



Report of	Meeting	Date
Interim Deputy Chief Executive (Chorley)	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Local Plan Update

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on progress made to prepare a new Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Recommendations

2. To note the contents of the report.

Reasons for recommendations

3. N/a.

Other options considered and rejected.

4. Not applicable

Evidence Base: Viability Assessment of the Local Plan

5. The Viability Assessment will commence during January 2024 by the consultants Aspinall Verdi and will begin with an inception meeting to agree programme timeframes. The viability assessment will include a review of emerging policies to ensure requirements are deliverable, considering individual policies and the cumulative impact of policies and to identify local plan viability implications.
6. The study will consider the cost implications of different typologies of development for the Local Plan to ensure the testing represents the range of development coming forward and also will consider the special circumstances of strategic sites, and will consider shared characteristics such as location, brownfield and greenfield, windfall developments, size of site and current and proposed use or type of development.

7. Average costs and values will be used to make assumptions about how the viability of each type of site that would be affected by relevant Local Plan policy requirements. The outputs of the assessment will include recommendations on what might be an appropriate benchmark land value and policy requirement for each typology.
8. The typologies will include residential development including various tenures and alternative forms including self and custom build housing, older persons accommodation, non-residential and mixed-use typologies. The final list of typologies to be assessed will be agreed by the three Councils and Aspinall Verdi.
9. The work will include development appraisals to test the viability of a mix of proposed allocations against the Council's proposed policies (outlining the values used across all uses, build costs, policy costs and finally land values).
10. The work will also take account other known costs of development e.g., Infrastructure Funding Statements, City Deal and will include undertaking engagement with landowners, developers, and infrastructure and affordable housing providers throughout the process to ensure assumptions on costs and values are realistic and broadly accurate.

Housing Study

11. The Central Lancashire Housing Study was published in 2022 and we are in the process of commissioning DLP to undertake a refresh of this work, which includes an update to the housing needs evidence (this is necessary due to changes in population forecasts, census, employment, and economic forecasts), in addition to a revised Local Plan period of 2023-2041. The evidence will provide up-to-date housing need scenarios and inform the development /finalisation of the strategic housing policies.
12. This work will precede the finalising of the housing supply and trajectory for later in the year.

Retail Study

13. The existing evidence base for Retail comprises of a Chorley Retail Study (2019), South Ribble Retail Study (2016) and Preston Retail Study (2019) all produced by WYG Consultants. Given these studies were all produced before the Covid Pandemic and subsequent changes in shopping behaviours and wider economic climate, there is a need to commission a light touch refresh.
14. Since previous retail studies were undertaken, there have been a number of significant changes and challenges which have impacted the centres which include growth of internet shopping, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy including the trends such as home working. There have been changes to Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights, with significant changes to the Use Classes Order have been enacted through the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, including the introduction of three new Use Classes (Classes E, F1 and F2) and changes to uses classified as sui generis.
15. Permitted development rights have also been significantly expanded and include changes of use from Class E to residential. For Out-of-Centre retail, it is unclear what impact the wider trends have had on existing retail parks and whether the Use Classes Order has resulted in changes to retail provision outside of centres.

16. As the previous consultancy who produced the Retail Studies, WYG no longer exist, it is the intention to commission this light touch refresh via a small competitive tendering process led by South Ribble Council. The study will look at introduction of Use Class E, and recent changes in retail, an analysis of the existing hierarchy of centres in Central Lancashire, comprising a general analysis of the trends and patterns in existence for all of the centres with a more in-depth analysis of the centres at the top of the hierarchy. The analysis should cover industry wide trends impacting on centres, including comparison and convenience retailing, leisure, food, and drink uses etc. To provide clear recommendations on the scope and content of sound and robust planning policies for the Central Lancashire Local Plan. A detailed final report will be then used as an evidence base for the new Local Plan.

Evidence Base: Employment Land

17. In 2017 BE Group were commissioned to prepare an Employment Land Review (ELR) for the Central Lancashire authorities. The purpose of the Employment Land Review is to assess the quantity and quality of employment land in the borough and identify the amount of new employment land that will be required over the plan period.
18. In 2022 an update to the 2017 ELR was prepared by BE Group to support the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan and consider the Covid 19 Pandemic, changes in national planning policy, Brexit, and their impact on the local and sub-regional economies.
19. In 2023 a further update to the ELR was commissioned to review the potential future employment land supply of the three local authorities, in the light of changing market conditions. It also considers the ongoing applicability of the findings of the 2022 ELR Update in light of changing macro-economic conditions, the latest population projections for the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan and an analysis of recorded losses of employment land, to other uses, in Central Lancashire, and how the incorporation of such recorded losses into take up based projections of needs affects the subsequent projections of employment land requirements for the plan period.
20. A draft 2023 ELR Update Report was published in November. This report summarises the key findings of that report. Further work is required as it has now been agreed that the plan period will be 2023- 2041, therefore the employment land requirement needs to be updated to reflect that period and BE Group are being commissioning to undertake a refresh of the employment land need to reflect the revised Local Plan period.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Update and Level 2

21. JBA are undertaking the SFRA, and this work is progressing well. The draft Level One site assessments are expected back to the three Councils in early February with the final SFRA Level One Report expected to be 29th April 2024. Thereafter the Councils will review the site assessment work and considering all other factors including the site assessment work and policy development, any sites that are identified as potential allocations that require an SFRA Level 2 assessment will be taken forward and assessed by JBA. The outcome of any SFRA Level 2 work is likely to be reported in early Summer 2024.

Policy Preparation

22. A policy structure of the new Central Lancashire Local Plan is now under preparation and policy preparation is being managed centrally, with a directory of all chapters and policies developed which identifies lead officers and consultants responsible for

preparing specific policies, and it is envisaged that the bulk of initial policy drafting will be concluded before the end of March 2024. The policies will inform other key pieces of work including the viability assessment, the IDP, housing trajectory and supply.

23. Policy drafting is an iterative approach with collaboration required across a number of teams and partners and all policies will be subject to the Integration Appraisal process undertaken by LUC, with some also relevant to viability testing.
24. Some policies will be subject to Duty to Cooperate discussions with key partners including Lancashire County Council, the Environment Agency, and United Utilities, As well as neighbouring authorities.
25. A revised NPPF and Gypsy and Traveller Planning Policy have been published and we are looking into the implications if any of for plan making of these (see separate report).

Plan making Programme/Local Development Scheme (LDS).

26. A separate report is to be presented with regards the LDS.

Resourcing

27. The fixed term Project Officer (Local Plan) post is currently out for advert with a closing date of 26th January 2024. This is a new approach to move away from a standalone Local Plan Team and instead the three Council 'home' planning policy teams actively contributing to the work of the Local Plan. For policy writing this is supported by Richard Wood Associates who will be assisting with policy drafting.
28. Later in 2024, steps will need to be taken to commission a Local Plan Programme Officer which is a requirement of the Planning Inspectorate in the lead up to plan submission and thereafter the EIP process and is commonly (although not exclusively) commissioned to specialist consultants who only deliver this area of work.

Site Selection

29. A verbal item will be provided at the meeting.

Infrastructure

30. We have commenced the work on the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP). This work has been commissioned to Fore consulting and they are compiling a baseline of infrastructure that is already identified across the three boroughs, taking account of each Councils Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). Engagement will commence shortly with existing infrastructure providers across the three boroughs to begin to look at what is likely to required to support the new Local Plan.
31. The transport assessment work has now commenced, and a verbal presentation will be provided by Jacobs at the meeting. Discussions with the School Planning Team are ongoing. For Open Space, Sports and Recreation, consultants KKP are undertaking an update to the evidence base for playing pitches and will be reviewing the impact on supply and demand for typologies as and when the site allocation proposals become more distilled in March /April.

Climate change and air quality

32. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

33. There are no impacts at this stage and the Local Plan itself is subject to a comprehensive impact assessment and EIA which must be published alongside the draft plan when submitted to the Planning Inspectorate

Risk

34. There is a risk assessment in place for the Local plan.

Background documents

35. There are no background papers to this report.

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