

Thursday, 26 October 2023

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To seek Cabinet approval to publish the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet approve the publication of the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses, as included in Appendix A.
2. Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Growth and Regeneration to make any final typographical and formatting amendments to the document prior to publication.

Executive Summary

Tamworth Borough Council are currently in the early stages of producing a new local plan, which will guide development up until 2043. The Issues and Options Consultation formed the first stage of this process, and was approved by Cabinet for publication on Thursday 8th September 2022.

The consultation was held for a period of seven weeks, from Friday 30th September 2022 to Monday 14th November 2022. Views were sought on the key issues facing the borough and the potential options to address them. The consultation was open to the general public as well as other stakeholders including neighbouring councils, landowners, and developers. In total, representations were received from 47 parties.

Planning officers have collated all of the comments that were received into the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses document, which is included in Appendix A of this report. The document focuses on each feedback point posed in the consultation, and lists all of the associated comments that were submitted. Planning officers have provided initial responses to all of the representations received, alongside any further action points where deemed appropriate.

The document was reviewed by the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee on 13th September 2023, where it was resolved to endorse all of the recommendations to Cabinet.

It is intended for the document in Appendix A to be published on the Council's website, subject to any minor typographical or formatting amendments.

Options Considered

The alternative option is to refrain from publishing the consultation responses at this stage, and instead delay release of the document until the Examination period. This is not considered the most suitable approach, as publication at this stage would demonstrate a high degree of transparency from the beginning of the local plan process, and align with common practice amongst other local authorities. Delaying publication would forego the opportunity to publicly share an update on the progress of the new plan, and for all interested parties to have the chance to understand the ideas and viewpoints which will directly contribute to the next stage of plan development. As such, releasing the document now may encourage more individuals to engage with the wider plan process and potentially instigate greater participation with future consultations.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications associated with the recommendations contained within this report.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

Planning regulations do not require the consultation responses to be published at this stage. However, it is considered common practice amongst other local authorities to do so, and would encourage transparency in the plan-making process. In consideration of this, there are no legal or risk implications associated with the recommendations contained within this report.

Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications resulting from the recommendations set out in this report.

At each appropriate stage later in the plan making process, an equalities impact assessment will be carried out to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's own policies on diversity and equality.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

There are no direct environmental or sustainability implications resulting from the recommendations set out in this report.

With regard to the wider development of a new local plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the need for sustainable economic growth on which local plans are to be based and includes clear policies that guide how the presumption should be applied locally. Sustainability is therefore at the heart of plan making and will be appropriately assessed at each stage of the process.

Background Information

In March 2020, Tamworth Borough Council conducted a review of the current local plan. This process concluded that, although the plan remained generally in

accordance with national policy and was performing relatively well, a number of changes would be required to ensure continued compliance. The extent of these changes were deemed significant enough to warrant the production of a new local plan for Tamworth, which will guide development across the borough until the year 2043.

The process of developing the new plan consists of numerous stages, as indicatively timetabled in the current Local Development Scheme (LDS). The process begins with the Issues and Options document, followed by the Preferred Options and subsequent Pre-Submission. The final draft plan is then submitted before being independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate. The process concludes with the adoption of the plan by the Council.

The publication of the Issues and Options document was approved by Cabinet on Thursday 8th September 2022. A subsequent consultation was held over a seven week period, from Friday 30th September 2022 to Monday 14th November 2022. The consultation sought views on the key planning issues facing the borough over the proposed plan period, and the potential options available to address them.

In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the consultation was publicised via the Council's website, social media channels and accompanying press release. Officers from the Planning Policy Team also directly contacted 188 parties via email to provide notification of the consultation and offer instructions to participate. These parties consisted of statutory bodies, local authorities in the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA), and all individuals/organisations who had requested to receive updates regarding local plan progress.

Residents, businesses, government bodies, developers and other interested groups shared their thoughts on a range of feedback points posed throughout the document. Respondents were able to participate via a number of methods, including an online survey, email or in writing. In total, the consultation received representations from 47 parties.

Planning officers have reviewed all of the comments submitted as part of the consultation. These have been collated into the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses Document, as included in Appendix A. Each comment is accompanied by an initial response from planning officers, alongside any further action points.

All of the representations received through the consultation will contribute towards the next stage of local plan production.

The document included in Appendix A was considered by the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee at the meeting of Thursday 13th September 2023. The committee resolved to endorse all of the recommendations to Cabinet, with no amendments to the document suggested.

Report Author

Laura Massey - Planning Policy and Delivery Officer

Richard Powell – Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader

List of Background Papers

8 September 2022 – Report of the Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste – Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

13 September 2023 – Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning – Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses

Appendices

Appendix A – The Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Responses