

LDF Project Management Report

Workshop 19: 26th October 2012

Local Development Scheme

Report by Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager

Introduction

An up to date Local development Scheme is a requirement to manage the Council's forward planning effort and for submission of the Local Plan and other Development Plan Documents. This report presents key issues arising out of work to date in order to obtain a steer from Members.

Recommendations: that the PMB provide a steer on key issues listed below that have emerged from early work on the Local Development Scheme update.

Report

Background

At the Board's previous meeting on 4th October the Board endorsed a review of the current LDS for 2007 – 2010 (approved by the Council's District executive in April 2007 and endorsed by the Government in September 2007) under the auspices of the PMB and then to be considered by District Executive and Full Council. The PMB's forward plan identified this meeting to receive a detailed report on a LDS update.

Progress

A detailed revised LDS for 2013 – 2016 has been drafted in initial form with a detailed project plan and risk assessment still to be finalised. The Scheme has raised some significant issues relating to resource and process and these have resulted in the report slippage and recognition of the value of an early steer from the PMB on these matters.

Key issues for consideration

1. The basic list of potential documents to be pursued through the LDS shown in the report to the Board at the last meeting has been provisionally prioritised to develop the LDS as below.
 - South Somerset local plan – top priority
 - Urban extension Plan – primary priority
 - Site Allocations Plan – primary priority
 - Gypsy and Travellers site allocations joint Plan – primary priority
 - Town centre Boundaries and retail frontages – secondary priority
 - Historic Heritage Strategy SPD – secondary priority
 - Landscape heritage SPD – secondary priority
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD – tertiary priority

- Annual Monitoring Report – primary priority
- Statement of Community involvement – tertiary priority

The prioritisation will inform what is in the LDS and when although there is potential to proceed with secondary and even tertiary priorities without undue impact on primary priorities where different resource is being applied. Members' views are sought as to this initial prioritisation.

2. The previous PMB considered the list of Development Plan Documents (DPD) referred to in the Local Plan and the site allocations DPDs (general and for Gypsy and Travellers) identified by the Planning Inspectorate "critical friend". Members broadly endorsed these. These did not include however a Yeovil Town Centre Area Action Plan as identified in the current, albeit outdated, Scheme. Should such a Plan be identified in the LDS?
3. Can the Council proceed with a joint DPD for Gypsy and Traveller's site allocations in the Local Development Scheme without other Councils confirmation of support. The Duty to Co-operate meeting where this issue will be addressed has been delayed and is now scheduled for 9th November. If the support is either not forthcoming at that meeting or subject to a ratification process that may take some time can and should the Council identify a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation DPD "off its own bat"?
4. Initial work on the Project Planning shows the Council undertaking three DPDs of primary priority dealing with site allocations commencing and proceeding at the same time upon completion of the Local Plan (Yeovil Urban Extension, Site Allocations in Market Towns (and possibly Rural Centres) and a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD. This at a time when the Local plan team will no longer have the supplementary support of two officers, as during the bulk of the Local plan process, nor such readily available funding furnished from the housing and planning delivery grant (funding for consultants is still potentially available but expected to be less). Whilst a Joint DPD will be less work than otherwise should the Gypsy and traveller Plan be undertaken jointly and nothing should be quite as onerous as a local plan nonetheless these are major plans and likely to prove controversial also. Identification of additional resource or a reduced local Development Scheme are the logical conclusions of this and an early steer is sought.
5. It will be for Town and Parish Council's to determine if they wish to undertake neighbourhood plans. The role of the Local Planning Authority in neighbourhood plans is to consider conformity issues, agree areas a plan will cover, provide technical support on evidence gathering, sustainability appraisal et al, consider legal compliance, appoint examiner, fund examination, organise referendum and adopt. The time and resource required for this per neighbourhood plan is difficult to quantify at present but is likely to be substantial. Whilst there is likely to be funding from central government, the indication of the frontrunner grant funding for 2012/13 is for £30,000 per Plan and most of this will be to fund the examination and referendum with little available by way of resource supplement. Members will need to recognise that the decisions of local councils to undertake neighbourhood plans is an unknown at present but may impact significantly on the ability to deliver the Council's own LDS (or not if few neighbourhood plans are proposed).
6. Responsibility for the LDS and its implementation has not hitherto been an issue as the focus has been on the one Local Plan. As we move away from this into several plans and supplementary documents such as green infrastructure strategy, Historic

Heritage and Landscape strategies and Neighbourhood Plans clarity will be needed on who is responsible for delivering “over the piste”. Several options present themselves, Spatial Policy Manager, Development Manager, different managers for individual specific plans or supplementary planning guidance or Asst Director (Economy) to ensure overall co-ordination of resources.

7. The previous Board meeting was informed that the LDS would need to be endorsed by District Executive and Full Council. The previous LDSs were endorsed by District Executive solely before being ratified by Government. The Council’s constitution indicates that the following is reserved for Full Council

“Local Plan for South Somerset, Local Development Framework and Urban Development Framework”

The Local Development Framework is a Project Plan and not an actual planning Policy document and is one of a number of documents that form part of the Local Development Framework.