

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**
Date of Meeting: 29 January 2019
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None



Review date for release Regular reviews will be provided on local plan production.

Agenda item: 11

Subject: **Timetable for production of a new East Devon Local Plan**

Purpose of report: This report sets out a first draft of a timetable for production of a new Local Plan for East Devon. It does so on assumption that the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will be produced to publicised timetables.

Recommendation: **Strategic Planning Committee is recommended to endorse the draft new local plan timetable, noting alignment with timelines for production of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan, as detailed in this report.**

Reason for recommendation: To update members on the first draft of a timetable for new Local Plan

Officer: Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Strategic Planning and Development Management

Financial implications: There will be financial implication in the production of a Local Plan but details are not outlined in this report and members are not being asked to approve a budget from this report.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications from this report.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk

This report introduces a timetable for production of a new East Devon local plan and it does so on the assumption that the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will be produced in line with published timetables.

Links to background information: • None

Link to Council Plan: A new local plan for East Devon will have links to all Council priorities.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The current East Devon Local Plan was adopted in January 2016; this is three years ago. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), see paragraph 33 at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf advises that plans should be reviewed at least once every five years. It is, therefore, timely and appropriate for a timetable for production of a new local plan to come before members. Though it is worth highlighting at the outset, given changing circumstances and other factors, that a 'light touch' review of the currently adopted local plan is unlikely to be a practical option for a new local plan. It should also be noted that the expectation is that the new local plan will supersede the Villages Plan, though some further considerations will need to be given to if, how, at what point and whether in part or whole the forthcoming Cranbrook Plan may be superseded.
- 1.2 As members will be aware there is currently an inter-authority Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) in production covering the local planning authority areas of
- East Devon District Council;
 - Exeter City Council;
 - Mid Devon District Council; and
 - Teignbridge District Council.
- Devon County Council, although not a planning authority in respect of the GESP, are a key partner in GESP production with a particular interest and responsibility in infrastructure and transport matters.
- 1.3 Assuming GESP proceeds as currently envisaged it will cover a number of strategic planning issues across the four planning authority areas. The intention is that it will set out housing development numbers through to 2040, and potentially beyond, along with policy for employment land and more generally policies promoting major facilities and supporting infrastructure. It is planned, as well, that it will identify and allocate strategic/large scale sites for future development.
- 1.4 The new local plan will provide policy to implement the strategy set out in the GESP and there can be expected to be many detailed policy considerations, and some topic matters, that GESP will not address; these will fall to the new local plan.

2 A timetable for new local plan production

- 2.1 A timetable in Gantt chart format is attached to the end of this report that sets out timelines for production of a new local plan. The timetable establishes that production of the new local plan should follow on after key stages of work on GESP production. GESP work can then inform local plan work and content. It is important to note that GESP will establish a large part of the strategic agenda for a new local plan and may have policies that explicitly advise on matters a new local plan will cover, including for example the levels of development that should be accommodated.

- 2.2 On account of the importance and implications of GESP it is not considered reasonable or viable to proceed with key stages of local plan production until GESP has made substantive progress and there is confidence and ultimately certainty about the final content of GESP. Ultimate confidence can only be established at the point that GESP is adopted (shown in the Gantt for April 2022). So for example we can plan to undertake public consultation on a draft version of a new local plan prior to GESP adoption (on assumption of expectations of what the GESP will ultimately say) but it is unlikely that it would be reasonable to go to the publication stage of local plan making until the time of or after GESP is adopted. In reality this means that there is likely to be a period of up to 18 months between when GESP is adopted and when a new local plan is adopted. With GESP adoption likely to be around April 2022 it would suggest a new local plan would be adopted in late summer/Autumn 2023.
- 2.3 Drawing on information in the attached Gantt chart the following observations are noted.
- a) GESP timetable – the top section of the chart shows the GESP timetable, as reported to committee in November 2018.
 - b) In June and July 2019 a GESP draft policies document will be consulted on and through 2019 it will be possible to start early work on a new local plan, including reviewing existing local plan policies and preparing an issues report. There are some more detailed policy matters that GESP will not address and we can look at these in some detail.
 - c) In late 2019/early 2020 a draft version of GESP will be published and at this point we can start to have confidence and clarity on the expected end shape of GESP. This would allow for this council to produce and consult on a local plan issues document in early 2020 (the timetable indicates consultation in April/May 2020).
 - d) Whilst the issues report is being consulted on we would also envisage that we would issue a 'call for sites' as part of a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) exercise. The HELAA timetable is shown on the Gantt chart and will take most of 2020 to complete. The timetable also shows scope for specific public engagement that could follow on after the HELAA work. There is potential here for public engagement that goes beyond (just) seeking responses to paper based consultation report.
 - e) The GESP will go to Publication consultation in early 2021 (the Gantt indicates February and March), it is submitted for Examination on the chart in July 2021, hearings are in September 2021 and modifications (which can nearly always be expected to be required) are to be consulted on in December 2021/January 2022. On this basis GESP adoption could be in April 2022.
 - f) It is not regarded as appropriate to start consultation on a draft local plan until we know what the GESP modifications say and in timetabling draft local plan consultation for February and March 2022 we have sought to ensure the local plan consultation starts after GESP modification consultation is concluded.

- g) After draft local plan consultation is concluded, and GESP is adopted, we can move reasonably swiftly to production of the publication version of the Local Plan. The Gantt chart shows Publication consultation in August and September 2022. After the Publication consultation the plan is submitted for Examination, the chart shows this in December 2022.
- h) From the point of Submission of the plan for Examination to receipt of the Inspector's final report there are a number of tasks to be completed, these are shown on the Gantt chart and will take much of 2023. What they point to, however, is a potential date for new local plan adoption of October 2023.

2.4 Members will appreciate that the time lines set out are a first draft of a possible timetable for new local plan production. Much will depend on the timelines that GESP runs to and for GESP (and a new local plan) there are many unknowns that could impact on when it is possible for tasks to be undertaken and completed. There may be some scope to compress some of the time lines for aspects of local plan work and key tasks. But there will remain the overall GESP timetable that is seen as setting a number of constraints on how swiftly a new local plan can progress given the need for key GESP stages to be completed before Local Plan tasks can be undertaken.

