



**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

Council

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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## **Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036) – Approval for Public Consultation and Submission (Regulation 19)**

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Report of the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation

### **1. Summary**

The new local plan will cover the period 2020 to 2036 and will replace the current Core Strategy (2014) and saved policies from the previous local plan of 2006. This report outlines the main strategies and policies of the pre-submission plan proposed for consultation in January 2023.

Officers have undertaken extensive consultation exercises (para.3.5) on various stages of developing the local plan. These consultations have considered all aspects of planning policy as well as taking into account changing national guidance.

This report recommends approval for the publication of the pre-submission (Regulation 19) version of the Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036), including supporting documents, for public consultation, and that subsequently these documents, together with consultation responses, are submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.

## **2. Recommendations**

That council is recommended to approve public consultation for the Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036) pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 as amended, and thereafter its submission, together with consultation responses, for Examination in Public to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation be authorised to make any necessary minor technical/factual amendments to the plan prior to consultation.

## **3. Draft Local Plan**

### **3.1 Background**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local planning authorities to produce a local plan. In view of this officers have been working on a new plan which will replace the current core strategy (2014) and saved policies from the previous local plan of 2006.

The new local plan will cover the period 2020 – 2036 and seeks to:

- Meet the needs for homes, jobs, shopping, and leisure
- Allocate sites for development including strategic development sites
- Protect important sites such as those with heritage value
- Set clear policies that guide decisions on planning applications
- The plan is required to be viable and deliverable

The council is now in a position to publish a pre-submission local plan for public consultation. This will be the final consultation before the plan is submitted to the independent Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public (EIP), expected in 2023.

The plan is supported by various evidence documents and assessments, including an Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment.

The draft pre-submission local plan and supporting evidence for approval can be viewed here. <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-documents>

### **3.2 Previous 'Regulation 18' Local Plan Consultation**

- The replacement local plan process involves a number of stages before the plan is ultimately adopted by the council.
- Previous consultation on the Draft Leicester Local Plan (Reg 18) was delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic until September - December 2020. Responses (including petitions) to this consultation exercise are included in the supporting evidence to the proposed pre-submission plan - <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-documents>
- All policies and proposed site allocations have been reviewed in the context of the consultation responses received and comments from the council's scrutiny commissions. [Agenda for Overview Select Committee on Tuesday, 27 September 2022, 5:30 pm \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)
- Revisions to the list of proposed development sites have been made following consultation and as a result of the withdrawal of some proposed allocations by site promoters.
- Additional consultation with council members on the draft pre-submission plan and supporting evidence was recently carried out and the outcomes reported to the Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022. [Agenda for Overview Select Committee on Thursday, 3 November 2022, 5:30 pm \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)
- A petition has been recently received objecting to development proposals at Beaumont Park. This petition will be recorded and processed through the Council's Petition scheme and petitioners will have the opportunity to make further representations during the Regulation 19 Consultation.

### **3. 3 Key Strategies and Policies in the draft pre-submission Local Plan**

The following key strategies and policies are included in the draft pre-submission Local plan proposed for approval:

- Housing need for the city over the plan period is 39,424 dwellings (2,464 dwellings per annum).
- This is an increase of 12,512 dwellings from the Reg 18 previous plan due to Central Government publishing a new standard method for calculating housing need. This resulted in the city's housing need increasing by 35%, adding a further 9,712 homes between 2020 and 2036. In March 2022 the Government published new data (affordability ratios) which increased housing need in the city by a further 2,800 homes to 2036.

- However, there will be an insufficient supply of land available in the city, which means there will be a shortfall that cannot be provided in the city of approximately 18,700 dwellings and 30 ha of employment land.
- A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) on the redistribution of 18,700 unmet housing need and 23ha of employment land within Leicester and Leicestershire was approved by the City Council in April and would support our Local Plan progressing to an examination subject to approval by the individual councils.
- Housing and Employment Supply will be provided as follows:
  - Five Strategic Sites
    - Former Western Park Golf Course – Including housing, employment and open space, waste recycling centre, and permanent Gypsy and Traveller provision
    - East of Ashton Green – Including housing, employment and open space
    - Land North of A46 bypass – Including housing and open space
    - Land West of Anstey Lane - Including Housing and open space
    - Beaumont Park – Employment and possible Gypsy and Traveller transit site
  - 47 other sites will be allocated for housing
- There has been a net reduction of 23 sites from the local plan since the last Regulation 18 plan version.
- The Central Development Area (CDA) will provide around 6286 dwellings largely on brownfield sites to contribute towards housing supply. This is an increase on the previous Regulation 18 plan version of 1386 dwellings. The CDA also provides a focus for retailing, culture, leisure and entertainment.
- Employment – To meet around 30ha of employment need, new sites remain proposed to be allocated at the former Western Park Golf course; East of Ashton Green and Beaumont Park as well as two smaller sites at Thurcaston Road/Hadrian Road and Mountain Road. The city centre remains the focus for office proposals. Note, one or both of Beaumont Park and Thurcaston/Hadrian Road sites could provide Gypsy and Traveller transit sites.
- Open Space – The plan provides for a balance between housing, employment and open space. Development site proposals include some green wedge loss and public open space reductions. However, there are opportunities to secure new open space on strategic sites and enhance the quality of existing public open space through developer contributions.

- Transport – The plan will support the emerging Leicester Local Transport Plan, in particular improving key transport hubs; providing a fast and efficient bus network; and promoting walking and cycling.

### **3.4 Key planning policies that planning applications will be judged against.**

The following key policies included in the draft pre-submission Reg 19 Local Plan are highlighted:

- Climate Change – Includes air quality, transport, energy and flooding
- Health and Wellbeing – Good design, open spaces, employment, cycling and walking
- Internal Space Standards – City wide
- Affordable Housing including 30% on greenfield sites
- Policies in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation, student housing, retention of family housing and supported housing
- Delivering Quality Places – includes tall buildings where suitable, landscaping, shopfronts, protecting residential amenity
- Policies to preserve our heritage assets and to support tourism in the city
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of open space
- Protecting designated bio-diversity sites and support for Bio-diversity Net Gain
- Policies to protect existing sports pitches and support for new ones
- Support the city's retail hierarchy and leisure and cultural facilities

- **Local Plan Timetable**

Subject to emerging Government policy and any associated changes in plan making requirements, the timetable for the local plan is as follows:

- *Issues and Options - Public Consultation (Complete)*

- *Emerging Options, Sites and Development Management Policies – Public Consultation (Complete)*
- *Public Consultation on Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) (Complete)*
- Public Consultation on pre-submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) – January 2023
- Submit Local Plan to Government – estimated June 2023
- Local Plan Formally Adopted – Early 2024

#### **4. Proposed Public Consultation and Submission**

Officers will carry out consultation in line with the approved Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) document, which sets out how we will involve the public, developers, businesses and other agencies in the preparation of the council's planning policy documents.

It is intended to use a variety of methods of communication for consultation on the local plan. These include letters and e-mails, press releases and social media to ensure that there is appropriate public consultation and participation.

Following consultation, the pre-submission local plan and its supporting evidence will be submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.

#### **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### 5.1 Financial implications

Whilst a great deal of officer time and effort goes into the development of the Local Plan, these costs are largely funded through existing staff budgets and reserves set aside for this purpose.

Stuart McAvoy, Acting Head of Finance, Ext 37 4004

##### 5.2 Legal implications

The draft pre-submission local plan will be subject to a further period of public consultation (Regulation 19). A public hearing before an independently appointed Inspector will then be arranged prior to adoption of the Local Plan by the Council.

The governing provisions dealing with these procedures are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 as amended.

Legal, Stuart Evans

### 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Buildings and land are responsible for the majority of Leicester's Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions, with new development leading to both operational and embodied emissions. Considering the council's declaration of a climate emergency and ambition to reach carbon neutrality, it is therefore vital that these emissions are considered and addressed, including through the new Local Plan.

The council's current Climate Emergency Action Plan includes an action to ensure that the new Local Plan addresses the climate emergency. As set out within this report, the new Local Plan will include a policy on climate change, which will implement this action. The Climate Emergency Action Plan also contains an action on carrying out a study on sustainable construction to inform the Local Plan, which has been carried out. In addition, the council's Sustainability Service has been consulted on development of the new policy as part of the development of the Plan.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

### 5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

This is an on-going duty. Where a disproportionate negative impact on a particular protected characteristic/s is identified, steps should be taken to mitigate (reduce or remove) that impact.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

One of the three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development is a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.

The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to ensure that all members of the public, stakeholders and industry professionals can become involved in the plan making process, and comment on planning applications. It aims to ensure that the views of a wide range of stakeholders from across a range of protected characteristics, backgrounds and communities are considered, supporting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Meaningful consultation on the local plan is an important method of collating evidence around any potential equalities implications and should aid the authority in paying due regard to the aims of the PSED.

An equality impact assessment has been produced for the plan; the assessment is an iterative document and should be revisited and updated throughout the process and should take into account the consultation findings. It is important that the consultation is accessible.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None applicable

**6. Background information and other papers:**

- Local Plan – Attached
- Policy Map via link above in 3.1
- Supporting Evidence accessed via link above in 3.1 – Also see list in Appendix 2