

Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	18.11.2021

## 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, and the suite of evidence base documents supporting it.

Confidential report	Yes	No
Please bold as appropriate		

### Reasons for recommendation(s)

3. None, for information only.

### Alternative options considered and rejected

4. None.

### Local development scheme update

5. Work on developing the Local Plan has been delayed due to a number of factors which have and continue to affect plan progress. The failure to recruit to the vacant posts, resources deployed to cover covid related work, and home teams also dealing with JR's and planning appeals meaning resources have not been available to assist work on the Local Plan. All these factors have impacted on the Local Plan work and progress has been slowed.
6. To overcome the resourcing issues, we have appointed temporary agency staff to support the work of the Local Plan team, with additional support of one FTE in place until end of

April 2022. In addition, we are also looking at routes to bring in external consultancy support to progress work on developing the preferred options.

7. We are also anticipating the release of a number of key documents being led by LCC to inform the Greater Lancashire Plan (GLP) which cover economy and the environment. As reported previously, this work is directly relevant to the Local Plan, and the plan will be the mechanism to implement some of the actions arising. We are already utilising aspects of the evidence base work prepared for this through our update to the Employment Land Study.
8. We are also still progressing work on housing numbers and distribution across Central Lancashire. Work has recently been commissioned to provide the evidence base for the Local Plan on housing needs for Central Lancashire. The findings of this work will be key to the development of the Preferred Options. The findings of this work are expected early in 2022 This document will provide the basis for the development of policies on need and distribution across Central Lancashire.
9. This work all needs to be completed to enable sufficient evidence to be in place to inform the Local Plan preferred Options Consultation. As such once we have dates when this work will be complete and resources are secured to deliver the plan, we will be in a position to prepare a more accurate LDS early in 2022.

### **Planning Advisory Service (PAS)**

10. Earlier this year, officers from the three Council and LCC had a session with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) regarding progressing Local Plans to meet the December 2023 deadline. PAS have been appointed to assist Councils in delivering their local plan by looking at delivery of the project and identifying any obstacles which may be affecting that, and which they could offer support through. Since then, we have had 2 further meetings with officers from the three Central Lancashire Councils, and are continuing to work with them to look at what additional support they can provide.

### **SHELAA**

11. Following initial contact with PAS, and area of focus identified was the Central Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) to ensure all available land was captured in this work. To ensure this process was thorough, we appointed consultants LUC to independently review our approach. Through this work LUC noted a number of changes which should be made to make sure potential sites where not excluded prematurely from consideration.
12. Following on from this review, we have now reviewed and updated the SHELAA document in line with these recommendations for use in assessing sites received against this methodology. The site assessment and identification process remains our main focus of work at this time as we need to understand what is available and if this is sufficient to meet our needs.

### **Preferred options development**

13. As part of the evidence needed to support preferred options, LUC have been appointed to undertake an assessment of a number of open space designations in the extant plans. This includes an assessment of existing safeguarded land, areas of separation and protected open land policies which vary across the three councils, and also an assessment of our Green Belt Boundary and how this is performing against the 5 tests set out in NPPF. This work is needed to provide support for maintenance of the existing boundaries and to understand if our existing settlement boundaries are still correct. This work is also advising on what policies will be required for the emerging Local Plan, and ensuring wording proposed addresses the needs of all three councils.
14. The Local Plan team have continued to progress work on developing the Preferred Options plan. We have undertaken a review of the revised Vision and Objectives with council Officers, seeking their views on the approach set out, and will continue to review this as the plan develops to ensure it encapsulates emerging ideas for the direction of growth for the area and approaches to the spatial distribution of development across Central Lancashire.
15. We are also undertaking a review of the existing Local Plan Policies to assess how they perform against recent changes to NPPF as part of our work in identifying where new policies are required.

## **Evidence Documents**

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

16. Further work on flood risk is required if sites in the higher categories are being considered for development. Government has also recently updated its approach to development in flood risk areas through changes to NPPF published in July, and the SFRA work will reflect those changes. This work would be undertaken through a SFRA Level 2, and JBA will commence work on this as soon as the sites which need to be taken forward for more detailed assessment are identified through the SHELAA and agreed with members.

### **Housing Needs Study**

17. Work on development of this study has been completed by the consultants, including a survey with stakeholders across the two Councils. Draft reports for the Chorley and Preston Housing Needs Study are expected later this month.

### **Central Lancashire Density Study**

18. A final report on this document is due in November. 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. Hive Planning are the appointed contractors for this work.
19. The findings from this work will be applied to the sites which are identified within the Strategic Housing (and Economic) Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA/SHELAA).

## **Central Lancashire Transport Masterplan**

20. Lancashire County Council are leading on the work to update the Transport masterplan for Central Lancashire. LCC are looking to appoint consultants to deliver this project to enable the testing of potential sites to 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.
21. Work on this will commence following agreement of the sites for testing.

### **Central Lancashire Landuse Study**

22. As noted above, the Councils have appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC) to provide support on the development of the Local Plan. The consultants have specifically been asked to undertake a review of open land constraints across the three councils. Although green belt forms part of the assessment requirements, this does not indicate we are looking for large scale Green Belt release. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how the Green Belt is performing against the tests set out in NPPF, which in turn will enable a robust assessment of the submissions received in the Green Belt to justify any position made in relation to them which will stand up to scrutiny through the Local Plan Examination.
23. There are 5 key areas of work for this study as set out below:
  - A strategic Green Belt assessment (this will cover all the existing Green Belt, safeguarded land and other areas designated as open countryside in Preston and Chorley)
  - An assessment of areas of separation (areas of separation in South Ribble and Chorley are already being assessed as Green Belt. Preston will be assessed in the same way).
  - A strategic-scale assessment of landscape value (this will cover all of Central Lancashire's open land).
  - A strategic-scale assessment of settlement settings (this will be applied to all settlements inset from the Green Belt and all settlements of a comparable size in countryside areas outside of the Green Belt).
  - Recommendations regarding policies for Central Lancashire to replace the existing Local Plan policies.At this stage, no sites are being assessed, with the study focusing on the purpose of the designations themselves.

### **Climate Change**

24. The County work on the environment and climate change is in progress and initial findings have been discussed with Climate Change Officers across Lancashire, We are awaiting the detailed findings of this work to understand how this can be supported through the Local Plan and the policies therein. This work is looking at a range of options to delivering net zero and the mechanisms by which councils can achieve this goal. The local Plan is expected to be one of those mechanisms.
25. We are also looking at what will be required within the Local Plan to deliver the Biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements of the Environment Bill. This Bill will bring into law a number of requirements for environmental protection and recovery. This Bill is currently going through the House of Lords and is in the report stage prior to its third reading. Once the Bill receives royal ascent, secondary legislation will emerge which will provide the detail on how aspects of the bill will be delivered. These detailed stages will provide key information and targets which will be relevant to the Local Plan, particularly monitoring indicators which will be identified. We are also continuing to work with

planning colleagues from across Lancashire on climate change and development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire.

### **Local Plan Viability**

26. We recently completed a tendering process for the appointment of consultants to undertake work on plan viability and Community Infrastructure Levy review, with Aspinall Verdi being the successful consultants. This is a jointly commissioned piece of work and will run concurrently with the Local Plan Timetable.
27. The plan viability work will also feed into work on the sites assessment, with evidence being prepared through other studies on topics such as transport, community facilities, education, flood risk etc feeding into this work. This will ensure full consideration of the needs of each proposal are assessed through the Local Plan before sites are allocated.

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

28. LUC were the successful bidder for this contract following a tender process and work has commenced on this project. Work is initially focussing on the HRA Screening stage and review of the scoping report.

### **Employment Land Review**

29. To ensure the evidence base for the preferred options is up to date, a review if the existing employment land study was deemed necessary to understand the impacts of covid on demand across central Lancashire and any changes in requirements of employment land going forward. Consultants BE Group have been commissioned to undertake a refresh of the existing Employment Land Studies for Central Lancashire. The key aim of the Review is to update the employment land need and demand elements of the 2017 Study to provide an updated Objectively Assessed Need for the three Councils individually and collectively.
30. Work has commenced on this, utilising econometric data prepared for the GLP to ensure our processes align. Initial results are expected before Christmas.

### **Duty To Cooperate**

31. We have attended a number of DtC meetings recently with neighbouring Authorities including Wyre and GMCA and have sessions in motion with others. This work will pick up pace as we move towards Preferred Options and seek to engage directly on the development of the Plan and prepare statements of common ground as necessary.
32. A meeting has also taken place with LCC to discuss comments made by the three councils on the emerging Minerals and waste Local Plan (M&WLP), and to establish a Statement of Common Ground between the parties to support the M&WLP going forward. We are also continuing to meet with County Education to discuss planning for school places as well as working closely with colleagues on developing the transport masterplan for update for the area.

**Contact for Further Information:**

Carolyn Williams      01257 515151

Central Lancashire Local Plan Team