

Title of Report	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – UPDATE	
Presented by	Ian Nelson Planning Policy Team Manager	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: 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 Deputy Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	None identified	
	Signed off by the Deputy Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To provide an update for Members in respect of the Local Plan review.	
Recommendations	<b>THAT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE:</b>  <b>(I) NOTES THE CURRENT POSITION IN RESPECT OF THE PARTIAL REVIEW;</b> <b>(II) NOTES THE CURENT POSTION IN RESPECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVIDENCE BASE</b>	

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out for members an update in respect of both the Partial and Substantive Reviews of the adopted Local Plan

## 2.0 THE PARTIAL REVIEW

- 2.1 As reported to the May meeting of this Committee, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the Examination scheduled for May had been postponed. Officers have been in contact with the Planning Inspector, via the Programme Officer, to discuss the possibility of holding the Examination virtually. These discussions are ongoing and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

## 3.0 THE SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW

- 3.1 Work on the substantive review continues. This section outlines recent work on the evidence base.

### Housing

- 3.2 The 2018-based household projections were published on 29 June 2020. Taking the principal projection published by ONS and applying these to the government's (current) standard method, produces a local housing need of 910 dwellings per annum. For a plan period of 2020 to 2039, this would equate to a total requirement of 17,290. This is nearly twice the current housing requirement in the adopted Local Plan (480 dwellings per annum). It should be noted that this is the worst case scenario using the projections and the current standard method. However, the government has made it clear that it is reviewing the standard method, but there is as yet no date for when this will be finalised. Any change could have further implications for the Local Housing Need.

- 3.3 This very significant difference is illustrated by the fact that between 2020 and 2030 (the ten-year period used as per the standard method) shows that the number of households in North West Leicestershire is projected to increase by 17%, compared to 6.8% for England, 8.3% for the East Midlands and 12% for Leicestershire. Indeed, it is the highest percentage growth for any local authority in England. The next nearest is 16.6% in South Derbyshire and then 16.4% in Corby.
- 3.4 Officers are in the process of doing additional work to understand the projections and the potential implications for the review timetable. A report will be brought to a future meeting of this committee that considers these issues in more detail.

### **Employment**

- 3.5 A number of workstreams, which are underway, will inform the economy-related policies in the Substantive Local Plan Review.

### **Employment Needs Study**

- 3.6 This study will assess the future requirements for new offices, industrial and non-strategic distribution uses (i.e. units of up to 9,000sqm). The adopted Local Plan is based on the findings of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017 (HEDNA) which was commissioned jointly by the Leicestershire authorities. The HEDNA provides figures for the period to 2031 (the end date of the adopted Local Plan) and also to 2036.
- 3.7 Expert consultants have been appointed to provide an updated assessment of employment land requirements for North West Leicestershire. The assessment will a) be based on the latest economic forecasts; b) factor in the extended plan period to 2039; and c) take account of the requirements in the 2019 NPPF.
- 3.8 This work was commissioned prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. The economic impacts of Covid-19 will be significant and to progress evidence with pre-Covid forecasts may misrepresent the nature and scale of economic growth which can be expected. The intention now is to pause this study temporarily pending the release of a first set of post-Covid economic forecasts which is expected in July.

### **Strategic Distribution Study**

- 3.9 An update study on future strategic distribution requirements, that is units of 9,000sqm and above, has been commissioned by the Leicester and the Leicestershire authorities.
- 3.10 The previous study dates from 2017 and identified county-wide land requirement figures for strategic distribution for the periods to 2031 (361ha) and to 2036 (472ha). These were expressed as minimum figures. The strength of market demand has been such that sufficient permissions have been granted to meet the minimum requirement up to both 2031 and 2036 already, signalling that needs have accelerated above the levels that were anticipated as recently as 3 years ago.
- 3.11 The study will consider the factors which are likely to impact on the growth of this sector including the continued expansion of e-retailing, the drive for more carbon friendly operations including transference to more rail-borne freight and the uncertain impacts of both Brexit and Covid-19. The updated study will look forward to 2041.

### **Local employment opportunities**

- 3.12 A matter for consideration is whether, and to what extent, the Local Plan Review should address the need for training and/or local recruitment in connection with new development.

- 3.13 There are current examples of good practice in this area. An Employment Scheme is in place for East Midlands Gateway which sets out expectations of how Segro will encourage occupiers to recruit locally. A requirement for an Employment Scheme (construction phase) was also secured as part of the consent for Mercia Park (Jaguar Land Rover) at a M42 J11.
- 3.14 Any planning policy approach will need to be justified by evidence. Whilst the district has key economic strengths, it can be argued that action is needed to sustain its position. Further, there is the prospect of Covid-19 linked recession and associated increase in local unemployment. More generally, increased local recruitment could also help to bear down on commuting distances, important in a district where 92% of journeys to work are by car (the national average is 78%). In the broadest sense, local employment initiatives can also help ensure that local people benefit from new development and, equally, show that businesses are invested in the wellbeing of their communities.
- 3.15 It is proposed that some potential policy options be included in the next consultation stage for the Local Plan Review to test them with a wider audience.

#### Start-up premises

- 3.16 A further issue to explore is whether the Local Plan Review should make provision for business start-up units. The council's Economic Growth Plan includes the objective to "ensure there is sufficient workspace and support for new enterprise and for business start-ups". Local experience is that these types of flexible workspace are not generally provided by the market. The recent scheme at Vulcan Way on the Hermitage Lane Industrial Estate was a LEP Growth Deal funded project delivering 17 units ranging from 93-423sqm.
- 3.17 To provide an evidential foundation for the Local Plan Review, officers intend to commission a specific piece of research which would identify the potential role of such start up space in the local economy, understand the scale of demand and the types of premises which would match the demand identified.

#### Climate change

- 3.18 As part of the substantive review of the local plan we need to consider the implications of climate change and how the local plan can respond to provide adequate mitigation and adaptation measures to help reduce the impacts of climate change in NWLDC.
- 3.19 In June 2019 NWLDC declared a climate emergency and appointed specialist environmental consultants (Etude) to help develop the council's response to the need to reduce the council's and the district's carbon emissions.
- 3.20 The outcome from the consultant's work was the publication of a Zero Carbon Roadmap in November 2019. The Zero Carbon Roadmap and accompanying Action Plan were adopted by the council on 31 March 2020.
- 3.21 The Action Plan focuses on carbon emissions, their sources and how to reduce them and identifies a number of recommended actions which the Council needs to take to achieve Net Zero Carbon. The actions are wide ranging covering diverse sectors and so it has been split up into two sections:
1. Recommended action plan to achieve a Net Zero Carbon Council by 2030
  2. Recommended action plan to achieve a Net Zero Carbon District by 2050
- 3.22 The first part refers to actions the Council must take to achieve net zero Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. The second action plan provides a broader set of actions that must be taken if the Council wishes to put NWLD onto a pathway toward net zero GHG emissions by 2050.
- 3.23 The second action plan specifically addresses the role of planning in helping to achieve zero carbon by 2050 and it identifies a number of actions. These actions include setting

targets for both solar and wind capacity within the district, along with a number of other measures that could be considered as part of the substantive review of the Local Plan.

3.24 Discussions with Etude have highlighted concerns that the targets for solar and wind energy generation included in the Roadmap are not based on an assessment of actual potential, but rather assume that NWL will continue to meet a similar proportion of all national need as it has done previously. This will not be robust enough for the Local Plan.

3.25 Therefore, additional technical evidence is being commissioned that will reassess the findings contained in the Roadmap as well as address a number of other recommendations detailed in the Action Plan, such as the potential establishment of a Carbon Offsetting fund. This will provide a more robust evidence base for the Local Plan.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected  Local people live in high quality, affordable homes  Supporting businesses and helping people into local jobs Developing a clean and green district
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 at this stage
Environment and Climate Change:	No issues identified at this stage
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None
Risks:	A risk assessment of the review has been undertaken and is reviewed at the officer Project Board meetings.
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