

Welcome to the tenth edition of *SPATIAL PLANNING UPDATE*, keeping you informed about planning policy matters in the Borough. In this edition, we wanted to take the opportunity to review and reflect back on 2017 as well as looking to the year ahead.

If you need any further information or explanation, please feel free to get in touch with the Spatial Planning team. Our contact details are at the bottom of the page.

Local Plan Strategy

We started January 2017 analysing the Local Plan Inspector's views on the need for main modifications following six weeks of examination hearings in late 2016, signalling that the Local Plan could move onto the Main Modifications Stage. On behalf of the Inspector, the council ran a further six weeks public consultation regarding draft Main Modifications ending in late March with 311 representations from 108 representors. The council considered all representations and reported the findings and changes in a full statement of consultation back to the Inspector.

We were then in the hands of the Inspector awaiting his Final Report which arrived towards the end of June. The report concluded that 'the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough providing a number of Main Modifications are made to the Plan'. This completed the Plan's examination stage and the council swiftly took the Plan for adoption at full council on the 27 July 2017. The Spatial Planning Team would like to thank all local councils for engaging in the Local Plan process and helping to shape the new statutory development plan.

In the interests of reducing the need for printed copies of the Local Plan Strategy, electronic copies can be downloaded for free, and an easy to use interactive version is available on the Council's website:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local-plan-strategy/local_plan_strategy.aspx

Printed copies are available on request to Town and Parish Councils at £20.00 each (plus postage of £2.50). Alternatively, copies can be collected from Westfields. Please e-mail: localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Plan led development coming forward as a result of an adopted Local Plan

Looking ahead, the new Local Plan provides the best opportunity to ensure that planning application decisions are plan-led, providing greater certainty for residents and others about what development they are likely to see in their area.

Proposals are coming forward on allocated Local Plan sites which will bring additional housing to support jobs growth across the Borough. Importantly this will include new affordable homes. The Plan can be downloaded at:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_strategy.aspx

In October 2017 the council approved a Development Framework for the Royal London Site at Wilmslow, a strategic allocation in the Local Plan. It was shaped through public consultation between 23 June and 4 August 2017 which included a drop-in event on 4 July at Wilmslow Leisure Centre.

The draft document was updated in light of the comments received during the consultation and was approved on 10 October 2017 by Cheshire East's Cabinet to help guide future planning applications for development within the site.

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

With the final Local Plan examinations completed in late 2016, the council started to turn its attention in January 2017 to work on the second part of the Local Plan to provide more detailed Development Management policies to steer planning application decision making. On 20 February 2017, the Portfolio Holder agreed to start the first stage in taking the SADPD forward with the publication and consultation of an Issues Paper and a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. There was also a 'call for sites' to enable landowners, developers, service providers and others to submit details of sites that they believe are suitable and available to meet development needs. It provided a pool of sites for the council to assess and consider.

The six week public consultation took place between 27 February and 10 April 2017, during which an invitation was extended to all local councils to meet, but we were particularly keen to meet those covering our Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres and others preparing Neighbourhood Plans. Many of you took us up on the offer and we had 1,478 responses from 185 different parties and around 1,000 sites submitted under the 'Call for sites'. This gave the council an understanding of initial views about the scope of the Plan and the direction of potential policies, along with land availability. A range of studies were commenced in the first part of the year to ensure that the policies and proposals in the Plan are based on appropriate and up to date evidence.

This work includes:

- The development of a Landscape Strategy including a review of Local Landscape Designations
- Local Wildlife Sites updates
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment update
- Housing Mix Study
- Town Centre and Shopping Impact Thresholds Study
- Retail Capacity Study Update
- Spatial Distribution Study – establishing development requirements to individual Local Service Centres
- Site Assessments to inform any further land allocations – looking at how submitted sites perform in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability

Now, at the beginning of 2018, the Spatial Planning Team is well advanced with this evidence work and will focus on drafting policies in the early part of the New Year. The intention is to publish a first draft of the Plan for public consultation in the first half of 2018. Considering the Local Plan Strategy was adopted only six months ago, to have a draft of the second part of the Plan published for consultation in this timescale shows the ongoing commitment of the council to ensure that a comprehensive suite of up to date planning policies are in place to support the achievement of plan-led sustainable development and provide a clear Local Plan context for the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

We remain committed to fully engage local councils in the preparation of the SADPD. We will be in touch about further informal meetings with town and parish councils to discuss some of the issues that arise from the initial findings of our evidence work, particularly with those local councils covering Local Service Centres and those currently preparing neighbourhood plans. However, please do not hesitate to get in touch if there is anything you would like to ask us or discuss with us at any point in time.

Minerals and Waste Development Plan (MWDPD)

The legacy Minerals and Waste local plans are very dated and this new Plan will bring the council's Minerals and Waste policies up to date and fully compliant with current Government guidance. The MWDPD will form the third part of the council's Local Plan. We started 2017 with a comprehensive review of the existing evidence base and identified where new evidence is required. This included the need to update the council's Waste Management Needs Assessment (WMNA) and this was procured during February 2017. The completed WMNA is now available to view on the Council's website. The updated assessment is key to helping the council understand the implications for waste arisings and management capacity resulting from the increased levels of housing and employment identified in the Local Plan Strategy.

In March 2017, the Strategic Planning Board considered a Minerals and Waste Issues paper which was approved for consultation by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning on 4 April 2017. The consultation ran from 24 April to 5 June 2017 and also invited landowners, developers, operators and other interested parties to submit sites and areas that they consider to be suitable for minerals or waste purposes. Whilst the consultation was underway, we also contacted other planning authorities across the country regarding 'cross boundary' issues relating to the use and movement of minerals and waste.

A report of consultation on the Issues paper is available on the council's website. Work has begun on assessing the sites submitted as part of the 'Call for Sites' exercise.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that the council will have a draft MWDPD for consultation towards the latter part of 2018 as resources are focussed on bringing forward CIL and the SADPD.

Community Infrastructure Levy

On top of delivering in parallel both the SADPD and the MWDPD, which will complete the suite of development plans for the council, the team has also been progressing the formulation of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is a charge that the council can make on certain new developments to raise funds to invest in infrastructure in the Borough.

Consultation took place on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) in March and April 2017. It set out the initial draft charging rates on new development across the Borough. A total of 56 responses were received from Town and Parish Councils, residents and the development industry.

These comments were considered in preparing for the next stage of consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule. This was the subject of a further six weeks of consultation during September, October and November 2017.

Following this latest consultation, we are now considering the responses received. We were aware that the Government intended to make an announcement regarding the future of CIL in its Autumn Budget Statement on Wednesday 22 November. Instead of the radical revisions to CIL that had been recommended to the Government by the CIL Review Group at the end of 2016, the Budget Statement confirmed the Government's commitment to retain CIL. We are therefore continuing with our plans to submit the Draft Charging Schedule for scrutiny by an independent examiner. It is envisaged that CIL could be adopted and operational in the Autumn of 2018.

Neighbourhood Planning

What a year for neighbourhood plans! The council remains an exemplar nationwide, being the fourth most active authority for neighbourhood planning in the country and the leader in the north west with 49 neighbourhood planning groups across the Borough. This year alone we have seen plans completed and 'made' from Holmes Chapel,

Astbury and Moreton, Goostrey, Weston and Basford, Buerton, Willaston and Wistaston and successful examinations completed by Stapeley, Somerford and Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths. Knutsford, Wilmslow and Poynton are making great progress toward publishing draft Plans and Calveley have just started their regulation 14 consultation, Congleton have finished theirs earlier in the month and Disley and Bollington have submitted their finalised plans to us for examination.

Our progress has been supported by the Housing White Paper, released early in the year, which renewed commitment to neighbourhood planning and set out an important role for neighbourhood plans in the future. April 2017 was probably the busiest month for neighbourhood plan strategy when the Neighbourhood Planning Act gained Royal Assent enshrining the true powers of plans firmly into law. This confirmed that neighbourhood planning will continue to carry important weight in planning decisions. This was demonstrated in April in an appeal decision for a proposed development at Marton. A conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan was fundamental in the dismissal of an application for 27 homes in the village. Finally in April we pointed you to a new document available to help Town and Parish Councillors understand neighbourhood planning. Here is a reminder of the link (PDF, 9.8Mb):

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Good-Councillors-Guide-to-Neighbourhood-Planning.pdf>

In September, the government confirmed £22.8million funding over the period 2018-22 for groups preparing neighbourhood plans. This meant that if you had not at that point claimed funding, or were just starting out, then finance would and still is available to support your plan making.

Over the course of the last year the neighbourhood planning team has been reviewing its support to communities across Cheshire East and is now offering an updated set of services (see our refreshed Service Level Agreement on our Tools and Support Page of the website). This includes a more focused approach to the early stages of your process which will help you draft a neighbourhood plan more quickly. In refocusing our support, the team are also seeking to minimise costs whilst ensuring continuity of services and will be introducing limited charges for a number of activities currently provided. From 1st January 2018 charges will apply to our provision of Housing Needs Advice Reports, Character Assessment Reports and specialist mapping services. These charges will only apply to new work undertaken (not to anything already underway) and will be to cover costs only. The full details are set out in our updated Service Level Agreement, and if you have any queries about our new support agreement then please contact us on neighbourhoods@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

We're looking forward to supporting your communities through the neighbourhood planning process and you can find out more about our updated offer for 2018 via our website:

<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-planning.aspx>

Other work undertaken by Spatial Planning during this year

Even with the progression and delivery of the major projects above, we have contributed to or delivered a number of other pieces of work, including:

Six weeks of public consultation was undertaken on the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Facilities Strategy took place between 18 April 2017 and 20 May 2017. These important documents provide an assessment of existing sports facilities and the future demand for them, linked to the levels of growth proposed in the Local Plan Strategy. They also include action plans to ensure that the right number and type of sports facilities are provided to meet the needs of existing and future residents in the Borough – and in doing so providing more opportunities for people to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle. These documents are now being used to inform the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies and the preparation of further policies in the SADPD.

For more information on any of the above, please contact the Spatial Planning Team on the details below:
Email: localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk or phone: 01270 685893

Three Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs) were published during 2017; the 2013/14 AMR and the 2014/15 AMR in April and the 2015/16 AMR in the Autumn.

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/authority-monitoring-report/authority-monitoring-report.aspx

In May 2017, the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Regeneration approved the adoption of the Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The guide is intended to ensure that all new residential developments achieve a high quality of design, reflecting local distinctiveness and characteristics, including the type of materials, natural features, surroundings and other connections within the locality. The adopted SPD can be viewed or downloaded from the council's website at

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/supplementary_plan_documents/design-guide-supplementary-planning-document.aspx

We would again like to thank those who submitted any comments on the draft document for their valuable contribution to this SPD.

In August 2017, in line with the requirements of national planning policy, we published our latest Housing Monitoring Update giving the most up to date position regarding housing delivery and housing land supply as at 31 March 2017. It identifies that 1,762 homes (net) were built in Cheshire East in 2016/17. This is a 20% increase in the level of housebuilding in the borough compared to 2015/16 and continues the positive trajectory of housing growth. There is every expectation that housing delivery will continue to rise through the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy and the plan-led release of additional sustainable development opportunities.

Also in August, work progressed on the first Brownfield Register for Cheshire East. This is a new requirement for all local planning authorities introduced by the Government and is intended to provide up-to-date information on brownfield land that is suitable for housing. The council's first Register was approved by the Portfolio Holder on 18 December 2017 and is now available on the council's web site:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/brownfield-register.aspx

.....and finally.....

It just goes for us to wish you a Happy New Year.