useful information to inform the evidence base for the Local Plan.
17. Further work on flood risk is required if sites in the higher categories are being considered for development and we need to apply the sequential test. If sites are still considered to have merit to being looked at further, a sequential test will need to be carried out, and if passed then the Exception test will be undertaken if required on these sites. This work would be undertaken through a SFRA Level 2, and JBA are lined up to look at the need for this from July 21.

### **Housing Needs Study**

18. Preston and Chorley Councils have partnered 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 at the type of housing that is required. Work is expected to be completed summer 2021.

### **Central Lancashire Density Study**

19. Hive Planning have been commissioned to undertake a review of densities historically achieved on residential developments across Central Lancashire. This is required to inform our assumptions about the potential development capacity of sites being considered for allocation in the CLLP.

20. The purpose of this instruction is to provide an evidence base on which to inform and support assumptions about the capacity of sites proposed to be allocated for residential development through the CLLP. This will be achieved by using data gathered around housing densities of sites which have previously been developed or are under construction, wherever possible.
21. It is intended that the output from this commission will be used to inform the capacity assumptions on future residential allocations across Central Lancashire and will inform work on capacity assumptions to be applied to the sites which are identified within the Strategic Housing (and Economic) Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA/SHELAA). Work is expected to be completed on this by summer 2021.

### **Central Lancashire Transport Masterplan**

22. Discussion are been set up to engage with LCC on undertaking initial assessment of the proposed sites for the Local Plan. LCC will be engaged to run a test working options to help inform decisions on growth options and potential allocations. This work will identify any issues arising from the options presented and infrastructure needs which could be associated with their delivery.

### **Climate Change**

23. The County work on the environment and climate change is in progress and due for initial reporting this summer. This work will provide a carbon assessment of Lancashire, which will provide evidence on achieving the goal of being net carbon zero. This work will look at a range of options to delivering net zero and identify those likely to be most effective in achieving this goal.
24. Work at a local level is continuing alongside this project and we will look to undertake further research as necessary to help inform how the Local Plan can effectively address the issue of climate change. We are also continuing to work with planning colleagues from across Lancashire on climate change and sharing best practice on how to address this across all areas of planning, recognising that it is an above local issue and one where we need to work in partnership with one another to deliver our combined goal.
25. In addition to the Local Plan work, each of the three councils have their local climate change obligations which the aim of supporting the Councils in meeting their declarations on the climate emergency by becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The Councils are actively looking at ways to support their communities and businesses in working towards carbon neutrality, as well as identifying steps the Council's themselves can take to reduce carbon emissions. This work is expected to identify linkages with planning and mechanisms for change which can be delivered through the Local Plan.

### **Local Plan Viability**

26. We are currently in the process of procuring support for suitably qualified consultants to undertake work on assessing viability of the Local Plan. Consultants will be appointed to undertake work on plan viability and Community Infrastructure Levy review. This is a jointly commissioned piece of work and run concurrently with the Local Plan Timetable.

### **Integrated Assessment (IA )And Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

27. We recently tendered for consultants to undertake work on the IA and HRA for the Local plan. This work will run alongside the plan up to the point of adoption. We are currently appraising the responses received with a view to appointing consultants to start in June.

## **Duty to Cooperate**

28. We continue to engage with organisations and councils on the development of the local plan, with meetings set up regularly with key partners such as LCC.

29. A number of requests have also been received from neighbouring authorities in regard to the development of their plans and delivery of housing and employment needs within their areas. As any discussions will affect all three partners to the Local Plan, it has been agreed that all responses to the Duty to Cooperate requests will be prepared with agreement from all 3 Councils.

### **Contact for Further Information:**

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Central Lancashire Local Plan Team