

Cabinet 2 October 2024

Revised Local Development Scheme

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out New Forest District Council's programme of work for the Local Plan, looking broadly over the next 3-4 years.
Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet: i. agrees the revised timescales for the Local Plan; ii. agrees that to the revised version of the Local Development Scheme and for this to be published on the council's website; and iii. agrees to a call for sites to be held during 2024 for potential sites.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	Having an LDS is a key requirement with the local plan legislation and there is therefore a need to have this up to date.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	James Smith Planning Policy Team Leader james.smith@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out New Forest District Council's programme, looking broadly over the next 3-4 years, for the production of documents that will form the Local Development Framework for New Forest District (outside the National Park).
2. The LDS was last updated in February 2024.

Proposed revised local plan timetable

3. The first milestone in the LDS document is the 'Local Plan Issues and Scope' document. This document is to be informed and populated by the work of officer and member working groups, suitably edited by the Planning Policy Team in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
4. Following the general election in July 2024, planned member working group meetings were postponed and have only recently been reconvened with consequential impacts to the work programme.
5. The key milestones in this revised LDS are, subject to approval:
 - October 2024 – 6 week Consultation on revised SCI
 - February 2025 – 6 week Issues and Scope consultation
 - October 2025 – 8 week Regulation 18 consultation
6. This revised timetable has been prepared in advance of the new government's publication of its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following the public consultation that closed on 24 September 2024. The government has made it clear that it expects to undertake significant planning reforms, which are likely to be material to the preparation of the Local Plan. As such the timetable set out above will be kept under review by officers, as further announcements are made by the government.
7. Whilst consideration has been given to pausing the formal preparation of a revised timetable, officers consider that the direction of travel of the new government is already clear in urging the preparation of up-to-date local plans and increasing housing delivery – including through reviewing the Green Belt.

Proposed call for sites

8. The government's recent consultation on the NPPF included proposals to amend the methodology for assessing housing need. As a result, it is likely that the development needs (and associated mitigation) identified for the district through this process is going to be significantly higher than in previous years. The government will also be looking at councils to make as much use as possible of greenfield, brownfield and/or under-utilised land in existing settlements. Site promoters and other interested parties will also be aware of this increased need. It is therefore considered beneficial for the future preparation of the Local Plan review to capture further information now on sites promoted for all forms of development (and mitigation) to help the council consider future development opportunities in a strategic manner.
9. The council continuously looks for possible brownfield sites through its brownfield register. To ensure no stone is left unturned, before we make any decisions about sites in the Local Plan, officers believe it is

useful to undertake a call for sites now to allow land owners to come forward with any sites that they feel are suitable and available for development in the district.

10. The 'Call for Sites' process is an opportunity for landowners, developers, agents and site promoters to submit sites to the council which are potentially suitable and available for future development (or mitigation).
11. As part of the process, it is also an opportunity to ask whether members of public are aware of any sites or land that may be suitable for different types of new developments or uses (e.g. vacant or poorly used sites or premises), to enable the council to investigate these further.
12. The council would welcome submissions for a number of uses including but not limited to:
 - Housing – including for specialised accommodation needs;
 - Commercial - including employment and retail;
 - Infrastructure – including community uses;
 - Green infrastructure;
 - Renewable energy;
 - Biodiversity net gain / nature recovery;
 - Other alternative natural recreation greenspace / habitat mitigation land.
13. It is proposed to carry out this consultation in late Autumn/Winter 2024.
14. It is important to note that the Call for Sites exercise will not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. All sites will need to be further assessed for suitability and capability of development and will then be consulted upon with the public as part of the wider Local Plan preparation. The submission of a site following the Call for Sites does not give them any planning status, nor does it determine any future planning status.

Corporate plan priorities

15. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 was adopted by Cabinet on 3 April 2024. It outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the council over the next four years.
16. The vision of the Corporate Plan is to secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest. This has been organised into the thematic areas of People, Place and Prosperity. This paper aligns with the following priorities:

- Place Priority 1: Shaping our place.
- People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.
- Prosperity Priority 2: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow.

Consultation undertaken

17. The proposed approach and timetable set out in this paper and appendix has been discussed internally with officers and through informal consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy. The approach set out has also been informed by discussions with officers at the National Park Authority and County Council.

Financial and resource implications

18. Sufficient existing budget provision has been made to cover work on the Local Plan review, including the implications arising from the revised work programme.

Legal implications

19. None. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 requires provides the legislative framework which requires that councils should prepare a local plan and keep it up-to-date.

Risk assessment

20. No formal risk assessment is required in relation to the recommendations as set out.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

21. A Local Plan Review, as set out in the revised LDS, is essential if the Council is to stay in control of the planning of its area and ensure a high quality environment.

Equalities implications

22. None directly from this report

Crime and disorder implications

23. None directly from this report

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

24. None.

New Forest National Park/Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

25. The New Forest National Park Authority are required to produce their own Local Development Scheme to support the proposed review of their local plan. The timetable proposed by this council is broadly in line with that of the National Park Authority, therefore there may be increased opportunities for joint working on evidence studies. There are no specific implications identified for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

Conclusion

26. Work is progressing on the Local Plan with the next few months being particularly important in preparing an Issues and Scope document for consultation. This revised LDS is a realistic and achievable programme of work to achieve this.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revised Local Development Scheme

Background Papers:

None