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Cabinet  
Council

12<sup>th</sup> January 2016  
12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment – Councillor Maton

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

New Coventry Local Plan – Publication Draft (2011-2031) and the Updated Local Development Scheme (2016)

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**Is this a key decision?**

Yes.

The proposals in the report are likely to have an impact on all wards across the city

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**Executive Summary:**

The Office for National Statistics recognises Coventry as the fastest growing city outside Greater London with continuing job growth and two successful universities. The Local Plan responds to this growth and the policies and proposals within it to provide a blueprint to support the Council's overarching aim of re-establishing itself as a Top Ten City.

The Plan sets out how and where the city will grow, develop and change and how the city council will work jointly with its partners and neighbouring authorities to support and facilitate this growth.

This will be managed through a range of policies, designations and allocations, which cover a broad selection of policy areas. These include:

- Sustainable Development and the Duty to Cooperate;
- Housing;
- The Economy, Jobs and Employment;
- Public Health;
- Retail, Social, Community and Leisure Uses;

- The Green Belt and the Wider Green Environment;
- Heritage and Conservation;
- Urban and Landscape Design;
- Accessibility and Transport;
- Environmental Management, Climate Change and Minerals and Waste; and
- Infrastructure Provision.

Although all elements of the plan present specific policy implications and proposals for different parts of the city, of particular importance is the quantum of growth proposed and the impacts it has on the city's Green Belt. The development pressures outlined in this report are testimony to the growing demand from people who want to live and work in the city, and who are increasingly attracted to the area as a result of the resurgence of manufacturing industries in the sub-region, the success of our two world class universities and the growth in jobs across many sectors.

As such, an Objectively Assessed Need for Housing has been identified of 42,400 homes for Coventry between 2011 and 2031. This has been informed by the Government's most recent population projections. It is not possible however to accommodate this level of housing within the city's administrative boundaries, with the Council's housing land supply identifying a capacity of approximately 25,000 homes. A Memorandum of Understanding has therefore been prepared with the six Warwickshire authorities to propose how the remaining housing need will be redistributed and planned for. This has been considered at item 1 of this Agenda. The total capacity for new homes is approximately 400 homes higher than the housing requirement agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding with Warwickshire. This helps provide some flexibility to the city's housing land supply, which is a requirement of national guidance. Included as part of this growth are two proposed urban extensions at Keresley and Eastern Green. These two areas represent the first sizeable planned expansion of Coventry's urban area in over 50 years.

In addition to housing needs the plan also responds to the need for employment land. A total requirement of 354ha has been identified, which reflects both need for new land but also an allowance for qualitative improvements to the city's employment land offer. The plan makes provisions for 128ha of employment land within Coventry's boundaries (but with a further 89ha of employment land at Ansty Park and Ryton Park in Rugby Borough). The remaining requirement is expected to be largely delivered as part of the Gateway proposals in Warwick District.

This will however require the removal of approximately 600ha of land from Coventry's existing Green Belt to provide approximately 6,600 of these new homes and 41.5ha of the new employment land (potentially supporting the creation of 7,000 new jobs). It is important to note however that only 48% of the land removed from the Green Belt is likely to be developed meaning less than 10% of the city's existing Green Belt will be built on over the course of this plan. This is due to assets such as ancient woodlands being protected by other policy designations and new developments incorporating new publicly accessible and useable green spaces to ensure high quality environments. The majority of the remaining supply will be on brownfield land.

The Plan has also continued to ensure the most sensitive and highest value green spaces remain protected in the most appropriate and robust way. This has led to the re-

designation of some areas previously referred to as Green Belt being redefined to the new national designation of Local Green Space. This reflects the fact they do not meet the purposes of Green Belt policy but perhaps more importantly reflects their importance to local communities within the more urbanised parts of the city. It is important to note that Local Green Space designations carry a very similar level of protection as Green Belt policy.

Notwithstanding the levels of growth expected within Coventry's boundaries, the city will not be able to achieve its ambition of becoming a Top 10 City again without the support of its neighbouring authorities, and continued working through the Duty to Cooperate. This reflects the city's tight administrative boundaries and that a substantial amount of the city's housing and employment needs will be delivered in Warwickshire, whilst links to the wider Birmingham conurbation will also be vital for longer term economic growth. There is a genuine chance therefore that some of this development could be brought forward adjacent to the city's boundaries, most notably to the north, east and south. The Local Plan identifies its support for such proposals where they support the sustainable growth of the city, but recognises that the final decisions rest with respective authorities. Indeed, recent proposals such as the Coventry Gateway and the growth of Warwick University are prime examples of how such developments can be achieved.

The version of the Local Plan included at Appendix 1 is the Publication Draft, which means it's the version of the plan the Council believes is suitable to submit for public examination. It has been developed over a number of years and has had full regard to a wide range of consultation responses, a robust evidence base and the Council's responsibilities under the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant National Legislation and Planning Regulations, which means prior to submission the plan must be published for a statutory period of 6 weeks public engagement (referred to as a period of representations) which focuses on the Plans "soundness" and "legal compliance". This will commence on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

It will however be necessary to consider all representations to the plan and potentially propose minor amendments prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Public Examination. In order to avoid the need for a further report to full Council and the delay to the process that would result, it is intended that the Council delegate responsibility for this to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) [Scrutiny Board 3] and the Chair of Planning Committee. This delegated power would also include a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Planning Committee in March 2016. In the event that significant issues are highlighted with the Local Plan that would affect its legal compliance or overarching soundness and result in the need for major amendments, a further report will be brought to Cabinet and Council for its consideration.

Accompanying this stage of the new Local Plan is an update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS is a mandatory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and sets out which documents the Council will produce to establish its new planning policies and when they will be produced. The LDS contains four separate documents planned for development. These include the Local Plan, the City Centre Area

Action Plan the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a Supporting Housing Delivery Development Plan Document.

### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet is requested to recommend that the Council:

- 1) Consider the responses received to the Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth: September 2014, which are referenced in Para 3.1 and 3.2, summarised in Appendix 3 and contained in full on the Councils website;
- 2) Approves the "Local Plan Publication Draft (2011-2031)" document;
- 3) Approves the updated Local Development Scheme (2016);
- 4) Authorises a period of six weeks statutory public engagement beginning on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and ending on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016; and
- 5) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Chair of Planning Committee, to take full account of the responses received to the statutory period of public engagement, propose minor amendments to the Local Plan (where this is necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity) and submit the plan to the Secretary of State for a period of Public Examination.

The Council is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the responses received to the Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth: September 2014, which are referenced in Para 3.1 and 3.2, summarised in Appendix 3 and contained in full on the Councils website;
- 2) Approve the "Local Plan Publication Draft (2011-2031)" document;
- 3) Approve the updated Local Development Scheme (2016);
- 4) Authorise a period of six weeks statutory public engagement beginning on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and ending on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and;
- 5) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Chair of Planning Committee, to take full account of the responses received to the statutory period of public engagement, propose minor amendments to the Local Plan (where this is necessary to correct any errors and aid clarity) and submit the plan to the Secretary of State for a period of Public Examination.

### **List of Appendices included:**

- Appendix 1: New Coventry Local Plan – Publication Draft (2011-2031).
- Appendix 2: Local Development Scheme (2016).
- Appendix 3: Summary of responses received to the Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth: September 2014.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Other useful documents:**

A copy of all responses in their entirety has been made available on the Council's website via the following link [www.coventry.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/localplan). These have not been provided in paper format as they represent a significant number of pages, with printing resulting in an inefficient use of Council resources.

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

A summary of responses received to the previous round of public engagement was reported to Scrutiny Board 3 at its meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The responses received to this period of statutory representations, will also be presented to a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Planning Committee in March 2016 prior to submission to the secretary of State. This will help to inform the delegated process referred to in recommendation 5 to Cabinet and Council.

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

The Coventry Local Plan Advisory Panel has informed preparation of the Local Plan

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

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**Report title:** New Coventry Local Plan – Publication Draft (2011-2031) and the Updated Local Development Scheme (2016)

## **1. Context (or Background)**

### **The Local Plan**

#### **1.1 National Planning System**

Since the Council commenced work on its new Local Plan (and the Core Strategy before it) the Government have made numerous changes to the national planning system. This has involved the introduction of the Localism Act (2011) the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) and the new National Planning Policy Guidance Notes (2014). The changes have also included the abolition of Regional (Spatial) Strategies (RSS) and the introduction of the Duty to Cooperate.

1.2 As a result of these changes the development of the Council's new Local Plan has been subject to a number of difficulties and complexities, including a rebranding from a Core Strategy to a Local Plan. These have however contributed towards the version of the Local Plan presented at Appendix 1, which helps to make the plan more robust and has ensured it is founded on continuous periods of public engagement and an up to date evidence base as well as satisfying the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate.

#### **1.3 Moving Forward with the Local Plan**

This version of the Local Plan is the Publication Draft, which means it is the version of the plan the Council believes is suitable to submit for public examination. It has been developed over a number of years and has had full regard to a wide range of consultation responses, a robust evidence base and the Council's responsibilities under the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

1.4 The Plan has been prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) meaning the Council must now seek representations on the "soundness" and "legal compliance" of the Plan's proposals under regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012). This will take the form of a statutory 6 week period of public engagement commencing on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. It is different from a normal period of consultation in that it reflects the needs of planning law and must focus on the specific issues outlined above as opposed to general commentary.

1.5 It may however be necessary to propose minor amendments to the Local Plan prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Public Examination. In order to avoid the need for a further report to full Council and the delay to the process that would result, it is intended that the Council delegate responsibility for this to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, the Chair of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Chair of Planning Committee. This delegated power would also include a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and the Planning Committee in March 2016, at which all responses received to the period of statutory engagement will be presented and considered. In the event that significant issues are highlighted with the Local Plan that would affect its legal compliance or overarching soundness and result in the need for major

amendments, a further report will be brought to Cabinet and Council for its consideration.

- 1.6 Assuming there are no significant concerns raised, and following the consideration of responses by Scrutiny Board 3 and Planning Committee, the Local Plan (alongside all responses and evidence) would then be submitted to the Secretary of State. An independent Inspector will then be appointed, who will conduct an Examination in Public. This is similar to a Public Inquiry, and following the close of the examination the inspector will issue a report to the Council. At this point, the Council may proceed to adopt the Local Plan meaning it will then replace the 2001 Coventry Development Plan “saved” policies. The new Local Plan will then be used to shape development and to determine planning applications up to 2031.

- 1.7 The Local Plan Policies and Proposals

The Council’s policies and proposals identified within this Plan are intended to support the delivery of the Council’s Strategic Plan and the development of the city through to 2031. This will support its overarching aim of becoming a Top Ten City again. As such, the purpose of the Plan is to set out the long-term spatial vision for how the city will grow, develop and change and how this vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting and delivering sustainable development. This is managed through a range of policies, designations and allocations, which cover a broad selection of policy areas. These are outlined below and cover the different chapters of the Local Plan (set out in Appendix 1).

#### **A. Development Strategy, Sustainable Development and the Duty to Cooperate**

This section contains three strategic policies, which go the heart of the Local Plan and which seek to ensure it promotes sustainable development. They identify the strategic development needs of the city (for housing and employment land and retail floor space). They also recognise the city’s constrained boundaries and the fact that the city cannot accommodate its full development needs. It therefore highlights the importance of the Duty to Cooperate and the need to continue working with our Warwickshire neighbours to ensure the city’s development needs are met in full. To summarise, the policy identifies a need for 42,400 homes (of which 25,000 will be within the city’s boundaries), 208ha of employment land (of which 129ha will be within the city’s boundaries and 105,900sq.m of retail floor space).

#### **B. Health and Wellbeing**

Following Coventry’s designation as a Marmot City the Local Plan has sought to incorporate enhanced health and wellbeing at the forefront of its policies. This chapter highlights a host of links and opportunities where public health can generate significant benefits across all parts of the city. To support this, a policy is proposed to produce Health Impact Assessments for major developments where it is deemed appropriate and relevant to the proposal.

#### **C. Jobs and Economy**

This chapter provides the overarching strategy for continuing to improve the city’s economic base and providing jobs for the city’s growing population. It allocates 101ha of new employment land within the city boundary including Friargate, Whitley Business Park and its proposed expansion, Lyons Park and



land as part of the Eastern Green Sustainable Urban Extension. These sit alongside existing completions and permissions to provide the total employment land supply of 129ha. The policies seek to protect existing high quality sites as well as making allowances for sites adjacent to the city boundary which contribute towards the city's needs such as Ansty Park and ProLogis Ryton. Policies also seek to ensure new development is appropriately located and compatible with neighbouring uses. It also supports the delivery of the Local Enterprise Partnership's initiatives such as the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Skills Strategy as well as the city's Jobs and Growth Strategy and Tourism Strategy.

#### **D. Housing**

The chapter seeks to support the Council's Housing Strategy as well as making proposals to deliver 25,000 new homes within the city's boundaries over the plan period. Approximately 4,000 have already been completed with a further 6,500 already consented. The plan then allocates a further 10,000 homes on a variety of sites including land currently within the Green Belt. This includes 2 large sustainable urban extensions at Keresley (3,100) and Eastern Green (2,250) as well as smaller sites at Cromwell Lane, London Road, Sutton Stop, Cheltenham Croft, Woodfield School, Gibbet Hill, Browns Lane and Mitchell Avenue. A string of brownfield sites have also been proposed including 2 larger sites at Whitmore Park and Paragon Park as well as a number of smaller strategic schemes such as Jardine Crescent and some mixed use sites such as Durbar Avenue. The remaining supply comprises sites within the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and a small allowance for windfall delivery on small sites. There is a target to prioritise the development of brownfield land whilst other policies ensure affordable housing needs are met as well as those of students and Gypsies and Travellers. Other policies respond to government initiatives around self-build and starter home developments, appropriate densities and city centre living. An appropriate mix of housing is also promoted to ensure the city is able to diversify its housing stock and make provision for a greater number of larger family homes.

#### **E. Retail**

The chapter makes proposals to deliver approximately 106,000sq.m of new retail provision across the city. More than 65% of this is targeted towards the city centre, but recognises that this may be constrained by the needs of larger bulky retail provisions. Other retail allocations are proposed for new centres at Keresley and Eastern Green, with changes at existing centres at Cannon Park, Jardine Crescent and Brade Drive to support local provisions. There are however restrictions proposed to limit the further growth of Arena Park. The Riley Square aspect of Bell Green District Centre is also proposed for complete redevelopment as part of a comprehensive masterplan for this area. New Supermarkets are also planned for the city centre and Eastern Green. The policies continue to promote the centres hierarchy and focus new investment towards the city centre. They do recognise however that out of centre retail parks may have a role to play as well, especially where new out of centre provision could be prevented. A Sequential Assessment will be required however for all out of centre proposals whilst Impact Tests will be requested where appropriate.

## **F. Community**

This chapter sets a range of policies to plan proactively for new social, community and leisure facilities across the city. This has also been expanded to include cultural provisions such as places of worship and new health facilities. There is a general principle of promoting new uses towards designated centres or locations where other similar uses already exist. This is with a view to promoting linked trips and sustainable travel. The policies also support neighbourhood planning and Assets of Community Value.

## **G. Green Belt and the Green Environment**

This chapter establishes an approach to protecting and enhancing the city's most valuable and most sensitive green spaces, whilst still embracing the city's development needs. As such, the policies re-designate the city's Green Belt where it continues to serve the purpose of national Green Belt policy and re-designates some Green Belt land as Local Green Space, especially around the existing Green Belt islands and corridors which run through the urban area e.g. the Sowe Valley and Memorial Park and which no longer serve the purposes of Green Belt policy. Essentially, Local Green Space designations carry very similar levels of policy protection as Green Belt but are more reflective of their importance to local communities. As set out above there are also a range of sites removed from the Green Belt to facilitate the development of new homes and employment land. Policies do however also seek to designate current white land as new areas of Local Green Space e.g. around the Sherbourne Valley and Lake View Park, a northern extension of the Sowe Valley and land at Walsgrave Triangle. Current Green Belt land along the southern boundary is then proposed to be reserved for future release from the Green Belt, but specifically related to emerging proposals in Warwick District. This reflects the possibility of the planned expansion of Coventry to the South into Warwick District, and helps future proof the city's plan should such proposals materialise. In terms of Green Infrastructure, this is again promoted to be included within new developments, whilst existing assets are identified for protection. Where assets are lost they are to be replaced within an appropriate distance and should target improvements in quality. Policies are also included to retain protected trees and ancient woodlands.

## **H. Design**

These policies seek to ensure high quality design having regard to local character and identity, including Conservation Areas and other heritage assets. Supporting Design Guidance will be prepared for the City Centre to support the Area Action Plan and the proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions with consideration given to the Ancient Arden Design principles.

## **I. Heritage**

This chapter has been prepared to reflect the importance of the city's heritage assets. The city's existing Conservation Areas are identified alongside 2 new Areas at Brownhill Green and Earlsdon and some minor amendments at Stoke Park, Allesley, Kenilworth Road, High Street, Greyfriars Green and Ivy Farm Lane. In addition, a new City Heritage Park is to be designated around Charterhouse and the London Road Cemetery, providing a strategic heritage asset and tourism infrastructure on the edge of the City Centre. The designation will include enhancements to the River Sherbourne, the former Coventry Loop

Railway Line and Bluecoats school grounds with enhanced connectivity to the City Centre.

#### **J. Accessibility**

This chapter promotes an accessible city with a well-integrated transport network that is well connected to its surrounding towns and cities. It contains policies on new rail provisions including links to HS2 and potential improvements to local services. The creation of new mobility hubs is promoted to build upon improvements to bus and rapid transit services which will enable close integration between local and national transport networks. Links to new transport infrastructure are also outlined in policy to support strategic development and address network capacity. Of particular relevance here includes the improved connectivity between Coundon Wedge Drive and the A444 as part of the proposed development at Keresley and new grade separated junctions on the A45 at Eastern Green and at the TGI and Clifford Bridge roundabouts on the A46. Policy will also require appropriate highway modelling as part of new development proposals to ensure the impacts on the highway can be managed and mitigated. Active travel, provisions for new freight facilities and the introduction of parking standards are also included. The introduction of new parking standards in particular will represent a movement away from maximum standards in line with national guidance.

#### **K. Environmental Management and Minerals and Waste**

This chapter identifies a set of policies that support planning for climate change including improvements to the city's air quality. Policies promote high quality building standards which include energy efficiency and a high standard of design. Where viable and achievable, renewable energy should be incorporated into development with connections to heat line where possible. Policies cover flood risk management and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems which should be identified as part of multi-functional green spaces where appropriate to help promote sustainable development. The chapter also reflects the Council's Waste Strategy and highlights mineral safeguarding areas, predominately to the North and West of the city. In addition, land adjacent to the existing Energy From Waste facility at Barr Road has been identified to support further waste management facilities and energy generation.

#### **L. Connectivity - Telecommunications and Broadband**

This chapter seeks to ensure the provision of high speed broadband facilities and connections to all new developments. This is with a view to delivering the ambitions of the EU Digital Agenda and ensuring the city has a high quality broadband offer. The policy also supports wider IT and telecommunications infrastructure, which will help deliver the Council's IT strategy, especially within the City Centre.

#### **M. Infrastructure, Implementation and Monitoring**

The last chapter of the plan sets out an initial summary of the infrastructure required to support the levels of growth anticipated for the city over the plan period. This covers a host of areas such as transport, green spaces, education and health care etc. It is supported by an Appendix known as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which provides greater detail on specific infrastructure which will be monitored and updated as required. The policy highlights the need for

development to make provisions towards infrastructure through either Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It also includes direct links to the on-going development of the Council's CIL charging schedule.

### **The Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

- 1.8 Accompanying this stage of the new Local Plan is an update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS is a mandatory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and sets out the documents that Coventry City Council intends to prepare as part of the new Local Plan and the timetable within which they will be prepared.
- 1.9 The Council's LDS was last updated in 2014 alongside the last draft of the Local Plan. Due to unforeseen issues around neighbouring Local Plans and evidence gathering however there has been a need to adjust the timetable again prior to submitting the Local Plan and Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State.
- 1.10 The LDS contains four separate documents planned for development.
  1. The first is the Local Plan itself, which is expected to reach public examination in summer and be adopted by the end of 2016.
  2. The second document is the City Centre Area Action Plan which is being brought forward in parallel with the Local Plan.
  3. The third is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which will be consulted on for the first time in summer 2016 and adopted by the end of 2017.
  4. The fourth is the Housing Delivery Development Plan Document, which will be brought forward as and when it is required.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 In relation to the Local Plan there are three realistic options. The first of these is to do nothing and not progress a Local Plan. This option is not realistic as without a Local Plan the Council will be subject to planning by appeal, having little or no control over planning within its own administrative boundaries.
- 2.2 The second option would be to publish a further round of consultation in order to test a Preferred Options approach. This would add further delay to the Local Plan, adding approximately 6 months to the timetable. The Council has consulted with local communities and key stakeholders on numerous occasions over the last 10 years. The responses received have largely been consistent, well presented and justified in their approach. To undertake further detailed consultation would therefore repeat very similar processes that have been undertaken in recent years. As such, this option is not recommended.
- 2.3 The third option is presented within this report and at Appendix 1. This involves engaging key stakeholders and the local community through a statutory period of engagement in relation to the Council's proposed Local Plan. With support from the Sustainability Appraisal process and building upon consultation exercises that have covered the previous 10 years, this considers all reasonable alternatives and seeks to engage with local people and key stakeholders in advance of the plan being submitted for public examination

- 2.4 In relation to the LDS there are two realistic options. The first is again to do nothing. This option is discounted as to not produce a LDS would prevent the Council from formally setting out its timetable for developing its new Local Plan and supporting documentation. It would also mean the Council would fail to meet one of the statutory requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- 2.5 The second option is recommended by this report and would see the Council discharge one of statutory requirements in setting out the timetable for producing its new Local Plan and supporting documents.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Numerous periods of public consultation have taken place since 2004 that have related to the development of the Local Plan (or the Core Strategy as it was previously known). The results of this consultation have been reported to Council at various times in the last ten years.
- 3.2 This culminated in the period of public engagement between September and December 2014 which focused on levels of growth and high level policy proposals. The consultation also included a draft version of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as part of the emerging evidence base. A full Equalities and Consultation Assessment was undertaken at this time to support this period of public engagement. Approximately 600 responses were received from local communities, local business, professional organisations and key stakeholders, with additional views and opinions expressed and recorded at Ward Forums and drop in sessions. All responses have been considered as part of the summary in Appendix 3. This showed that the greatest area of objection was around potential development within the city's Green Belt.
- 3.3 It is proposed that this version of the Local Plan will be subject to a further period of public engagement between 18<sup>th</sup> January – 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The responses received during this period are scheduled to be presented to a special meeting of Scrutiny Board 3 and Planning Committee in March 2016.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Subject to approval by Cabinet and Council, the new Local Plan – The Publication Draft will be published for a period of 6 weeks statutory engagement (referred to at paragraph 3.3 above) prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for public examination.
- 4.2 Subject to the approval by Cabinet and Council the Local Development Scheme will then be published on the Council's website with immediate effect and establish the timetable by which the Local Plan and supporting documents will be delivered.

### **5. Comments from the Executive Director, Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are two sets of costs associated with this report.

The first is associated with the publication of the documents for representations and the costs of public engagement. These are considered to be minimal and will be funded from existing budget provisions.

The second is the substantial costs of the Examination in Public of the Local Plan. Once submitted to the Secretary of State, he will appoint an Inspector to conduct the Hearings, and the Council is required to appoint a Programme Officer who works for the Inspector to make sure the Hearings run smoothly. Both the Inspector and Programme Officer are at the Council's expense.

The Local Plan has been brought forward in parallel with the City Centre Area Action Plan with the intention of saving costs associated with the public examination, as a number of issues, services and evidence overlap. It is anticipated that the costs of submission and examination will be met through existing Council reserves earmarked specifically for this purpose.

## 5.2 Legal implications

The proposed engagement period and development of this plan reflects the statutory requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Localism Act (2011) and other associated regulations, the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), and Planning Policy Guidance (2014). This also reflects the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

The period of publication for representations will ensure that the Council can demonstrate that the Local Plan is fully legally compliant. A Local Plan that is not fully legally compliant cannot proceed to Public Examination. The provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Localism Act (2011) set out the relevant provisions governing the matters raised in this report, including that the Council has a duty to have a development plan.

The proposed engagement period will help to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that it has considered all reasonable alternatives when considering its approach to developing its Local Plan, and that it has continued to involve the local community and others with an interest in the process.

The Council can be confident that the work undertaken in recent year's means its statutory responsibilities associated with the Duty to Cooperate have been discharged. Indeed, once the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State no further work relating to this Plan and the Duty to Cooperate can be undertaken.

Through this period of engagement though the Council will continue to engage constructively and actively with its neighbouring authorities as part of the Duty to Cooperate, as set out in Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as introduced by the Localism Act (2011)), where it is considered appropriate and necessary to do so.

Once adopted by the Council, the Local Plan will become the starting point for determining any planning application that are submitted to the Council for consideration.

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

- **A prosperous Coventry:** The plan has sought to deliver a range of opportunities to deliver new homes and employment land across the city for the next 15-20 years. This will help to ensure that sufficient new homes are provided to meet the needs of local people and sufficient jobs are created and facilitated. It will also help ensure that businesses are not deprived of staff through a lack of housing and land opportunities;
- **Citizens living longer, healthier, independent lives:** Choosing the right approach to delivering the city's housing, employment, retail and infrastructure needs will help promote improvements to the existing built environment. The most valuable and sensitive green spaces will also be protected from inappropriate development. The new Local Plan will also contain specific policy promoting improvements to health and wellbeing including improvements to health inequalities and life expectancy.
- **Making Coventry an attractive and enjoyable place to be:** Choosing the right approach to delivering the city's housing, employment, retail and infrastructure needs will help promote improvements to the existing built environment. This will also create opportunities for the city centre to develop and regenerate supporting increased tourism and ensuring the most valuable and sensitive green spaces will also be protected from inappropriate development.
- **Providing a good choice of housing:** In partnership with neighbouring authorities the Local Plan makes provisions to fully meet the city's housing needs. This will ensure that sufficient new homes are provided to meet the needs of local people within the Housing Market Area.
- **Making places and services easily accessible:** New homes and job opportunities will be brought forward in a planned and sustainable way. In practical terms this will help ensure the right amount of new development happens to ensure that services are viable and accessible. The Local Plan will also promote sustainable development with adequate provision of infrastructure and improved accessibility to key services and facilities.
- **Encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city:** The New Local Plan will promote a centres first policy, establishing designated centres as the hub for new retail, leisure and community investments within their surrounding communities. New homes and job opportunities will be brought forward in a planned and sustainable way. In practical terms this will help ensure the right amount of new development happens to ensure that services are viable and accessible.
- **Developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods:** By planning proactively for the city's housing and employment needs the Local Plan

can help to ensure that more people will be adequately housed, with greater access to new jobs, leisure provisions and community facilities.

- Improving the environment and tackling climate change: The plan proactively seeks to mitigate the impacts on the environment brought about by development and includes specific policy on combating climate change. The plan will help bring about improvements to areas in need of investment and will protect the most valuable and sensitive areas of green space from inappropriate development.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

By virtue of its nature, this version of the Local Plan has been revised to reflect the most up to date evidence and engagement responses with a view to minimising the risks that may arise at the next stage by engagement and subsequent public examination.

The principal risks associated with the Plan remain around the Duty to Cooperate. Of key relevance at the time of writing is the fact that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council have not signed the Memorandum of Understanding on housing provision. It is hoped however that this risk can be removed prior to submission of the Local Plan through further joint working with the Borough Council.

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

No direct impact.

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

A full Equality and Consultation Assessment (ECA) was undertaken as part of the Local Plan Public engagement exercise at the end of 2014. Where appropriate an update of this ECA is to be completed alongside this stage of the engagement process. This is due to start in January and will inform this update and enable the impact of the Local Plan on key protected groups in the city to be fully understood and considered.

As part of that analysis, the Council will have due regard to its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010). The Council's responsibilities under this act will be met through the development of the updated ECA and through the consultation activity that has taken place previously and will take place in support of this draft of the plan.

There will be significant economic and social benefits to the city through the development of new homes and employment opportunities in Coventry. This will be promoted by urban regeneration and the redevelopment of land currently sitting vacant and derelict as well as increased opportunities for job creation and the delivery of new infrastructure.

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

A detailed assessment of potential environmental implications and issues has been undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA/SEA) for the Local



Plan that will be made available as part of the engagement period. This will help inform community and stakeholder engagement. In summary this highlights potential increases in carbon emissions and air quality issues generated by new developments and an increased population. There are also accepted environmental impacts brought about by the proposed development of Green Belt land, however the provision of new green and blue infrastructure as part of such development is likely to support increased biodiversity and quality of space. The plan also encourages climate change adaptation and the provisions of renewable energy and energy efficient buildings

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Partner organisations, notably neighbouring Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership, will be impacted because they have a responsibility to formally engage with the Council with respect to strategic matters such as the Local Plan. This is to discharge the Duty to Cooperate, as described by the Localism Act and NPPF. Of principle impact in this respect is the need for neighbouring authorities to plan for the city's unmet housing and employment land needs within their respective authority areas. This is also expected to have implications for strategic infrastructure. All issues are expected to be mitigated by the on-going work between the seven Coventry and Warwickshire authorities as evidenced by recent Memorandum of Understanding on housing requirements and continued development of respective plans.

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