

Thanet District Council



CAG Inception Briefing **Local Plan and the Update process**

28 April 2021

Adrian Verrall Strategic Planning Manager

Scope of presentation

- Local Plan Update process
- Summary of Update topics
- Examination and “soundness” issues
- Role of evidence-gathering in the Local Plan process
- Importance of Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Duty to cooperate
- Questions

Update of Local Plan - LDS

- The review of the Local Plan has been completed and the new Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been published
- Extends the Plan horizon to 2040
- A range of issues have been identified and these need to be addressed through the Update of the Plan
- **The role of this Group** is to consider these issues and make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the Plan later this year



Update of Local Plan - timetable to Publication

2021 - “Call for sites”; development of evidence base; Reg 18 engagement; “Duty to Cooperate” activity

October 2021 - Consultation (Reg 18)

2022 - Consider consultation responses; finalise draft Plan for Publication/Examination

May 2022 - Publication (Reg 19)

Update of Local Plan - timetable for Examination

September 2022 - Submit Plan for Examination (Reg 22)

2022/23 - Examination (Reg 23)

2023 - Inspector's Report; Adoption

Issues - Environment

- The implications of climate change; including the outcomes from the work of the Climate Emergency Working Group, where relevant;
- The provision of publicly-accessible electric vehicle charging points;
- Ensure a robust policy relationship between biodiversity “net gain”; woodland protection/planting; green infrastructure and the Council’s proposed Tree Strategy; and
- Update Environment Strategy policies as necessary, depending on the progress of the Environment Bill and Kent Environment Strategies.

Issues - Housing

- The implications of the Local Housing Need Methodology on housing requirements for the district;
- Guidance on type and size of dwellings may require updating; and
- The provision of Gypsy & Traveller sites to meet identified requirements.

This will involve:

- “call for sites” (currently running, finishes on 21 May)
- a review of housing sites that have not come forward
- directed stopping site for travellers

Issues - Economy

- Update the provisions of the Plan in relation to Manston Airport in the light of the decision on the Development Consent Order;
- Identify additional employment land, as required;
- Review the homeworking policy to assess whether any update needed in the light of a potentially significant shift to flexible/remote working;
- Incorporate any decision in relation to the future of Port Ramsgate;
- Address any planning implications arising from the Council's community wealth-building programme.

This will involve a review of some employment sites

Issues - Retail & Town Centres

- Update retail floorspace figures for town centres;
- Some Town Centre policies may need amending in the light of changing Government guidance and other changes to the planning system; and
- Incorporate key policy aspects from the proposed Westwood SPD fully into the Plan.

Need to consider:

- Impact of changes to “permitted development” and Use Classes Order
- Margate Town Deal
- Ramsgate “Levelling Up” Fund

Other Issues

- Some infrastructure policies (for example, transport; health and education) may need updating, depending on the scale and location of new housing;
- Consider the evidence for a possible policy relating to hot food takeaways, in relation to local public health impacts;
- Identify possible resilience/design measures to address COVID or similar threats to the social and economic life of the district; and
- Ensure new and revised policies address the Government's policy guidance in the NPPF and nPPG.

Examination process & “soundness”

- Examination is by independent Inspectors
- Assessment based on the “soundness” of the draft Plan (as submitted)
- Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:
 - a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

“Soundness”

- b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

Survey work/evidence base required

NPPF 2019: *“The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence”.*

Evidence base requirements:

- Review of Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)/Local Housing Need Methodology (the “standard method”)
- Review of employment land supply/allocations and retail capacity arising from population and housing change (working with KCC/Lichfields)
- Update of transport modelling (KCC lead)
- “Call for sites” - for housing; employment land; traveller sites and Local Green Space; biodiversity net gain off-setting (in-house)

Sustainability Appraisal/Habitat Regulations Assessment

- SA/HRA is a critical part of the Local Plan process
- It demonstrates how the Council has considered development and policy options and selecting an appropriate strategy for the LP update - only have to consider “reasonable alternatives”
- It also demonstrates how the Council has undertaken its legal duties in relation to the Habitats Regulations, in its plan-making process
- Land Use Consultants are acting as advisers on the SA/HRA work

“Duty to cooperate”

- Addressing strategic cross-boundary issues
- It is a duty to address issues seriously and to seek solutions - “...*dealt with rather than deferred...*”
- Not a duty to agree
- Regular meetings with East Kent Councils to discuss matters of common interest/concern
- Issues can include - housing; transport; natural environment; etc.
- Statements of Common Ground required
- One of the first things that Inspectors test

Any questions?