

Swindon Borough Local Plan Review – Regulation 19 Consultation

Cabinet

Date: 4th December 2019

Author: Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning /
Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek approval to undertake public consultation on the submission draft Swindon Borough Local Plan Review for a period of 6 weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.2 Community engagement is an essential part of the Plan preparation. A specified period of public consultation is required to enable the wider community to assess the draft Local Plan prior to it being submitted for examination in 2020.
- 1.3 The Local Plan Review will have a key role in implementing many of the Corporate Plan's priorities and will be fundamental in delivering key elements of the Priority One: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to submit to Council that it:

- 2.1 Authorises the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services, and Heritage to undertake public consultation on the Draft Swindon Borough Local Plan Review as attached at Appendix 1 in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraph 3.24.
- 2.2 Authorises the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services, and Heritage, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, and the Chief Legal Officer, to make minor non-material changes to the content of the documents if required, prior to publication.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an up to date Local Plan to provide a planning framework to shape and guide future development through the determination of planning applications in the Borough.
- 3.2 The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 was adopted on March 26th 2015 (Council Minute 97, 2014/15 refers). The independent Local Plan Inspector in his report recommended an early review of the Plan to update the housing and employment land requirements.

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- 3.3 The revised Local Development Scheme was approved for publication in March 2019 (Cabinet Minute 76, 2019/20 refers). It sets out the timetable for the review of the Local Plan. In accordance with this timetable it is intended to undertake public consultation on the draft Local Plan in the winter of 2019/20.
- 3.4 Public consultation on the preferred and ‘emerging’ options for the Local Plan was undertaken between 29th July 2019 and 23rd September 2019 in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), (Cabinet Minute 19, 2019/20 refers).
- 3.5 In total approximately 1,100 comments were received from about 400 individuals and organisations. Many of the individual comments received from residents were in relation to specific development site proposals, principally land at Marlborough Road, Badbury, sites at Wanborough and Wroughton, particularly land north of the Ridgeway School. The main issues raised were loss of open space and potential traffic implications. Other areas of concern related to the safeguarding of the canal route through Swindon Central Area and climate change policies.
- 3.6 A number of representations were received from landowners and developers promoting their particular land interests. Many developers also commented on the overall housing requirement in the Borough and development management design policies.
- 3.7 In a number of addition sites were submitted during the consultation for consideration in the Plan. These are listed at Appendix 3 to this Report and have been assessed through the Sustainability Assessment.

How many homes need to be planned for?

- 3.8 The Local Housing Need using the government’s standard methodology is 1,040 dwellings for the period 2018-36. The emerging strategies consultation proposed an additional 5% to increase the likelihood that the Council will be able to maintain a housing land supply. Following the consultation, to ensure further the maintenance of a 5-year housing supply through any slippage of the strategic allocations, a buffer of 20% is incorporated for a 5 year period. This equates to a total requirement of 20,450 additional dwellings in total for the Plan period.

Meeting identified needs

- 3.9 A very large number of new homes are already in the pipeline. Many of these new homes are planned within the large-scale new communities allocated for development in the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, including the New Eastern Villages and Kingsdown. In total 18,142 dwellings as at April 2019 are already committed by virtue of extant permission or allocations in the adopted local plan and made neighbourhood plans.

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- 3.10 In addition to the planned housing identified in the table above, a windfall allowance of 57 dwellings per annum for new housing on small sites of fewer than 5 houses from 2022/23 onward has potential to deliver another 798 dwellings by 2036¹. In total, therefore, 18,960 homes are already accounted for through consents, allocations and windfall assumptions.

The Spatial Strategy for Delivering the Residual Requirement

- 3.11 For avoidance of doubt the present spatial strategy of development at Swindon including large urban extensions is maintained for delivering the planned growth already identified in the current adopted Plan and carried forward to 2036. Swindon urban area remains the most sustainable location for development however there are limited opportunities within current urban boundary that are not already commitments. A number of additional sites have been assessed and the following are proposed as specific allocations within the Plan.

Urban site allocations

Site	No. of homes
Swindon urban area	
Former Stratton Education Centre	11
Land fronting Idovers Drive	8
Land east of 261 Marlborough Rd	12
Moredon Rec	60
Windmill Hill School, Uxbridge Rd	35
North Star House	250
Total	376

- 3.12 In respect of sites outside of the Swindon Urban Area the sustainability appraisal assessed a number of alternative strategies. The preferred approach to residential sites is a variant Option 2 (graduated dispersal) with housebuilding focussed on Swindon, Highworth and Wroughton. The outline reasons for selecting this approach are as follows:

¹ The basis for this windfall allowance is explained in the Swindon Borough Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2019.

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- 3.12.1 The strategy identifies a range of sites in a range of locations. Thereby supporting a wider range of builders and diversifying the development sites in the Borough, which are currently focussed on the large new communities, in particular the New Eastern Villages.
- 3.12.2 The strategy is considered most likely to encourage an increase in housebuilding in the short term and thereby to support the Borough's ability to maintain a five-year housing land supply.
- 3.12.3 By not focussing development in a single location, the strategy reduces exacerbating existing traffic and air quality issues, particularly around the motorway junctions and A419 corridor.
- 3.12.4 The graduated dispersal strategy makes best use of existing infrastructure reducing the need for significant new infrastructure, an important factor given the scale and expense of infrastructure required to deliver the new communities planned under the Local Plan 2026. This is particularly the case in Highworth and Wroughton, which both benefit from secondary schools with capacity, a range of town centre facilities, and established frequent bus services, which in the case of Wroughton can be upgraded.
- 3.13 As part of the graduated dispersal approach, the residual development requirement is focussed on the larger settlements of Wroughton and Highworth, which have the widest range of services and facilities and offer the best opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes. A smaller quantum of housing is allocated to some of the Borough's better served smaller villages, proportional to their size.
- 3.14 Turning to consider individual sites, those sites listed in the Emerging Strategies consultation and those sites submitted subsequently to that consultation have been assessed for their sustainability. The following sites are proposed as specific allocations in the Plan:

Housing site allocations

Site	No. of homes
Highworth	
Land east of Roundhills Mead	250
Land at Shrivenham Road	200
Redlands Park, Phase 2	41
Land west of Lechlade Road	25

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Wroughton	
Land east of Swindon Road	300
Land to the north of Overtown Reservoir	8
Land East of Moormead Road	300
Other villages	
Land at School Close, Castle Eaton	12
Land west of New Town Lane, Bishopstone	9
Land at The Forty, Bishopstone	30
Hodson Road, Chiseldon	42
Croft Yard, Ham Road, Wanborough	8
Land west of Hewers Close, Wanborough	20
North of Mayfield, West of Kite Hill, Wanborough	20
Land at Lynt Road, Inglesham	6
Land west of Trenchard Road, Stanton Fitzwarren	5
Total	1276

3.15 In summary the housing supply to 2036 from the various sources is as follows:

		No. of homes
Commitments	Housing completions 2018-19	1,124
	Small site windfall allowance year 4 onwards	798
	Sites with planning permission (non-strategic)	2,287
	Neighbourhood Plan sites (non-permissioned)	42
	Wichelstowe remainder (part)	2,821
	Commonhead remainder	427
	Tadpole Farm remainder	629
	New Eastern Villages	8,936
	Kingsdown	1,650
Allocations	Swindon urban area	376
	Highworth	516
	Wroughton	608

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phil Smith, 01793 466443, psmith@swindon.gov.uk.

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	Other villages	152
	Total	20,612

How much employment land needs to be planned?

- 3.16 The Swindon Employment Land Review 2017 provides a range of scenarios for 2016-2036 employment land requirements based on information supplied by the leading economic forecasting companies and past completion rates.
- 3.17 Based on this evidence it is considered that it is reasonable to consider an office land requirement of between 2.4ha and 10.2ha. This equates to a floor space requirement of 16,000sqm to 67,700sqm. In respect of industrial land requirements it is considered that it is reasonable to plan for an additional need of up to 56.7 hectares.

Meeting future Employment Land Needs

- 3.18 The Employment Land Review confirmed the existing employment zones should be protected for employment uses. In addition the revised Local Plan proposes additional protection for the core employment zones including the current site occupied by Honda (UK).
- 3.19 Taking into account commitments and existing allocations such as Kimmerfields, NEV and Wichelstowe there is sufficient land to meet future forecast requirements. The proposed approach is to supplement these with sites for smaller businesses that have prospects of being developed in the shorter term.
- 3.20 Proposed employment allocations are as follows:

Site	Size
The Carriageworks, Swindon	1.52ha
Land north of Barnfield Close, Swindon	0.75ha
Former Groundwell Park and Ride*	1.7ha

*Also suitable for residential development/mixed use development

Additional changes to the Local Plan

- 3.21 The Local Plan Review is also an opportunity to refresh those policies used to determine planning applications in light of revisions to the NPPF, best practice and experience in their operation. Such policies include design, open space provision, affordable housing and infrastructure.

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- 3.22 In light of the comments received it is proposed to reinstate existing Policy SD1 with clear links to how the Plan is meeting the climate change challenge. Additional changes are to retain the safeguarded route for the Canal through the central area and enhanced heritage policy to reflect the newly created Heritage Action Zone.

Next Steps

- 3.23 If agreed by Council, it is intended the public consultation would be undertaken for a period of 6 weeks from 17th December 2019 to 31st January 2020.
- 3.24 The consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement in Planning and include:
- 3.24.1 Early notification of the consultation period to Parish and Town Councils following Cabinet approval;
 - 3.24.2 Letter or email to consultees on the planning policy consultation database, providing notification of the consultation;
 - 3.24.3 Online publication of all consultation documents on the Council's website.
 - 3.24.4 Publication of advertisement in local newspapers; and
 - 3.24.5 Documents being made available for viewing at the Council's main office and at public libraries.
- 3.25 It is also proposed to hold specific events for representatives of parish and town councils and their communities, particularly those areas highlighted in the options appraisal.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Borough Council could choose not to proceed as set out in the Local Development Scheme. However not proceeding as intended would lead to delay in producing an up-to-date Local Plan with associated risks, including a continuation of our lack of a 5 year housing land supply, the stifling of economic development and potential intervention by the Secretary of State

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The costs of preparing the review of the Local Plan will be met from the Forward Planning budget, which is determined annually based on likely spend.
- 5.2 The Swindon Borough Local Plan is a strategic planning policy document, and as such, it does not necessarily commit the Council itself to funding proposals

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contained within it. However, the Local Plan is a key document in securing Government funding for infrastructure and subsequent commitments on the Council for the expenditure of such funding.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 The preparation of the Local Plan Review have to be in accordance with relevant legislation, particularly the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
- 5.4 The content of this report will not have a direct implication on human rights issues.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.5 The Local Plan Review will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment and Health Impact Assessment to ensure that the impact of proposals can be minimised with the least negative impact possible on the Plan area. Other planned development documents will be in accordance with the Local Plan.

Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)

- 5.6 A DIA has been undertaken on the development plan documents and is available from Phil Smith (contact details at footnote). The DIA reveals that overall the Local Plan Review seeks to produce positive impacts for all those who live and work in the Borough by meeting identified housing and employment (land) needs to 2036 and through policies which seek to create an inclusive and accessible built environment, to engender positive health impacts and to provide suitable housing for specific equality groups such as older people, wheelchair users and gypsies and travellers

Risk Management

- 5.7 Delay to the Local Plan Review could undermine the Council's vision to create and realise Swindon's aspirations for development. Appendix 2 of the Local Development Scheme (March 2019) presents a detailed risk assessment to the Local Plan Review Production. Adequate resourcing and robust proportional evidence are identified as potential risks to the Local Plan Review. Should additional evidence come to light or be required this may delay submission of the Local Plan.

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6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

All appendices are available online at the Council's website or on request from Phil Smith, 01793 466443, psmith@swindon.gov.uk.

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Swindon Borough Local Plan 2036 Submission Draft for Consultation and Policies map, including appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7

8.1.1 Appendix 4 to Appendix 1

8.1.2 Appendix 5 to Appendix 1

8.1.3 Additional Appendix 6 to Appendix 1

8.1.4 Annex to Appendix 1: Policies Maps 1 to 5

- 8.2 Appendix 2: Swindon Borough Local Plan Sustainability Assessment

- 8.3 Appendix 3: Additional sites submitted autumn 2019

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and is in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2019.