


Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	3 February 2022	
Report Title:	Fenland Local Plan updated timetable	

1 Purpose / Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the revised timetable for the emerging Fenland Local Plan.

2 Key issues

- Since the first round of public consultation in October 2019 there have been several delays to the Local Plan timetable.
- Firstly, the site assessment work and site visits were put on hold due to the Covid 19 pandemic and restrictions in place last spring.
- Then in summer 2020, the Council decided to carry out a second call for sites exercise which led to further delays with additional site assessment work required.
- A revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Cabinet in July 2020 setting out public consultation in on the draft version of the Local Plan in February 2021.
- Then in August 2020 Government consulted on proposed changes to the current planning system, which included proposed changes to the standard method used to calculate housing need figures for Local Plans, which resulted in further delays to the site assessment work.
- A Local Plan update report was presented to Cabinet in March 2021 setting out some of the proposed changes and new policy approaches to better facilitate economic and housing growth.
- In July 2021 a revised LDS was approved by Cabinet setting out public consultation in December 2021 and January 2022.
- However, since July 2021 there have been further delays to the Local Plan evidence base, particularly relating to Transport Assessment work, which means the above timetable cannot be met.
- Therefore, there is a need for a revised LDS setting out the new timetable to produce the Fenland Local Plan.
- Appendix 1 sets out the revised timetable

3 Recommendations

- That Cabinet approves the attached Local Development Scheme (LDS) (Appendix 1) which sets out the revised timetable for production of the Fenland Local Plan.

- Delegate to Acting Assistant Director the ability to approve any future changes to the Local Plan timetable (and LDS) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Dee Laws, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Report Originator(s)	Gemma Wildman - Local Plan Manager Dan Horn - Acting Assistant Director
Contact Officer(s)	Gemma Wildman - Local Plan Manager Dan Horn - Acting Assistant Director
Background Paper(s)	

1 Background / introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of a Local Development Scheme (LDS) is to inform the public and stakeholders of the Council's timetable to produce Local Plans that form part of the statutory development plan for the area.
- 1.2 The LDS provides information for the local community about the planning documents that apply in Fenland at any one time i.e. it explains what the current documents are which collectively form the development plan for the area. The LDS is also a programme or timetable for the preparation of Development Plan Documents over the next three years.
- 1.3 To be absolutely clear, the LDS is a statutorily required 'programme management' document and does not contain any Council policy.
- 1.4 In February 2019 Full Council approved an LDS, which confirmed commencement of a new Local Plan for Fenland.
- 1.5 The Issues and Options Consultation took place in October and November 2019 in accordance with the approved LDS. The Key Issues Report summarised the main issues raised during the consultation. At the same time a call for sites exercise was carried out which asked local landowners, agents and developers to suggest suitable sites for housing and employment for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan. The Strategic Housing Economic Land Availability Report was published in February 2020 which listed all suggested sites to the Council.
- 1.6 In early 2020 work commenced on a Draft version of the Local Plan for public consultation in summer 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic work on preparing the Local Plan was delayed. In addition, a second call for site exercise was carried out in summer 2020 to ensure that the Council received all possible sites available to assess for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.7 A revised LDS was approved in July 2020 setting out a new timetable to take account of the above delays.
- 1.8 In August 2020 Government consulted on proposed changes to the current planning system, which included proposed changes to the standard method used to calculate housing need figures for Local Plans. The potential change to the Local Plan Housing target meant that The Local Plan team were unable to progress the final site selection work until the outcomes of this consultation were published in December 2020
- 1.9 In March 2021 a Local Plan update report was presented to Cabinet which set out some of the proposed changes and new policy approaches to better facilitate economic and housing growth, this proposed that the Draft version of the Local Plan would be available for public consultation during summer 2021.
- 1.10 In July 2021 a revised LDS was approved by cabinet which showed public consultation on the Draft Local Plan due to take place in December 2021 and January 2021.
- 1.11 However, further delays to the Local Plan evidence base and Transport Assessment work means that a new LDS is required to show the revised timetable and dates for the Draft Local Plan consultation.
- 1.12 The revised LDS is attached at Appendix 1. Table 1 shows the proposed updated timetable to take into account the above. The estimated adoption date for the Local Plan is now early 2024

2 Considerations

- 2.1 The delay to the Local Plan timetable will have minimal financial implications.

3 Effect on corporate objectives

- 3.1 Production of a new Local Plan will allow planning policies to be brought fully up-to-date with corporate objectives which amongst other things embrace growth for the area to improve the health, well-being and opportunity of Fenland residents

4 Community impact

- 4.1 The revised LDS will allow full community involvement with the Local Plan consultation process and opportunities to attend public hearings at the examination stage.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Local Plan process has been delayed due to the impacts of Covid 19, second call for sites and site assessment work and delays to important evidence base documents such as the Transport Assessment. The revised LDS (See Appendix 1) sets out the revised timetable. It is estimated that the new Local Plan will be adopted by February 2024.



Fenland Local Development Scheme 2022 update

February 2022

The Fenland Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Cabinet at a meeting on 15 July 2021. This update was approved on **03 February 2022** and replaces the July 2021 version with immediate effect.

Preface

This Fenland Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Fenland District Council on **3 February 2022** and came into effect immediately, replacing the previous LDS, dated 15 July 2021.

If you require any further information regarding the Scheme, please contact a member of the Local Plan Team at localplan@fenland.gov.uk

A 'live' update is published on our website (www.fenland.gov.uk/newlocalplan) each month. This sets out the current and next stages of preparation, with dates, of each of the documents included in this LDS.

This LDS is produced under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended.

Fenland Local Development Scheme 2019 to 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a timetable which sets out the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that a local planning authority intends to produce over the next few years. Such DPDs are also known as the Local Plans for an area.
- 1.2 This Fenland LDS sets out the timetable for any DPDs to be prepared in the period 2019 to 2024. It explains when Fenland District Council intends to reach key stages in the preparation of a new Local Plan.

The Local Plan and Supporting Documents

- 1.3 In summary, the framework of strategic planning in Fenland is:
 - **Development Plan Documents (DPDs):** These are documents (often referred to as 'Local Plans') that form part of the statutory development plan for the area and are subject to independent examination by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. For Fenland, as at July 2021, they comprise:
 - **The Fenland Local Plan –**
Adopted on 8th May 2014, it provides land use planning policies, allocates sites for development and identifies other areas designated for protection that will shape the growth and regeneration of the Fenland area over the next 15 years and beyond.
 - **Minerals and Waste Local Plans –**
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan, was adopted on 28 July 2021 and set out the framework and specific proposals for all minerals and waste developments until 2036.
 - **Neighbourhood Plans:** Local communities, including Parish and Town Councils, can prepare Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) putting in place policies to guide the future development of the area. Any NP must be in general conformity with 'strategic policies' in DPDs (Local Plans) and with national policy. NPs are not able to propose lower levels of development than those set out in up to date Local Plans but could propose higher levels, or offer other detailed policy proposals. It is up to local communities to decide if they want to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and so it is not appropriate for this LDS to specify when or where they will be produced. Any NP that has been made (brought into legal force) becomes part of the statutory development plan. Two Neighbourhood Plans have been made across Fenland, a few more Neighbourhood Plans are under preparation.
 - **Policies Map:** This is a map on an Ordnance Survey base for the whole of a local planning authority's area which shows where policies in DPDs apply. The Fenland Policies Map includes inset maps for some areas to show information at a larger scale. The Policies Map is updated each time that a DPD or Neighbourhood Plan is adopted/made.
 - **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** These can cover a wide range of issues on which the planning authority wishes to provide guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in its DPDs (Local Plan). They do not form part of the statutory development plan and are not subject to independent examination. There is no requirement for this LDS to set out a timetable for the production of any SPDs, but for completeness and clarity they will be listed on the Fenland web site.

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** This is a document that explains how the local planning authority will engage the community in the preparation, alteration and review of planning documents, and in development control decisions. It is required to specify how and at what stages people will have the opportunity to be involved in planning for their area. The latest Fenland SCI was adopted in July 2018.
- **Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR):** This is a report which must be produced by the local planning authority (on an annual basis) to explain how the local development scheme is being implemented and the extent to which policies in the Local Plan are being achieved.

Joint Working Arrangements and Joint Local Plans

- 1.4 No formal joint working arrangement or Joint Local Plans are currently being prepared, but long established informal joint working across Cambridge and Peterborough HMAs (including the Combined Authority) continues to proceed successfully.

2. Local Plan Timetable

- 2.1 Through monitoring of the Local Plan and as a result of changes to National Planning Policy, Fenland District Council decided to review the Fenland Local Plan at its meeting on 21 February 2019. An LDS was approved that set the timetable to 2022.
- 2.2 The Issues and Options Consultation was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with the LDS, which included a call for sites exercise.
- 2.3 However, in early 2020 due to the COVID- 19 Pandemic the production of the Local Plan was delayed, and an updated LDS was approved. The Local Plan has been further delayed and consultation on the draft version is due to take place June 2022.
- 2.4 An updated LDS was published in February 2022 which shows a revised timetable for the production of the Fenland Local Plan to 2024.
- 2.5 There are a number of stages involved in the preparation of a DPD (Local Plan). This process allows for opportunities for the public to be involved, early resolution of objections, and an Independent Examination. The stages in producing a Local Plan, and the intended timescales of those stages for the review of the Fenland Local Plan, are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Timetable for Production of Development Plan Document

[illegible]

No.	Stage	Description	Date's stage will/ is proposed to take place
1	Public Participation (Regulation 18)	Opportunities for interested parties and statutory consultees to consider the options for the plan before the final document is produced. This stage can involve one or more public consultation rounds. We intend two rounds for the Fenland Local Plan.	Issues and Option Consultation October 2019 Draft Local Plan Consultation June/July 2022
2	Pre-submission Publication (Regulation 19)	The Council publishes the Local Plan which is followed with a 6-week period when formal representations can be made on the Local Plan.	January 2023
3	Submission (Regulation 22)	The Council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at Regulation 19 stage.	April 2023
4	Independent Examination	Held by a Planning Inspector into objections raised at Regulation 19 stage on the Local Plan	From the day it is 'submitted'
5	Inspector's Report Issued	This will report whether if the Plan is 'Sound' or 'Not Sound'. The Inspector may make recommendations to make the plan 'sound'	January 2024 (estimate – could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)
6	Adoption of DPD (Local Plan)	Final stage, the Council will formally need to adopt the Local Plan and it will then be used in making planning decisions.	Adoption March 2024 (estimate - could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)