

Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2022

## CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the contents of this report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

2. This report updates members on the development of the Local Plan and the suite of evidence base documents supporting it.

Confidential report	Yes	No
Please bold as appropriate		

### 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

5. As noted at previous meetings, the Local Plan programme needs to be updated, work on this has been delayed until the approach to resourcing the gaps in the team have been addressed to enable work to progress.

6. The failure to recruit to the vacant posts, and home teams also being stretched due to demands on officer time in dealing with planning appeals, has impacted on the Local Plan work and progress has been slowed. However, it is imperative that we progress work to secure an up to date local plan is in place for Central Lancashire, including importantly an agreed position on housing supply and distribution for the area.
7. Temporary agency support for one officer has been extended until end of April 2022, and we are continuing to look at potential routes to bring in additional consultancy support.
8. We are also awaiting 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. The Economic work has been published, and we have been utilising aspects of this evidence through our update to the Employment Land Study and the work DLP Planning have been commissioned to undertake on housing.
9. This work all needs to be completed 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 for publishing in due course.
10. We are currently looking at options for delivering the Preferred Option consultation to enable all the evidence base work needed for that to be in place. As part of this we are looking at how we can deliver the next stage to enable the information to get out there as soon as it is ready, whilst ensuring a robust and transparent process to preparing the plan is undertaken. This does mean that consultation on this stage is delayed, but it is felt this is necessary for the above reasons. Actual dates for the consultation will be provided following completion of work to update the LDS.

## **SHELAA**

11. The SHELAA methodology sets out the procedures which will be followed when assessing the sites submitted and identifying those which are considered suitable.
12. Following the review of the Central Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in 2021, which was reported to the Joint Advisory Committee on the 18th November and endorsed for use, the site assessment and identification process has been progressing, and the revised SHELAA methodology is being used in undertaking and documenting this process.

## **PREFERRED OPTIONS**

13. The Local Plan team have continued to progress work on developing the Preferred Options plan. Work is focussing on completing the assessment of sites as well undertaking a review of the existing Local Plan Policies to assess how they perform against recent changes to NPPF. This will enable us to identify those areas where policies need updating as well as identifying where new policies are required

## **EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)**

14. Further work on flood risk assessment is still to commence as this will be focused on any sites being considered which have been identified as potentially having flood risk issues through the SFRA Level 1.
15. This work is depended on the results from the SHELAA work and will be completed following progression of that task. It will only be required where sites in the higher categories are being considered for development.
16. Government has also recently updated its approach to development in flood risk areas through changes to NPPF published in July 2021, 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 EVIDENCE**

17. DLP planning Ltd have been appointed to prepare a new piece of evidence on housing for Central Lancashire. This work will be looking at the housing need for the area, including those specific requirements of specialist housing and affordable housing, as well as also how the housing need should be delivered across the three councils.
18. This work will involve development of proposals for housing distribution which will be agreed by all three councils and will replace all existing evidence to date once completed.

### **CENTRAL LANCASHIRE DENSITY STUDY**

19. The purpose of this instruction was 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.
20. Hive Planning were appointed contractors for this work and undertook a process of reviewing a range of sites delivered across the three Councils under a set of agreed typologies. This work is noted as backward looking at what has been delivered on sites historically, using this as a basis for estimating what could be considered appropriate densities for development going forward.
21. Further work on developing an agreed set of densities to be applied through policies in the Local Plan has been identified as the next step in this work to ensure that the Local Plan adheres to the requirements on NPPF and makes an effective use of the land available to us for development.
22. On agreement of the above, the densities will be applied to the sites which are identified within the Strategic Housing (and Economic) Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA/SHELAA).

## **CENTRAL LANCASHIRE TRANSPORT MASTERPLAN**

23. Lancashire County Council are leading on the work to update the Transport masterplan for Central Lancashire. The aim of this work will be to assess the 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.
24. Work on this will commence following agreement of the sites for testing.

## **CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LANDUSE STUDY**

25. Land Use Consultants (LUC) are undertaking a review of open land constraints across the three councils. The purpose of this study is to review the existing policy approach in the extant Core Strategy and Local Plans and to ascertain how these are performing. This work includes an assessment of the existing Green Belt against the 5 purposes set out in NPPF. The Green belt will be split up into parcels for assessment, and each parcel will be assessed against the 5 purposes to identify what contribution it makes.
26. The key areas of work for this study, as discussed previously, are 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.
27. At this stage, no sites are being assessed, with the study focusing on the purpose of the designations themselves.
28. This study will form a key component of the evidence base for the Local Plan and will be used in developing new policies covering open space designations to ensure a consistent approach is provided for Central Lancashire.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

29. As discussed above, we are awaiting the detailed findings from County work on the environment and climate which forms part of the evidence for the Greater Lancashire plan (GLP).

30. This work is looking at a range of options to delivering net zero and the mechanisms by which councils can achieve this goal. It is also providing information on the baseline position for Lancashire districts which they can use for their own plan making purposes.
31. The findings of this work will feed into the wider GLP work which will set out the objectives for Lancashire, and it is expected that the Local Plan will be required to deliver aspects of this.
32. The Environment Act came into force on 9th November 2021. This Act brings into law a number of requirements to protect and enhance our natural environment, as well as provide new measure for things such as air quality which will all help to address the issue of climate change.
33. Secondary legislation is due in the coming year which 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**

34. Consultants Aspinall Verdi have been appointed to complete works relating to the plan viability and Community Infrastructure Levy review. This is a jointly commissioned piece of work and will run concurrently with the Local Plan Timetable.
35. 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.
36. The consultants are also looking at the issue of site viability when considering factors such as biodiversity net gain, which is now required as part of the Environment Act from the end of 2023.

#### **INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT (IA)AND HABITAT REGULATION ASSESSMENT (HRA)**

37. LUC were the successful bidder for this contract following a tender process and work has commenced on this project. Work has been completed on the initial screening for the HRA, and that document is currently with Natural England for comment.
38. Work on appraising the sites for both IA and HRA will commence following completion of work on identifying potential sites.

#### **EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW**

39. BE Group have been appointed 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.

40. We have been able to utilise the most recent econometric work undertaken to inform the GLP in this review. A draft report on the findings has been provided to officers for review. This indicates very little change overall in land requirements for Central Lancashire. The report discusses the impact of Covid on demand and price for land across Central Lancashire, and provides a summary position for use in informing land requirement calculations for the SHELAA. Following completion of the review by officers, the final draft will be presented to members at the next JAC meeting.

#### **DUTY TO COOPERATE**

41. We continue to work closely with relevant bodies and have attended a number of DtC meetings with neighbouring Authorities. As we move towards Preferred Options, we will need to start direct engagement with bodies on issues relevant to the Local plan and prepare any statements of common ground as necessary.
42. We are also continuing to work closely with colleague in County on matters which they have responsibility for, such as education and transport, and will maintain these working relationships throughout the preparation of the plan.

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

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Central Lancashire Local Plan Team