

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Property and Planning (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Planning, Business Support and Economic Development))	Council	Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Update to Local Development Scheme

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

1. This report presents the contents of the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS document is attached as Appendix 1.

Recommendations to Council

2. To approve the publishing of the updated LDS to the Central Lancashire Local Plan website and associated Central Lancashire Authority websites.

Reasons for recommendations

3. The current LDS is out of date and to meet national planning policy, an update must be adopted. It is a requirement for each authority to maintain an updated LDS uploaded to their website under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Other options considered and rejected

4. Not approving/publishing the updated LDS ensures the Central Lancashire Local Plan fails to meet national planning legislation requirements.

Executive summary

5. An updated LDS has been drafted for the Central Lancashire Local Plan and requires approval by Council.
6. Each Authority is required by national planning legislation to publish an LDS which outlines the documents and timetables for plan-making and review.
7. A Government consultation – *Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation*, took place in Autumn 2023. This consultation invited views on proposals to implement

the parts of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (now an Act) which related to plan-making and proposed a new system of plan preparation. It confirmed the Government's intention that the latest date for plan-makers to submit Local Plans under the current system will be 30th June 2025, with adoption by 31st December 2026.

8. The Central Lancashire Authorities are committed to meeting these deadlines as submission under a revised plan making regime would have significant impacts on the scope and content of the Local Plan currently being prepared.
9. Key evidence work has been commissioned and policy writing is underway. However, long timelines for key evidence production have resulted in changes to the LDS timetable.
10. To meet the proposed submission deadlines and adoption, a Part Two Preferred Options Consultation will now not take place.
11. Attention is now focused on preparing the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19). This version will provide a full draft Plan to be consulted on both in-person and online.
12. If approved, this updated LDS will be published to the Central Lancashire Local Plan website.

Corporate priorities

13. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Healthy and happy communities
Opportunities for everyone	Green and clean neighbourhood

The Local Development Scheme (LDS)

14. An LDS provides a roadmap for stakeholders and community members to understand the process and timetables of plan making. Under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), each authority is required to have an LDS, keep it up to date, and make it publicly accessible.
15. An LDS is required to outline:
 - The documents which are to be local development documents,
 - The geographical area that the policies will cover,
 - Which documents will be development plan documents,
 - Which documents will be prepared jointly; and
 - The timetable for the preparation and revision of the Local Plan documents.
16. The existing LDS was approved by the three Councils in December 2022. This set out the timetable for adoption by December 2023. Regrettably, this deadline was not achieved and approving a new LDS is now necessary.

Local Plan Timetable

17. The preparation of the Local Plan is fluid, and it is common planning practice to make changes to the LDS to ensure the most up to date timetable is published to inform stakeholders of the plan preparation process.
18. Several complex matters including the Covid pandemic, challenges recruiting qualified planning officers (a national issue), several consultations/changes to national planning policy, and long turnaround times for key evidence preparation, has caused delays to the programme. Therefore, this revised LDS is now required to provide an up-to-date trajectory of plan making programme.
19. Since the previous LDS was adopted, there have been significant changes to national planning policy and related legislation. A Government consultation – *Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation*, took place in Autumn 2023 and responses are being analysed. This consultation invited views on proposals to implement the parts of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (now an Act) which related to plan-making and a proposed a new system of plan preparation. It confirmed the Government’s intention that the latest date for plan-makers to submit Local Plans under the current system will be 30th June 2025.
20. The three Central Lancashire Authorities remain committed to delivering the new Local Plan under the existing plan-making regime. This updated LDS outlines how the Local Plan will meet the deadline of submission to the Secretary of State by 30th June 2025 and adoption of the Central Lancashire Local Plan by 31st December 2026. Failure to submit under the current regime would result in significant financial and operational impacts, because the three authorities would be required to commence preparation of a ‘new style’ plan under a revised local plan system.
21. To date, work on the Local Plan has progressed steadily. Consultations that have taken place include the Integrated Assessment Scoping from August to September 2019, Issues and Options from November 2019 to February 2020, and Preferred Options from December 2022 to February 2023.
22. Significant work has taken place so far in commissioning the required evidence base. Each of the three authorities and consultants have been undertaking detailed site assessment work, in addition to developing the structure of the new Central Lancashire Local Plan, with policy writing now underway.
23. The previous LDS outlined that the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation would be split into two parts. However, due to the proposed introduction of a submission deadline of 30th June 2025 for plans under the current system, this is no longer feasible.
24. We have therefore prepared a revised Local Plan programme and associated financial forecast. This takes account of current progress, made by officers, consultants, and other partners to achieve delivery of the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) in early 2025. Following this, to achieve submission of the new Local Plan by 30th June 2025.
25. The Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) consultation, which will take place in early 2025, will include the outcomes of the necessary evidence, therefore ensuring that consultations can engage with the full scope of the Local Plan.

26. Requirements under Regulation 18 were met within the scope and execution of the Part One Preferred Options. There will be further consultation with the opportunity for the submission of representations at the Pre-Submission/Regulation 19 Stage.
27. The Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) still provides an opportunity for people to have their say and can still include the same level of engagement as previous consultations, i.e., drop in events, social media posts etc.
28. The table below provides the key dates regarding production of the Local Plan, Appendix 1 provides the full LDS for review.

Key Stage	Timescale
Preparation of Pre-Submission Version of the Local Plan	March 2023 to January 2025
Regulation 19 Consultation	February 2025 to March 2025
Submission Stage (Regulation 22)	By 30 th June 2025*
Examination in Public	Late 2025 until Summer/early Autumn 2026
Adoption	By 31 st December 2026**

* and ** are deadlines proposed by Government in its consultation on reforms to the process of local plan making. These are outside the control of the three authorities.

Risk Assessment

29. As mentioned previously, the Local Plan has been met with unforeseen setbacks. A section of the LDS is reserved for a risk assessment which outlines potential future issues which could impact the deliverability of the Plan.
30. Highlighted issues which could affect delivery include:
 - staff capacity/turnover/absence
 - political delay
 - joint working
 - challenges to the plan's 'soundness' and legal compliance.
 - changing legislation
 - finance/resource availability
31. Each of the above risks, and how they will be addressed if they arise as issues, are covered within the LDS.

Next Steps

32. If approved, the LDS will be published on the Central Lancashire Local Plan website and stakeholders will be informed of the updated timetable.

Climate change and air quality

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

Equality and diversity

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

Risk

35. There is a risk assessment in place for the LDS and is included within the LDS document under Appendix 1 of this report.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

36. There are no direct financial implications arising within this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

37. The purpose behind the report and the updated LDS is to ensure that the council continues to meet all its legal duties and obligations with regard to the preparation of the Local Plan. Specifically, the report is seeking Council approval for the updated LDS to be published on the Central Lancashire Local Plan website. There are no concerns with the report from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

Background documents

38. Local Development Scheme 2024-2026 (attached as Appendix 1).

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Benjamin Vickers (Principal Planning Officer (Policy))	benjamin.vickers@southribble.gov.uk		07/03/2024