

Item 6 Appendix 1 - Key Stages in the Local Development Plan Preparation

- 1.1 To set in context the work described in this paper, the key stages in the Local Development Plan process are summarised below (see also Figure 1). Members will note from Figure 1 that preparing the Local Development Plan is considered to be a 40 month process. However, this timeframe is considered to be aspirational and is not considered to be realistically achievable by any Council's LDP team, requiring practically all of the topic-based background preparatory work and Member / stakeholder involvement to have been undertaken in advance of the Plan Timetable being published.

Stage 1: Initial Plan Preparation

- 1.2 This stage includes the development of the evidence base described earlier in this paper, preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Timetable and the production of the Preferred Options Paper (POP). The Timetable will set out the Council's programme for the production of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan including key milestones and timelines for plan production through to adoption. The SCI will promote a more meaningful and effective approach to enable interested parties and the local community to engage early in the plan process and throughout its preparation. Before a Council can consult on its Preferred Options Paper, it must have an agreed SCI in place in order to inform the general public and all stakeholders of how, where and when they can become involved in the Local Development Plan preparation process and the timescale for doing so.
- 1.3 In preparing a POP, a Council must undertake the initial stages of Sustainability Appraisal (SA). As illustrated in Figure 1, the SA is a continual process which runs parallel with the preparation of the POP and Local Development Plan (LDP). An SA Interim Report (consisting of SA Scoping Report and assessment of alternatives) will be published with the POP. The POP will indicate the Council's preferred options for growth and development in the area and will be the basis for consulting with the public and stakeholders. At this stage in the process, the public and stakeholders will have an opportunity to formally put forward views and influence the Local Development Plan.

Stage 2: Preparation and Adoption of Plan Strategy

- 1.4 This stage of the Local Development Plan preparation process consists of the preparation and publication of the draft Plan Strategy which will be independently examined prior to adoption. A Council will prepare a draft Plan Strategy based on both the information gathered and also the public and stakeholders responses to the Preferred Options Paper. As part of this process, the Council will also carry out a range of assessments including Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Rural Proofing. The Council will then publish our draft Plan Strategy, SA and other assessments for public consultation.
- 1.5 The Department will appoint the PAC or other independent examiners to hold the Independent Examination (IE). The IE will examine the Draft Plan Strategy against 'soundness' tests which will relate to how the Plan Strategy has been

produced, and how it has taken account of central government plans, policy and guidance, and also its coherence, consistency and effectiveness. Following the IE, the examiner will issue a report of its findings to the Department which will in turn consider this and issue a binding report to the Council. On this basis, the Council must incorporate any changes outlined in the binding report and subsequently adopt the Plan Strategy.

Stage 3: Preparation and Adoption of Local Policies Plan

- 1.6 The Local Policies Plan must be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and incorporate detailed site specific proposals for the plan area. The Plan Strategy must be adopted before the draft Local Policies Plan is published for consultation, subjected to IE and adopted. The process for the preparation of the Local Policies Plan is largely similar to that of the Plan Strategy outlined above. The draft Local Policies Plan and associated assessments will also be published for public consultation. Following this, the process for IE and adoption of the Local Policies Plan will be similar to that of the Plan Strategy.

Stage 4: Monitoring and Review

- 1.7 The final stage in the Local Development Plan preparation process is monitoring and review which are essential in establishing how the objectives in the Local Development Plan are being achieved and whether any changes are required. Regular monitoring of the implementation of the Local Development Plan is required and this will include the preparation of an Annual Monitoring Report which specifies the amount of housing and economic land, the number of housing completions and any other relevant information regarding the implementation of the Local Development Plan. The Annual Monitoring Report must also be submitted to the Department. A Council will also be required to undertake regular reviews of their Local Development Plan at least every 5 years from the date of adoption of the Local Policies Plan and submit its findings to the Department.

Figure 1:
Proposed local development plan process

