

REPORT NO.2

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 24th JULY 2017

Meeting: Executive
Date: 24th July 2017
Subject: Harborough Local Plan – Local Development Scheme Review
Report of: Head of Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Jo Brodrick
Status: For Decision
Relevant Ward(s): All

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek members' approval to a revised timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan and for this to be included in an updated version of the Council's Local Development Scheme for publication.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 To approve the revised Local Plan timetable at Appendix A for inclusion in an updated Local Development Scheme and to give delegated authority to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to make any necessary changes to update and publish the updated Scheme.

3. Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

3.1 To update members on the need to revise the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan and to ensure a revised Local Development Scheme is published in order to meet legal requirements.

3.2 To ensure that the Local Plan is as sound and robust as it can be prior to its publication. This has resulted in need to make a modest adjustment to the timetable for the preparation on the Local Plan.

3.3 To ensure the statutory requirements relating to the Duty to Cooperate have been fully met.

3.4 Slightly extending the timetable will also ensure that there is adequate and appropriate time to enable Executive and other members to be fully engaged in considering final key evidence studies that support the Local Plan.

4. **Key Issues**

- 4.1 A Proposed Submission Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation. It is anticipated that following approval by Council the draft Plan will be published for a minimum period of six weeks for any interested parties to make representations on the 'soundness' of that draft Plan.
- 4.2 The main highlights of the current local plan preparation work programme are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Current Local Plan Work Programme Timetable Key Milestones

July 2017 – Council approval of pre-submission Local Plan for publication
November 2017 – Submission of the Local Plan for Public Examination
February 2018 – Examination Hearings
July 2018 – Receipt of Final Inspector's Report
September 2018 – Adopt the Plan

- 4.3 However, in the light of a number of factors upon which the preparation of the Local Plan is dependent, it is considered necessary to modestly re-profile the Local Plan work programme and consequentially the published Local Development Scheme.
- 4.4 Modestly increasing the amount of time available for the preparation of the new Local Plan will mean that the published Local Development Scheme, November 2016 (LDS) will need to be revised in order to reflect this modest amount of additional time being added into the Plan preparation process.
- 4.5 The benefits of extending the period for the preparation of the Local Plan are:
- Allowing an appropriate amount of additional time to ensure that the Local Plan is as sound and robust as it can be prior to its publication;
 - To enable essential further DtC consultation to be undertaken;
 - Ensuring adequate and appropriate time is available to ensure a quality draft Local Plan document is prepared that is as sound and robust as it can be; and
 - Provide full opportunity for Executive members as well as other members to be engaged in the final key evidence informing the draft Plan.
- 4.6 In order to ensure that these benefits to the preparation of the Local Plan are captured it is recommended that the revised proposed Local Plan work programme set out in Table 2 below be approved.

Table 2 – Proposed Local Plan Work Programme Timetable Key Milestones

September 2017 – Council approval of pre-submission Local Plan for publication
January 2018 – Submission of the Local Plan for Public Examination
April 2018 – Examination Hearings
September 2018 – Receipt of Final Inspector’s Report
October 2018 – Adopt the Plan

4.7 The Local Plan work programme that will accompany these key milestones will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure time is always used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Should any opportunity arise to prepare the Plan any quicker it will be fully explored and where possible given effect to.

5 Legal Issues

5.1 The Council is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). It must be made publically available and kept up-to-date to ensure that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress.

6 Resource Issues

6.1 Preparation of the new Local Plan is expected to be undertaken within existing staff resource levels, including additional agency staff and specialist consultants.

7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

7.1 No implications.

8. Risk Management Implications

8.1 It should be noted that there are risks associated with extending the period for the preparation of the Plan and these are:

- The length of the Plan period remaining following adoption would be shorter by a modest amount in relation to the recommended post-adoption plan period set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- There would be a modestly longer period without an adopted Local Plan in place of approximately 1 month.
- There is a potential for some reputational risk for the Council in deferring a timetable previously agreed and communicated. Communication, particularly with Parish Councils will be important to ensure the reasons for any deferral and its implications are explained clearly and understood. However, this must be balanced against risk of potentially greater

reputational damage if the plan was delayed at a later stage or found unsound for any reason.

- There is always the possibility of changes to Government policy and other external factors of a national or wider scale occurring during the period allowed for preparing the Plan. These cannot be forecast and could occur anyway even if the existing timetable is retained.

8.2 Officers will work to ensure these and any other risks that arise are robustly managed. The Executive will be kept up to date, as needed, through further reports being brought for their consideration as and when these become necessary.

9 Consultation

9.1 The Chair of the Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel/Planning and Regeneration Portfolio holder has been consulted and supports the proposal.

10. Options

10.1 *Retaining the current Local Plan timetable*

This option has been rejected as there is a need to ensure the Local Plan is as sound as it can be prior to publication. There is also a need to ensure the requirements relating to the statutory Duty to Cooperate have been met, also prior to publication.

11. Background Papers

NA

Previous report(s):

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N

Appendices:

A-Proposed Revised Local Plan timetable for inclusion in a revised Local Development Scheme 2016-2018

APPENDIX A

Proposed Local Plan timetable for inclusion in a revised Local Development Scheme 2017-2018

Proposed Local Plan Work Programme Timetable – Key Milestones		
Stages	<i>Current Local Plan Work Programme</i>	<i>Proposed Local Plan Work Programme to be included in a revised LDS (period 2016-2018)</i>
Council Approval of Pre-Submission Local Plan	July 2017	September 2018
Consultation on Publication Pre-Submission Local Plan	August and September 2017	Late September through to early November 2017
Submission to Secretary of State	November 2017	January 2018
Examination Hearing	February 2018	April 2018
Inspector's Report	July 2018	September 2018
Adoption	September 2018	October 2018