



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 17 December 2024	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation and Submission (January 2025)**

Report Author(s): **Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval to publicly consult on the Pre-Submission draft Local Plan for a 6-week period proposed to commence on Friday 10 January 2025, running until Friday 21 February 2025 and subsequent submission to The Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2025 for Examination.
Report Summary:	<p>The Local Plan will be the Council's key planning policy document for the period 2020 to 2041. The Local Plan contains planning policies that drive, as well as shape sustainable development throughout the Plan period. The Plan will also protect and enhance the Borough's historic heritage and green open spaces through designation of appropriate land.</p> <p>The Plan sets out the Borough's housing and employment targets that the Council seeks to provide over the Plan period. To ensure the housing and employment targets are met over the Plan period, the Plan allocates land for development and contains Policies that specify how the allocations should be built out.</p> <p>Once adopted, the new Local Plan will supersede the current Local Plan (2019).</p>
Recommendation(s):	That Members approve the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan for the purposes of public consultation proposed to commence on Friday 10 January 2025, running until Friday 21 February 2025, with the subsequent submission to The Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2025 for Examination.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	<p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Jamie Carr (Planning Policy and Development Manager) (0116) 257 2652 jamie.carr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer) (0116) 257 2650 ed.morgan@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Strategic Objectives:	<p>Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)</p>

Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	The implications are as set out at paragraph 1.14 of this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at paragraph 1.4 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. Initial EA Screening (See Appendices)
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None so far, however this report is seeking approval to consult with the public and other key stakeholders.
Background Papers:	Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground (June 2022)
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Local Plan 2. Draft Adopted Policies Map 3. Equality Assessment Initial Screening

1. Information

Pre-Submission Local Plan Consultation and Submission for Examination

- 1.1 In producing a Local Plan the Council is required to undertake a number of formal public consultations at specific times and milestones (as set by national legislation and the Council's Local Development Scheme). The Council has undertaken all of the required public consultations to date, including public consultations during, September and October 2021 and April and May 2024. As well as public consultations, Members of the Council have been involved throughout the process. Council Committees, All Member Briefings and Place Shaping Working Group meetings have been integral to the Local Plans production.
- 1.2 The Pre-Submission Local Plan public consultation is the final consultation period prior to the document being submitted to The Planning Inspectorate for approval. Once the consultation period has been completed, any representations submitted to the Council regarding the Pre-Submission Local Plan will be collated and submitted to The Planning Inspectorate alongside the Local Plan document itself. The Council can submit proposed

changes to the document at this stage also. The Planning Inspectorate will then appoint an independent Planning Inspector to consider the Local Plan and any proposed changes as part of an Examination in Public.

- 1.3 The Examination process will begin on the day of Submission and the Planning Inspector will take responsibility for conducting the public examination into the soundness of the Local Plan. The Council is not yet aware of the likely dates for the public examination itself, although it is likely to be some point in late 2025 or into 2026.
- 1.4 Throughout the Examination period the Council is required to pay for the Planning Inspector's time (approximately £993 per day). However, the Council has sufficient budget to cover this, funded from the Local Plan Reserve, towards the cost of the Examination.
- 1.5 For the Examination period the Council is also required to employ a Programme Officer to assist the Planning Inspector. Due to the nature of the Local Plan process, the Programme Officer should be independent from the process of preparing the Plan. The Programme Officer is a part time post, and the role will be fulfilled by the Council's Assistant Development Control Officer as part of the duties associated with this post.
- 1.6 It must be noted, that it is particularly important that the Council launches the public consultation period on this Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan within 1 month of the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework, which the Government has said that it intends to publish by year-end. Central government has prescribed this as Local Authorities will need to adhere to the new Plan-making system including the new Standard Method for calculating housing need. The new formula for calculating housing need in the Borough would result in a significant increase in the Borough's housing need with a rise from the current figure of 240 homes per annum that the draft Local Plan seeks to deliver to 389 homes per annum.
- 1.7 The transitional arrangements afford Council's (like ourselves), that are close to Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation stage, the time to continue to use their current evidence base. Local Plans that do not reach Regulation 19 through the transitional arrangements would need to take account of the Government's new publications and would need to update evidence base to account for this; the Plan would essentially need to be rewritten. Rewriting a Local Plan would extend the period to adoption by many months. This delay could put the Council in a position whereby speculative unsustainable and unplanned developments would likely need to be permitted.

Spatial Strategy for Development within the Borough

- 1.8 The Plan takes the figure of 240 homes per annum agreed via the Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground (2022) and uses this as the basis for the 21 year Plan period to give a total of 5,040 homes. This figure of 240 is at the upper end of the range tested in the Sustainability Appraisal that can be accommodated and still be sustainable. To avoid any doubt, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to roll forward the figure of 240 dwellings per annum for the entire Plan period, including between 2036 and 2041.
- 1.9 There have already been 990 dwelling completions since the year 2020, and we do have a healthy supply of extant planning permissions, meaning that the residual number of homes needed to fulfil the 5,040 requirement is circa 3,500 dwellings up to 2041.
- 1.10 Taking account of the Site Options available for consideration, the Council has undertaken a thorough assessment of each Site Option and evidence-based assessments to inform its position with regards to the Council's Site Allocation Policies to meet the Borough's housing requirement to 2041.

- 1.11 The spatial strategy for housing growth allows sufficient flexibility to ensure that the Plan aligns with national policy and guidance and allows for choice and competition within the Borough. The eight Allocation Sites (see Chapter 12 and Adopted Policies Map for full details) in this Plan already have upward of five different developers invested in the delivery of new homes, with further developers likely to become involved as progress of those allocated sites continues through the planning process and come to market over the Plan period.
- 1.12 The Council is also allocating a range of size of housing sites, ensuring that the development comes forward by various developers and at different times, meaning that the Council is not 'putting all its eggs in one basket'.
- 1.13 With the Pre-Submission Local Plan being, effectively, the Plan the Council wishes to adopt, at consultation stage the Plan will have 'significant weight' and will be a material consideration in all planning related decisions that the Council makes. This position, however, is still subject to the Planning Inspector finding the Local Plan sound at Examination.
- 1.14 The Council therefore needs to ensure that the Local Plan is legally compliant and meets the tests of soundness.
- 1.15 To ensure that the Local Plan fulfils certain required directives and legislation, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared for this Pre-Submission stage of the Plan. SA is a tool used at the Plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the Plan when judged against reasonable alternatives. The Sustainability Appraisal will also be consulted on in public alongside this Plan, as will all of the relevant evidence that the Council has commissioned or undertaken.

Conclusion

- 1.16 Subject to Committee approval, the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan public consultation period is proposed to commence on Friday, 10 January 2025 for a 6-week period, with the subsequent Submission to The Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2025 for Examination (date TBC).