

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	24 September 2014
3.	Title:	Rotherham Local Plan: Public Consultation
4.	Directorate:	Environment & Development Services

5. Summary

The report seeks Cabinet approval for public consultation on the Local Plan. The consultation is planned to commence 13 October 2014 for a six week period until 24 November 2014 and will cover the potential development sites around all the Borough's communities, the refined development management policies and the draft Policies Map.

6. Recommendations

- 1. Cabinet approve the final draft Sites and Policies document for public consultation.**
- 2. Cabinet endorse the approach set out in the Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Action Plan summary attached at Appendix 1.**

7. Proposals and Details

Purpose

Rotherham's Local Plan decides **how much** new growth we need, **where** it should go and **when** it should happen. The Local Plan consists of two documents; the Core Strategy setting out the broad amount and distribution of future growth and the Sites & Policies document setting out the detailed sites and development management policies to deliver this growth.

The Core Strategy has recently been passed by the government-appointed, independent planning inspector. The inspector considers that we have fully met all the legal requirements and have complied with the duty to co-operate with other authorities and bodies. The inspector's decision was reported to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 9 July, with the Council meeting on 10 Sept formally adopting the Core Strategy as part of the statutory development plan for Rotherham.

Previous public consultation on the Sites & Policies document was undertaken in summer 2013. This presented the potential development sites for housing and employment around all the Borough's communities and the draft development management policies to steer decisions on planning applications. The latest version of the Sites & Policies document, a "final draft", reflects the feedback from the 2013 consultation. Crucially, it can also be finalised now that the Core Strategy is adopted and we know exactly what housing target we are planning for.

The final draft Sites and Policies document will be made available to Cabinet Members prior to the meeting.

Consultation

In carrying out the consultation, we will build on the successful features of previous Local Plan consultations by carrying out:

- four targeted public "drop in" sessions on potential development sites for communities
- pre-publicity for the consultation and specific local events
- advance briefings for Ward Members, MPs and Parish Councillors
- close working with libraries and Parish Councils
- early engagement with the local press as a further means of ensuring engagement with and involvement of local people

A summary of the Local Plan Consultation and Community Engagement Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1. This may be subject to minor changes in the run up to consultation launch as the detail is finalised.

Sites and Policies document

The Sites & Policies document presents to the public and other interested stakeholders the **detail** of where potential development sites will be. This enables local people and stakeholders to give their views on individual sites and have a further opportunity to influence the draft before it is eventually submitted to government.

The Sites and Policies document also contains development management policies to guide decisions on planning applications and includes designations to protect sensitive locations. A review of all town, district and local centres and Mixed Use areas has been undertaken to inform the uses that will be supported in these areas.

We have also amended and updated the draft Policies Map. The Policies Map shows all designations (residential areas, employment areas, Mixed Use areas, retail areas, community facilities, etc.) and all heritage interests, including the amended Green Belt boundary, statutorily and non-statutorily protected sites.

We have prepared a Feedback Report on the previous 2013 consultation which will be published at the same time as this next round of consultation. We have also responded to each of the comments made in 2013 on our consultation portal, these responses will be made 'live' when the next round of consultation begins.

A number of evidence base studies, good practice guidance notes and background papers are being finalised to support the Sites and Policies document. These will be published alongside the consultation documents.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The cost of the consultation will be met from the existing Planning Policy budget, although any expansion of the consultation would result in significant pressure on the financial and staffing resource available. Corporate assistance with the consultation will be sought for officers from relevant services.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Cabinet approval of the public consultation is sought to enable the further preparation and refinement of the Sites and Policies document.

- The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) express a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development. Our UDP policies only continue to have any weight where they are in accordance with the NPPF.
- Rotherham's Core Strategy is now in place and helps provide an up-to-date planning policy framework for the Borough's future growth and development. Progress on the supporting Sites & Policies document is vital to complete the Local Plan and bring forward the development sites required to implement the Core Strategy.
- A failure to achieve timely progress on the Local Plan could delay adoption of the policies required to guide future decision-making on planning applications.

- Having a Local Plan in place will provide a steer for any neighbourhood plans that may emerge under the provisions of the Localism Act.
- Failure to make progress with the Local Plan risks delayed provision of the new homes and employment opportunities that the Borough needs.
- New development will provide opportunities for construction workers, boosting local employment levels.
- New development opportunities will attract inward investors to Rotherham.
- There is a risk of premature release of potential allocation sites, currently within the Green Belt, on appeal, as the Council is unable to demonstrate it is meeting its five years housing land supply until the Sites & Policies document is adopted.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The implementation of the Local Plan will make a positive contribution to all of Rotherham's Regeneration priorities. The adopted Core Strategy and supporting documents will further the objectives of the Corporate Plan and support the delivery of the Rotherham Sustainable Community Strategy by:

- providing sufficient good quality homes
- ensuring well designed, decent affordable housing
- providing employment land to meet the needs of the modern economy and support sustainable communities through access to employment opportunities
- promoting the "town centre first" policy approach to help the regeneration and renaissance of Rotherham Town Centre

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Local Plan Adopted Core Strategy (September 2014)

Local Plan draft Sites and Policies (May 2013)

Feedback Report 2013

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Appendix 1: Consultation and Community Engagement Action Plan

Dates (2014)	Activity	Comments
TBC	Brief Ward Members and parish council chairs on proposed sites	Drop-in session at the Town Hall.
17 Sept	Press briefings	Cabinet agenda public 17 Sept.
24 Sept	Cabinet approve consultation	Sites & Policies Document and Policies Map available to Cabinet Members from 17 Sept.
w/b 29 Sept	Brief librarians	Principal librarians briefed.
w/b 29 Sept	Brief MPs	Briefing note circulated.
w/b 6 Oct	Advert placed in local press: Rotherham Advertiser, South Yorkshire Times, Dinnington and Maltby Guardian	Format of a "Statutory Notice" including dates, times and venues for public drop-ins.
w/b 6 Oct	Brief RMBC managers	Circulate Managers Briefing
w/b 6 Oct	Notify consultees	Letter and/or email sent to all consultees.
w/b 6 Oct	Notify Parish Councils	Parish Council briefing note and CD of documents sent out.
13 Oct	Consultation launch: Press and radio interviews as required with Rother FM, BBC Radio Sheffield, Hallam FM	Reference hard copy documents and CDs in customer service centres and libraries. Website made live with event details and all consultation material. Community Map website made live with interactive Policies Map.
November	4 x public drop-in sessions "North", "East", "Central" and "South"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rawmarsh High Street Centre • Wickersley Community Centre • Dinnington Community Resource Centre • MyPlace Rotherham Town Centre (opening hours 14:00 – 19:00)
24 Nov	Consultation close	