



<b>Report To:</b>	Planning Policy Committee
<b>Date:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	East Lindsey Local Plan Update
<b>Purpose:</b>	To advise Members on the current progress with the Local Plan review and consider next steps
<b>Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Tom Ashton
<b>Report Of:</b>	Phil Norman - Assistant Director for Planning
<b>Report Author:</b>	Ismail Mohammed – Interim Planning Policy and Research Manager
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Exempt Report:</b>	No

### **Summary**

This report outlines the current situation regarding preparation of the East Lindsey Local Plan (ELLP) review.

The preparation of the revised Plan has been considerably delayed and at present it is unlikely that the Draft Local Plan can be progressed to 'Regulation 19' Pre-Submission consultation by the end of this year.

One of main reasons for the delay has been the on-going work on one of the key supporting documents, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The modelling working for the assessment of flood risk in the district has been on-going for the past eighteen months. The Phase 1 report is expected to be completed by mid-September. This will enable assessment of potential sites submitted for consideration by the Council for future housing allocation.

Furthermore, the recent consultation by the government of the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will also have an impact on the future progress of the emerging Local Plan. The proposed new standard methodology for housing need assessment increases the future housing target by nearly 150%. As published it will also introduce transitional arrangements for plan-preparation. A further report on the revised NPPF is included on this agenda.

## **Recommendations**

That Members note the current position on the preparation of the draft emerging Local Plan and potential changes to national planning policy.

That Members agree that Officers take stock of the current situation and prepare a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out a programme for preparation of the Local Plan review.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

Plan preparation needs to be progressed to ensure that the Council has an up-to-date Local Plan.

## **Other Options Considered**

The new Government has clearly signalled the importance of up-to-date Local Plans. In this context it is not considered that there are any other reasonable options. There are unknowns and uncertainties regarding the Government's final position on housing numbers and transitional arrangements for plan-making. However, it is not considered reasonable to cease progressing work on the plan pending these formal positions being known.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the current position of the East Lindsey Local Plan review. It also considers the future direction and work programme for progressing the review in the context of the revised National Planning Policy Framework recently published by the Government for consultation.
- 1.2 Since the 'Regulation 18' Consultation on Issues and Options in early 2021, work has been on-going on plan-preparation. The initial programme for the preparation of the Local Plan review was that the 'Draft Local Plan' would be submitted to the Secretary of State by Autumn 2022. Since commissioning the work on the SFRA, this was further revised for submission by December 2024.
- 1.3 Over the past two years the Committee has received and discussed several reports on various local plan topic areas. It has given a steer on the future priorities and direction of growth for the development of the district.
- 1.4 With the delay in preparation, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) is now out of date. This needs to be revised, approved and published.

## 2 Report

### East Lindsey Local Plan 2018 (ELLP)

- 2.1 The current Local Plan was adopted in March 2018 covering the period 2016-2031, with several additional supporting documents. The Local Plan made no housing allocation in the coastal areas of the district. The total housing allocation of 7,480 homes required over the plan period was allocated in-land within town and villages outside of the coastal flood zone.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding this, some housing development is still being delivered in the settlements within the coastal zone. These housing developments are on those sites that were allocated in previous local plans and/or sites identified to deliver affordable housing.
- 2.3 The Planning Inspectors Report into the Examination in Public (EiP) of the Local Plan recommended that partial review of the plan should commence within two years from the date of adoption. The partial review would consider the issue of growth in the coastal towns.

### Progress of the East Lindsey Local Plan Review

- 2.4 In compliance with the Planning Inspectors recommendation the review of the Local Plan commenced in 2020. However, rather than a partial review, the Council embarked on a full review. The Plan is at an early stage of preparation following 'Regulation 18', Issues and Options Consultation in Spring 2021.
- 2.5 This consultation included a call for sites. Whilst only 61 representations were received, 69.6% of the respondents supported the continued coastal split, with the remainder supporting its removal. There were over 450 site submissions for housing. The sites submitted have been initially assessed. However, no decision has yet been made on allocations pending completion of the SFRA. In total there are over 850 housing sites within the Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment Register (SHLAA).
- 2.6 In preparing the review several new studies have been commissioned. The main documents include the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), Open Space and Recreation Study and Retail Study. The position on each is outlined as follows.

### *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*

- 2.7 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is a key part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. It collates information on all known sources of flooding that may affect existing or future development within plan area. The document informs the assessment of land that is suitable for allocation for the delivery of future housing.
- 2.8 The SFRA is not yet completed as modelling work is still being carried out by the consultants to be reviewed by the Environment Agency. It is expected that the Stage 1 report will be available in late September. This will enable officers to assess sites against the potential for flooding and make recommendations for future site allocations. Since the previous SFRA, the situation regarding coastal and fluvial

flooding in the district has likely worsened. Following the assessment of the sites a Phase 2 SFRA will be prepared, to assess the potential impact of the future developments in respect of flooding. This is a key outstanding area of work that is required to take the plan review forward.

#### *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)*

- 2.9 The current Local Plan has a target of 558 dwellings per annum.
- 2.10 To inform the plan review the Strategic Housing Market Assessment has identified a need for around 8,460 homes for the plan period that equates around to around 453 per annum. This is almost 100 homes less than the current requirements of the adopted Local Plan. The revised NPPF (December 2023) standard methodology reduced the housing need further to 437 dwelling per annum.
- 2.11 However, the new Government has issued proposed changes to the December 2023 NPPF for consultation (July 2024). The new standard methodology for housing need proposed results in a target of 1,091 dwellings per annum. This is a 150% increase on the December 2023 NPPF figure.
- 2.12 This is a consultation document at the present time. When the NPPF is finalised in early 2025 there may be reassessment of these figure. Across the country, there are strong reservations from many councils that have seen considerable increase in their housing target.

#### *Open Space and Recreation Study*

- 2.13 The Open Space and Recreation Study is being prepared by consultants. It will set out future provision for district. The draft document is being reviewed by officers. It is anticipated that this study can be finalised by October.

#### *Retail Study 2021*

- 2.14 There is currently an updated retail study for the district providing the evidence base for the assessment of planning applications for retail uses and to help the Council consider future strategies to support vital and viable town centres through the local plan process.

#### *Local Development Scheme (LDS)*

- 2.15 The Local Development Scheme is a project management document setting out the programme for preparing Local Development Documents. Unfortunately, due to the time taken to progress the review, the adopted LDS is out of date and needs to be revised. It is hoped that a revised LDS can prepared over the coming months and reported to the Planning Policy Committee for approval. For the preparation of the Local Plan review, it is important that the adopted LDS is up to date. Any new LDS will need to consider resource.

#### The Future of Plan Making and Transitional Arrangements

- 2.16 As outlined in the separate paper on the proposed NPPF the following is of note re: timescales for local plan transitional arrangements:

- As usual there are a series of transitional arrangements for local plan-making. This is relatively complex.
- The previous government's Levelling Up agenda signalled changes to the plan-making system. Secondary legislation and regulations were expected in late 2024. Common thinking was that the deadline for any 'old style' Local Plans to be submitted for examination would be Summer 2025.
- The new proposals highlight that Local Plans that have not reached Submission stage (Regulation 19) by the time the new NPPF is adopted would be required to take full account of its policies, in addition to the updated Local Housing Need figures.
- It is currently intended to implement the new plan-making system as set out in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act from Summer or Autumn 2025. It is anticipated that all current system plans that are not subject to the transitional arrangements will need to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026. Further details of the Government's intentions around plan-making reform will be published in due course.

2.17 It is evident that there are several unknowns pending the final publishing of a new NPPF and a clear steer on transitional arrangements. The only reasonable option in this context is to continue work on plan preparation, working on a 'worst-case' scenario. As matters become clearer officers will brief members accordingly.

### **3 Conclusion**

3.1 There has been delay in the preparation of the Local Plan review. This has been, in part, due to the time taken to progress the SFRA.

3.2 Concurrently, the Government's consultation on the revised NPPF is proposing a considerable increase in the housing need for the district. It also outlines potential transitional arrangements for plan-making under the current legislation. However, these are yet to be formalised.

3.3 It is important that Members and Officers take stock. However, it is also important that work continues on plan preparation. To that end Officer's will prepare a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out a programme for preparation of the Local Plan review and report back in due course

### **Implications**

#### **South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership**

There are no direct implication arising from this report to the Partnership.

#### **Corporate Priorities**

None

#### **Staffing**

Resources will need to be reviewed to ensure that local plan can be progressed in a timely fashion.

## **Workforce Capacity Implications**

Resources will need to be reviewed to ensure that local plan can be progressed in a timely fashion.

## **Constitutional and Legal Implications**

None

## **Data Protection**

None

## **Financial**

Resources will need to be reviewed to ensure that local plan can be progressed in a timely fashion.

## **Risk Management**

No direct implications.

## **Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales**

None

## **Reputation**

No direct implications.

## **Contracts**

None

## **Crime and Disorder**

None

## **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding**

None

## **Health and Wellbeing**

None

## **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

No direct implications.

## **Acronyms**

In report

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.'

## **Chronological History of this Report**

None

## **Report Approval**

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