

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**



Date of Meeting: 15 July 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

East Devon Local Plan work programme update

Report summary:

This report advises on progress on production of the new local plan and key steps and stages ahead noting the timetable to take a Regulation 19 plan to committee in November 2024. This would lead to the opportunity for comments through engagement to be made on the plan from December 2024 to January 2025 and for Submission for Examination in May 2025.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That committee note the work programme going forward on production of the new East Devon Local Plan.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure committee are aware of the work going forward.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk;

Links to background information

Links to background documents are contained in the body of this report.

Link to Council Plan

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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1. Further Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation

- 1.1 Committee will be aware that further consultation has taken place under Regulation 18 of the plan making regulations. This was under a select range of topic matters, having undertaken much fuller consultation on a draft plan from Monday 7 November 2022 until Sunday, 15 January 2023.
- 1.2 The consultation closed on 27 June 2024. At the time of writing this report responses had not been assessed although we received a good response rate.

2. Member workshops and site assessments

- 2.1 Committee will also be aware that we have started to hold the member site assessment workshops with to date workshops for Sidmouth and surrounding areas and Seaton and surrounding areas having been completed (and for Axminster and surrounding areas scheduled to have been completed at the time of the committee meeting). Workshops for the following locations and surrounding areas are scheduled to run from late July into August - Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary and West end.
- 2.2 The workshops are considered to be a really useful means to understand the type of concerns and considerations members and town/parish councils have about potential development sites. The workshops are not a forum to make decisions but debate held will very usefully inform officer report and recommendation writing.
- 2.3 The intent is that a report on site allocation choices will come to committee as soon as the work is completed and there has been the chance to assimilate information. We are aiming to report back to the meeting of this committee scheduled for the 3 September 2024 and also to a proposed follow on meeting for the 11 September – but depending on matters raised at workshops we may need more time to undertake relevant work.
- 2.4 It is highlighted that reports to committee in September are unlikely to be final definitive recommendations on site choices, there is still technical work to be completed. We would hope, however, that in reporting back we can give a clear recommended direction of travel. But we may need to also highlight fundamentally

difficult challenges going forward, including in respect of total supply of land/sites for development (especially housing) and also to secure timely delivery.

3. Local Plan policy redrafting

3.1 With the shift of focus towards site selection work the actual redrafting of local plan policy has moved down the timing priority order list. However, there will be a shift of officer workloads over the coming weeks to redrafting of policies. The aim will be to start to send the next redrafted plan chapters (amendment of the draft plan to form an early iteration of what we suggest the Regulation 19 plan should look like) to committee in September 2024 – though volumes of work are such that there may well need to be several committee meetings to consider plan redrafting.

4. Ongoing evidence gathering

4.1 As part of the plan making work we still have various ongoing evidence gathering studies that will inform plan making work. Major work areas, the subject of external commissions or work directly by officers, that we are undertaking or may wish or need to pursue include:

- Settlement Boundary definition work
- New community assessment and masterplan work
- Greater Exeter transport study
- Water Cycle Study
- Housing need assessment update
- Heritage strategy update
- Playing pitch strategy
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Habitat Regulations Assessment
- Viability assessment
- Equalities impact assessment
- Site Selection final technical reports
- HELAA completion
- Duty to co-operate reporting
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Assessment of inclusion of Cranbrook in the new local plan
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Major developments in National Landscapes assessment

4.2 We would stress the above is not a definitive list. But it does illustrate that there is still a significant volume of work to be completed.

5. Regulation 19 local plan consultation

5.1 Officers are still working to a timetable that will see a report coming to committee in November 2024 recommending that the local plan is made available under Regulation 19 of the plan making regulations for people to make comment on.

- 5.2 This is the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme and it advises of the period for comments running from December 2024 to January 2025. The plan itself, the comments received and supporting evidence documents will be sent (the Submission) to the Planning Inspectorate for the Examination of the plan. We are aiming to submit for Examination in May 2025, noting that as things stand there is a proposed deadline date of June 2025 for submission to meet in order to progress under the current plan making regime.
- 5.3 We would highlight, however, to meet deadlines there are some challenging targets to be met. Workloads for officer are and will be high, there are likely to be challenging decisions for members to make and we are dependent on third party work coming through in a timely manner, notably consultant reports that need to inform our plan making. And there are unknowns about the future shape and requirements of future Government policy.
- 5.4 We would advise of some, but limited potential, for timetable slippage to meet the June 2025 submission deadline. We have created a simplified work schedule (Gantt chart style) to illustrate timetabling of key workloads set out in this report – see below/over the page. As dates extend into the future they are best current estimates.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications raised in the report.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications requiring comment.

