

CONSULTATION ON ISSUES AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Responsible Officer George Candler, Director of Place and Enterprise
e-mail: George.candler@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258671

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for consultation on the first stage, known as Issues and Strategic Options, of the partial review of the Shropshire Local Plan. The Shropshire Local Plan currently comprises the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (adopted 2015) and they will both remain in force until any new Local Plan is adopted (anticipated around 2019). As part of the Examination of the SAMDev Plan, Shropshire Council committed to an early partial review of its Local Plan, extending the plan period to 2036. This partial review will ensure that the Local Plan continues to be the primary consideration for decisions about development in Shropshire by maintaining robust and defensible policies that conform with national policy and address the changing circumstances within the County and beyond. The Local Plan Partial Review will deliver these objectives over the extended plan period, ensuring our strategy is based on up to date and objective assessments of our development needs. Cabinet approval will permit the consultation documents to be published on 23 January 2017 for a period of 8 weeks.

2. Recommendations

- A. That Cabinet approves the draft document attached for consultation subject to minor amendments and editing.
- B. That authority is delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing, Regulatory Services and Environment to approve the final version of the documents and to publish these for public consultation.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The Shropshire Local Plan currently comprises the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (adopted 2015). These documents set out proposals for the use of land

and policies to guide future development to help to deliver sustainable growth in Shropshire for the period up to 2026. However, Local Planning Authorities are required to keep under review any matters that may affect the development of its area or the planning of its development. There is a requirement to objectively assess the development needs of the County and this also permits a longer term view to be taken for the period to 2036. In addition, there continue to be significant national policy and procedural changes along with opportunities and challenges at the national and regional level which will impact, to varying degrees, on Shropshire. These matters should be addressed through a partial review of the Local Plan to help to ensure the continuing conformity of the Local Plan with national policy.

- 3.2 This partial review of the Local Plan will provide an up to date and deliverable Plan for Shropshire. It will help to maintain local control over planning decisions by ensuring that the adopted policies and proposals will be the primary consideration for decisions about development in Shropshire. Maintaining an up to date Local Plan will further support local growth by generating certainty for investment in local development and infrastructure through a policy framework that supports sustainable development in communities across the County, during the period to 2036.
- 3.3 The Issues and Strategic Options consultation will focus on key areas of change, and set out options for the level and distribution of new housing and strategies for employment growth to 2036. The overall strategic approach of focusing growth in Shropshire's county town, market towns and key centres, whilst enabling some controlled development in rural areas, to maintain local sustainability, will remain at the heart of the development strategy. The partial review will present opportunities to strengthen the existing strategy and policy framework, to re-assess the purpose of specific policies or to bring together policies with common objectives to enhance their effects.
- 3.4 The Local Plan Review consultation documents have been the subject of both a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulation Assessment and copies of these assessments are attached.
- 3.5 The consultation on the Issues and Strategic Options will also be accompanied by a 'Call for Sites', inviting landowners and the development industry to submit potential development sites for further assessment.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The product of the review will be a new Local Plan document. The partial review will merge the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plans and will contain both strategic and more detailed (development management) policies, together with existing (unimplemented) site proposals and new site allocations to deliver sustainable growth in Shropshire up to 2036. However, some of the existing policies in the Core Strategy & SAMDev do not need to be amended and may be carried forward as part of the Local Plan Review.
- 4.2 Development strategies and specific sites will continue to be identified for the 18 existing 'Place Plan' areas comprising Shrewsbury, the market towns and key centres, and for other major redevelopment sites. In smaller rural settlements (including existing Community Hubs and Clusters), development will be managed in future through criteria-based policies using a consistent

set of guidelines to help deliver sustainable development in these settlements. Resource and time constraints mean it will not be possible to maintain the geographically specific approach for smaller rural settlements in the adopted SAMDev Plan.

5. Background

- 5.1 This is the first significant stage for public and stakeholder involvement in the partial review of the Local Plan. The objective at this stage is obtain feedback concerning the key issues and strategic options to guide the scope of the review, to test whether there are any other viable alternatives and to ensure prompt identification of potential sites to help deliver sustainable development during the period to 2036.
- 5.2 The consultation documents invite feedback on choices for each of the following strategic options:
 - i. Housing Requirement
 - ii. Strategic distribution of future growth
 - iii. Strategies for employment growth
 - iv. Delivering development in rural settlements
- 5.3 In addition to the these strategic options, at a later stage the partial review process will also consider a range of issues including: the role of Shrewsbury and its University; new retail and leisure needs; town centre designations; the need for affordable housing; provision for gypsies and travellers; the redevelopment of strategic sites; and provision to maintain sand and gravel production.
- 5.4 Continuing member involvement will be important in accordance with the Local Member Protocol to support the work of the Local Plan Member Group which has discussed and endorsed the format and content of the consultation documents.
- 5.5 The consultation will be undertaken in line with the standards set out in the Council's published Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and national guidance. Consultation documents will be made available on the Shropshire Council web-site, and paper copies will be provided at libraries and council offices in the main towns. A significant number of organisations and individuals will continue to be notified directly of the publication of the consultation documents in accordance with the SCI. A Consultation Plan describing these arrangements will be published alongside the Local Plan Review document for information. Electronic responses are encouraged to reduce printing and distribution costs and to reduce the time spent collating and analysing paper responses.
- 5.6 The consultation document has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, assessment under the Habitats Regulations and an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) consistent with national guidance and copies of these assessments will be published alongside the Local Plan Review document for information.

- 5.7 The consultation responses will be used to inform the next stages of the Local Plan review with further consultation anticipated for a full draft of the reviewed Local Plan currently anticipated in the early part of 2018.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

- Consultation Plan
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Mal Price, Portfolio Holder Planning, Housing, Regulatory Services and Environment

Local Members

All

Appendices

- Consultation on Issues and Strategic Options for the partial review of the Shropshire Local Plan