

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 13 October 2020

Report author: Spatial Planning Manager

Title: Local Development Scheme: Timetable for the New Watford Local Plan

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the subject, scope and timetable for the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The LDS includes the Local Plan which will set out the growth strategy, policies to guide planning decisions and identify sites for development within Watford.

1.2 The LDS, adopted in March 2019, has been revised to update the timetable for the different stages of preparing the new Local Plan leading to its anticipated adoption in February 2022. The revised LDS will cover a period from 2018 to 2022 and supersedes the timetable set out in the current LDS which has slipped during 2020.

1.3 The Local Development Scheme is a legal requirement. It provides certainty for the council, external stakeholders and the community about how the Local Plan will be prepared.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Local Development Scheme not kept up to date	Challenged by Planning Inspector at the Local Plan examination. Local community not	Engagement with Members and corporate officers about progress on the Local Plan and compliance with the set timetable.	Treat	6

	kept informed of progress on the Local Plan.			
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3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That council adopts the revised Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 That, minor updates to the revised Local Development Scheme can be made by the Head of Planning and Building Control in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development.

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Report approved by: Ben Martin, Interim Head of Planning and Building Control

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 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 set out as Appendix A to this report.
- 4.2 The proposed LDS presented is a revised version of that adopted in November 2019. This is to update the timetable reflecting circumstances that have arisen in 2020, including the Covid-19 pandemic, that have led to slippage in the Local Plan timetable. The primary changes made to the document include the timetable for adoption of the new Local Plan to February 2022 with the Regulation 19 consultation (Final Draft Local Plan) taking place in January 2021 (page 12, Appendix A). Other additions include reference to updating the Statement of Community Involvement (page 5, Appendix A) and citing the Infrastructure Delivery Statement (page 5, Appendix A).
- 4.3 At examination, an independently appointed Planning 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.

- 4.3 The proposed LDS sets out a timetable for completing the new Local Plan. This will replace the Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy adopted in 2013 and any remaining “saved” policies from the Watford District Plan 2000 adopted in 2003.
- 4.4 Local Plans are required to be no older than five years to be considered up to date. The Watford Local Plan (Core Strategy) adopted in 2013 no longer meets this requirement. Additionally, local authorities are required to work constructively and collaboratively when preparing a new Local Plan. Work has already begun on the evidence to inform the Local Plan review including several jointly commissioned studies with other authorities in the South West Hertfordshire area. Additionally, Watford and the other South West Hertfordshire authorities have agreed to work collaboratively on a Joint Strategic Plan to address cross boundary issues related to future growth.
- 4.5 The LDS sets out a timetable for a review of the Local Plan to ensure it remains up to date. It is anticipated the new Local Plan will be adopted in February 2022.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 The Interim Head of Finance comments that there are no direct financial implications. Costs will be associated with publicising the adoption of the revised Local Development Scheme. These will be in the form of officer time.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that s15(8) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to revise its LDS at such time as it considers appropriate and s15 (9A) to publicise the up to date text of the scheme; any amendments to the scheme and up to date information regarding non – compliance with the timetable.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

- 5.3.1 Having had regard to the council’s obligations under s149 of the Equality Act 2010, it is considered that 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.

5.4 Data Protection Impact Assessment

5.4.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.5 Staffing

5.5.1 The team currently has the staff resources available to deliver the Local Plan to the time table set out in the Local Development Scheme.

5.6 Sustainability

5.6.1 Progressing the Local Plan will help the council to make decisions on planning applications to help achieve sustainable development. The Local Plan documents themselves will be subject to separate sustainability appraisals.

6.0 Appendices

- Appendix A: Local Development Scheme: Timetable for the New Watford Local Plan

7.0 Background papers

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