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| Title of Report | LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – UPDATE | |
| Presented by | Chris Elston Head of Planning and Infrastructure | |
| Background Papers | <u>Partial Review Pre-submission consultation</u> | Public Report: Yes |
| | | Key Decision: Yes |
| Financial Implications | The cost of the review is met from existing budgets. | |
| | Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes | |
| Legal Implications | Legal implications considered in the preparation of this report. | |
| | Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes | |
| Staffing and Corporate Implications | None identified | |
| | Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes | |
| Purpose of Report | To provide an update for Members in respect of the Local Plan review. | |
| Recommendations | THAT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE: (I) NOTES THE CURRENT POSITION IN RESPECT OF THE PARTIAL REVIEW; (II) NOTES THAT LEICESTER CITY HAS NOW DECLARED AN UNMET EMPLOYMENT LAND NEED; AND (III) NOTES THE PROCESS FOR AGREEING ANY REDISTRIBUTION OF UNMET NEEDS | |

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out for members an update in respect of:
- the Partial Review;
 - and the issue of unmet need in Leicester City

2.0 THE PARTIAL REVIEW

- 2.1 Following approval by the Local Plan Committee of 13 November 2019 the consultation on the Partial Review was undertaken between 20 November and 8 January 2019.
- 2.2 In total 37 responses were received (2 of which were after the consultation closing date).
- 2.3 The responses can be summarised as follows:
- 16 (including the 2 late responses) made no comments or were supportive;
 - 4 (all Parish Councils) raised issues in respect of the employment land position;
 - 2 representations were concerned with employment land related matters;

- 1 representation appeared to relate to the Sustainability Appraisal; and
 - 14 made representations which raised issues about the proposed approach from a housing perspective.
- 2.4 The responses in the latter category are largely from the development industry (or their representatives). There was some limited opposition to the overall approach; with suggestions that the review should be addressing wider issues and that the Partial Review is merely delaying this.
- 2.5 However, the majority of concerns are largely about whether the policy as proposed in the Publication version provided sufficient certainty to ensure that the Substantive review does take place. The concerns related to:
- No timetable for the Statement of Common Ground to redistribute unmet need from Leicester City Council;
 - What happens if a Statement of Common Ground is not agreed – the representations suggest that no fall-back position is in place;
 - What happens if the Council does not submit within the specified period.
- 2.6 Full versions of all of the representations can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 2.7 The Partial Review was submitted for Examination to the Planning Inspectorate on 18 February 2020. This means that the adopted Local Plan has not become out-of-date as the submission complies with the requirements of Policy S1 of the adopted Local Plan that the review be submitted for Examination within 2 years of commencement (20 February 2020).
- 2.8 The Examination was scheduled to take place between 12 -15 May 2020. Nationally the Planning Inspectorate has put Examinations on hold due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and so the Examination has now been postponed. We are awaiting a decision from Inspector on next steps.
- 2.9 Notwithstanding the postponement of the Examination, all statements have now been submitted and can be viewed from this [link](#).

3.0 LEICESTER CITY UNMET NEED

- 3.1 As reported to the January meeting, Leicester City Council has now identified that it considers its unmet housing need to be 7,813 dwellings up to 2036.
- 3.2 The City Council has also now identified to the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities that it is unable to accommodate all of its employment needs. The scale of unmet need is estimated to be 23 hectares. More specifically the identified shortfall relates to small (i.e. less than 9,000sq metres) industrial (Use Class B2) and warehousing (Use Class B8).
- 3.3 The Leicester City Plan was due to be the subject of public consultation commencing at the end of March 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the consultation has been postponed, with no new date yet confirmed. This will have implications on the timetable for the Leicester City Local Plan and the work outlined below.
- 3.4 The fact that Leicester City has been able to provide a figure for their unmet need for both housing and employment is clearly welcomed. However, these are not at this stage anything like confirmed figures; they could change (increase or decrease).
- 3.5 The identification of the unmet need is only the beginning of the process. The Leicester and Leicestershire authorities need to agree how this unmet need is to be accommodated. To do this an officer group under the auspices of the Strategic Planning

Group has been established. The officer group includes a representative from each authority.

- 3.6 It is for those authorities declaring an unmet need to justify such declarations with evidence. Furthermore, there needs to be an opportunity for those authorities that may be required to assist with meeting any unmet need to be able to interrogate the evidence.
- 3.7 To assist with this the authorities have put in place provisions via the Planning Advisory Service for an independent assessment of the evidence provided by Leicester City Council.
- 3.8 Once this has been completed, options for redistributing the unmet needs will be assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process which will inform options for a final decision about how the unmet will be redistributed. It is also intended to try and build in flexibility through testing different scenarios to reflect the possibility that the unmet need figures may change, for example when the 2018-based household projections are produced later in 2020.
- 3.9 Based on this technical work, the officer group will make recommendations to the Strategic Planning Group and then onto the Member Advisory Group. Once the Member Advisory Group has agreed a preferred redistribution, it will then be necessary for each authority to sign off its agreement (as part of a joint Statement of Common Ground) through its own sign-off process. For this Council this will involve discussion at a future meeting of this committee and a meeting of full Council.
- 3.10 There is no agreed timetable at this time, partly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic but all of the authorities remain committed to completing this work as soon as possible.
- 3.11 From this Council's perspective, this is a very important piece of work as it may have an impact on the future housing and employment requirements that will need to be provided for through the Local Plan Substantive Review.

| Policies and other considerations, as appropriate | |
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| Council Priorities: | None |
| Policy Considerations: | None |
| Safeguarding: | No issues identified |
| Equalities/Diversity: | An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. |
| Customer Impact: | No issues identified |
| Economic and Social Impact: | No issues identified |
| Environment and Climate Change: | No issues identified |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | None |
| Risks: | Reaching agreement amongst the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities on how any unmet needs are to be redistributed will minimise the risk to individual Local Plans. |
| Officer Contact | Ian Nelson Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 |

