

PART A

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 7th March 2016
Report of: Head of Regeneration and Development
Title: Local Development Scheme 2016-19

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the subject, scope and timetable for the preparation of Local Plan Documents. Each LDS covers a 3 year period – the last one ran from April 2013 so a new one is needed to cover the period 2016-19.
- 1.2 During this 3 year period we expect to complete and adopt Local Plan Part 2 and commence work on a review of the Local Plan Strategy to take account of the most up to date evidence and to advance the end date to 2036.
- 1.3 It is important to have an up to date Local Development Scheme. As well as providing useful information for the local community and stakeholders who will be involved in the plan preparation process, compliance with the published scheme is one of the soundness tests when Local Plans are examined.
- 1.4 During this period we also expect to undertake a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and to prepare a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Development Briefs, some of which are already underway. These include:

Skyline – Watford’s Approach to taller buildings (SPD)
Watford Junction Development Brief
S106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

The timetable for these does not need to be included in the Local Development Scheme.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet supports the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme.
- 2.2 That the Local Development Scheme is recommended for approval to Council on 16th March– with a commencement date of 1st April 2016.

- 2.3 That, it is also recommended to Council that, updates to the Local Development Scheme can be made by the Head of Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development

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Report approved by: Jane Custance, Head of Regeneration and Development.

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out what the Local Plan will cover and the timetable for its preparation. It is a public document and one that is referred to in the examination process. The proposed LDS is at Appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 At examination, the inspector will consider whether the local plan document being examined has been prepared in accordance with the latest LDS. This forms part of the assessment of soundness. It is therefore important that the scope and preparation timetable are both accurate and achievable, given available resources, and potential changes to those resources. A detailed risk assessment has therefore been prepared, which highlights potential risks of slippage and measures that may need to be taken to minimise the likelihood and impact of those risks. This is at Appendix B to the report.
- 3.3 The main risks to achieving the timetable are identified as staff budget pressures; the mechanisms of joint working on strategic issues with other authorities and partners working to different timetables. Further national changes to the planning system are also a likely risk.
- 3.4 The proposed LDS sets out a timetable for completing the Local Plan Part 2. Along with the Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy adopted in 2013, this would replace any remaining "saved" policies from the Watford District Plan 2000.
- 3.5 Alongside this, work has already begun on the evidence to inform a plan review. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that plans must be kept up to date and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. Thus much of this evidence will be prepared together with surrounding authorities and progress on plan reviews will therefore be linked. The LDS sets out a timetable for a review of the Local Plan Strategy to ensure it remains up to date.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 There is an annual budget of approximately £100,000 to support Local Plan

preparation. It is estimated that around £100,000 per year will be required for the evidence studies and sustainability appraisal and engagement programme . It is also anticipated that a further £60,000 will be required for examination costs (including legal support); any budget shortfall will be met from the Examination in Public – LDF Reserve.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the LDS has to be approved by Council

4.3 **Equalities**

4.3.1 No equalities impact has been identified in relation to the scope and preparation timetable of the Local Plan. The Local Plan documents will be subject to equalities impact assessment as they are prepared.

4.4 **Potential Risks**

Potential risks are identified in Appendix B.

4.5 **Sustainability**

4.5.1 Progressing with the Local Plan will help the council to make sustainable decisions on planning applications. The Local Plan documents themselves will be subject to separate sustainability appraisal.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Local Development Scheme 2016-19
- Appendix B: Risk Assessment

Background Papers

- No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

- SP 2.3.2