



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	Approval of the Policy Options for the Local Plan for public consultation
Member Reporting	Cllr Curran – Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration, and Housing
Contact Details	Julia Worboys, Planning Policy Team Leader 020 8583 5228 / julia.worboys@hounslow.gov.uk
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	4 th June 2013
Implementation Date if Not Called In	14 th June 2013
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	Planning, regeneration, development, consultation.

1. Details of Recommendations

<p>The Cabinet is asked to agree the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the ‘Policy Options for the Local Plan’ for public consultation for a period of six weeks. 2. To delegate authority for minor amendments to the ‘Policy Options’ prior to consultation to the Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration, including alterations to the list of potential education site allocations. 3. To approve the proposed timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan as set out in paragraph 3.4 as the council’s revised Local Development Scheme in relation to the Local Plan. 4. To approve the re-allocation of £15,000 of Housing and Planning Delivery grant to fund the Policy Options consultation.

If the recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?	
Public consultation on options for the future development of the borough.	June 2013
Identifies priorities for regeneration and investment across the borough.	Over the next 15 years

2. Report Summary

1. This report deals with the first stage in the preparation of the council's Local Plan by consulting on 'Policy Options'
2. It recommends the approval of the 'Policy Options for the Local Plan' for public consultation for a period of six weeks.
3. These recommendations are being made because the council is required to consider and consult upon reasonable alternatives for its emerging Local Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and to meet the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament on Strategic Environmental Assessments.

3. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 replaced the process of preparing multiple local development plan documents known as the 'Local Development Framework' with the preparation of a single local development plan called the 'Local Plan'. A Local Plan is defined in the NPPF as:

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 3.2 Once adopted, the new Local Plan together with the London Plan and any Neighbourhood Plans subsequently adopted will form the development plan for the borough used to determine planning applications. The Local Plan will also have the equally important role of articulating the council's spatial vision for the development of the borough over the next 15 years highlighting the key areas for regeneration and investment including the council's priorities of Hounslow and Brentford town centres.
- 3.3 The 'Policy Options' consultation is the first stage in the Local Plan preparation process. However, as the council has previously carried out two consultations on its emerging Core Strategy (a predecessor to the Local Plan) these have informed the development of the options. There are also some aspects of the Local Plan included as policy options that haven't previously been consulted upon, such as the proposed development site allocations and development management policies as these would have been prepared as separate development plan documents.
- 3.4 Following the Policy Options consultation, there will be one further public consultation on a draft Local Plan, also known as the proposed submission Local Plan. Following this consultation, minor amendments will be made to the document where required in response to an issue of 'soundness'. The amended Local Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for an independent Examination in Public. The Planning Inspector appointed on behalf of the Secretary of State will examine the soundness of the Local Plan in terms of whether it has been positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The Inspector will then report their findings to the council recommending the adoption, amendment or withdrawal of the

Plan. The proposed timetable for the stages outlined above is set out below and approval is sought for the adoption of these dates as the council's revised Local Development Scheme (a statutory project plan setting out the key milestones for the preparation of development plan documents):

Policy Options for the Local Plan consultation	Jun – Jul 2013
Proposed Submission Local Plan consultation	Feb – Mar 2014
Submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State	Jun 2014
Examination of the Local Plan	Oct 2014
Adoption of the Local Plan	Mar 2015

4.5 The policy options set out are based on the delivery of eight objectives that have been carried forward and refined from the 'Preferred Core Strategy' consulted on in summer 2011. The eight objectives are set out below together with a summary of the main options presented under each objective.

Supporting our Town Centres

Maintaining our town centres as a focus for the community and to attract investment, through an improved retail and service offer; new leisure and cultural facilities, and new residential quarters. Enhanced public realm and environmental improvements will also help build their identity.

Main options considered

- Provide for the identified retail need within existing town centres;
- Allocate sites for mixed use development incorporating office, leisure and residential where appropriate;
- Amend town centre boundaries to better direct new development within a more consolidated area;
- Provide increased clarity around changes of use from A1 retail to other uses. Applying different standards depending on the nature of the town centre.

Economy and Inward Investment

Encourage inward investment and facilitate job growth by maintaining the supply of employment land, allocating development sites to accommodate forecasted employment growth and supporting our existing employers to expand. Make Hounslow an attractive place to do business by creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurs and ensuring our residents are appropriately skilled.

Main options considered

- Continue to promote the town centres and the Great West Road as locations for office development;
- To require evidence of marketing to justify the loss of office floorspace;
- To protect our industrial estates and afford extra protection for the large number in the west of the borough, where many of the occupying businesses form part of the Heathrow supply chain;
- To encourage hotels but only in accessible locations;
- To continue to seek opportunities for training either facilities, financial contributions or actual training.

Sustainable Mixed Communities

Provide a mix of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of our growing population including affordable housing, aspirational family homes and high quality provision for the elderly to allow people to choose to live in Hounslow throughout their lives and create stable mixed communities.

Main options considered

- To allocate sufficient housing sites to meet the London Plan target over the 15 year plan period (7,800 homes);
- Allocate further capacity for Gypsies and Travellers in line with the needs assessment;
- Maximising the delivery of affordable housing subject to viability through on site provision and off site contributions on sites of below ten units;
- Ensuring an appropriate mix of size of dwellings to meet housing needs;
- Ensure density of new development relates to existing densities, character and levels of accessibility;
- Protect existing HMO's but control new proposals and prevent areas of concentration;
- Consider the introduction of a presumption against new housing development on garden land;
- Set broad principles for the residential extensions and conversions.

Character and Identity

Recognise the varied character of Hounslow's districts and seek to protect and improve their special qualities, heritage assets and overall townscape quality and appearance. Combine this with the promotion of well-designed development that meets the needs of 21st century urban living and contributes positively to the character of an area.

Main options considered

- Recognise the variety of character throughout the borough and seek to protect and enhance it;
- Identify where tall buildings may be appropriate and where not;
- Identify heritage assets and provide for their protection through policy and the production of further guidance;
- Making the most of the boroughs great estates.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

To protect, maintain and improve the openness, access, amenity, biodiversity, health and recreational value of the borough's green spaces and to link together with blue water-spaces through new green infrastructure links to facilitate health and well being in our communities.

Main options considered

- Amend the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) boundary by tidying up the edges to follow recognisable features;
- Seek to improve access to the MGB and Metropolitan Open Land
- Define and protect Local Open Space;
- Provide clear guidance for proposals on open land;
- Define and protect a green grid of corridors and chains across the borough.
- Provide policies to fully take account of bio-diversity issues in the planning process;
- Promote the use of open space for appropriate community uses including as allotments and farming;
- Define and protect the waterways within the borough as blue infrastructure and ensure the most is made of this important resource.

Delivering Community Infrastructure

To ensure the delivery of appropriate infrastructure providing a range of community, education, health, cultural, sport and entertainment facilities that will support the

borough's growing community and which are seen as a positive reason for visiting, living and working in the borough.

Main options considered

- Provide policy protection to those facilities falling within the category of community infrastructure;
- Allocate sites to provide additional places at primary, secondary and SEN schools;
- Improve existing facilities within the council's leisure portfolio to meet the needs of the growing population;
- Work with partners to develop a strategic network of multi- use community facilities across the borough;
- Protect and support the provision of local shops and services across the borough.

Environmental Quality

To protect from, mitigate and seek to reduce the detrimental effects of noise, poor air quality and general environmental pollution through strong environmental standards. Promote the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change through requirements for sustainable design and construction; reduced carbon emissions; the management of flood risk; and conservation of resources.

Main options considered

- Require all development to contribute fully to the carbon reduction agenda;
- Provide a suite of policies to ensure development does not contribute to increased air pollution within the borough and in areas of poor air quality contribute to its improvement;
- Provide policies to ensure development is located, designed and managed to minimise noise impact;
- Promote areas of relative tranquillity;
- Safeguard Rectory Farm as a potential extraction site for minerals.

Connectivity

Promote ease of movement for all, through making better use of existing road space and enhancing public transport, cycling and walking measures to provide genuine alternatives to private vehicles for the majority of journeys. Improve the provision of telecommunications infrastructure to increase the attractiveness of Hounslow to business, and reduce the need for commuting.

Main options considered

- To pursue investment in strategic transport infrastructure to help support sustainable travel to and in the borough
- To continue to ensure development complies in full with the transport principles established in the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Transport Strategy.
- To provide comprehensive parking standards for all use classes.
- Ensure policy reiterates opposition to the future expansion of Heathrow including a third runway.

- 3.6 Each of the policy options presented is required to be in general conformity with relevant national and regional planning policies which places limitations on some policy directions – in such cases the policy option presented refers to the relevant guidance. However, in some policy areas, there are options to interpret the guidance presented in the light of local circumstances based on

the available evidence presented either through council commissioned technical reports or data from sources such as the 2011 census – known collectively as the Local Plan evidence base. The document identifies reasonable alternative local policy options where these can be identified, or explains why only one option is available for consideration.

- 3.7 Alongside the policy options, the document also sets out a spatial vision for the development for the borough over the next ten years on the basis of ten districts that have been identified through the council's Local Character and Context Study. A vision for the development of each district is presented together with the key development sites to describe how the area will change over the 15 year Plan period. These visions also address the spatial elements of the borough wide vision presented in the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy – Future Borough. A borough wide spatial diagram and strategy are also presented at the beginning of the document to draw together the visions for the districts to describe the key areas of change and regeneration.
- 3.8 The document has been prepared on the basis of extensive internal consultation through an officers Local Plan Working Group including representatives from Housing, Health and Well-being, Economic Development, Development Management, School Place Planning, Property, Design and Conversation, Environmental Strategy, Pollution and Community Partnerships. The policy options have also been subject to early review by a cross-party Local Plan Member Working Group, chaired by Cllr Cadbury.
- 3.9 The 'Policy Options' will be published for six-week period of public consultation from June 14th 2013 in accordance with the requirements of the council's revised Statement of Community Involvement. A detailed consultation plan has been developed to ensure that the consultation is well publicised in the local community and to allow for the opportunity for engagement with the Planning Policy team on the emerging policy options. A questionnaire and comment form will also support the consultation to allow for detailed feedback on the options presented. This report is seeking approval of the 'Policy Options' for public consultation.

4. Key Implications

- 4.1 The NPPF requires all Local Planning Authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan consistent with the principles of the framework including the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The council's current development plan documents consist of the saved Unitary Development Plan policies (2007), the Brentford Area Action Plan (2009) and the Employment Development Plan Document (2008). Where these policies are consistent with the NPPF and the London Plan they will continue to be used to determine planning applications until the new Local Plan is adopted. Consequently, there will be no impacts on planning decision making in the interim period, although the council is seeking to prepare its Local Plan within an accelerated timeframe to ensure that the council's vision for the development of the borough is fully articulated as soon as possible.
- 4.2 The NPPF also states that where practical Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges should be worked up and tested alongside the Local Plan. The

CIL is a fixed local levy charged on a per sq m basis on all qualifying development. The CIL charge will replace the majority of infrastructure funding currently negotiated through S106 planning obligations, although S106 agreements will continue to be used to secure affordable housing, and other site specific mitigation measures. At present it is proposed that restrictions will be placed on the pooling of five or more planning obligations for all types of infrastructure capable of being funded from CIL from April 2014. This would mean for example, that no more than five S106 contributions could be pooled to fund the expansion of schools in the borough. As supported in the NPPF, the council propose to develop their CIL alongside the Local Plan. This will result in the adoption of the borough's charging schedule in March 2015. This has potential implications in terms of general infrastructure funding in the borough between April 2014 and March 2015 that would have previously been secured through S106. However, the council has sought Counsel's advice on the potential of seeking more specific planning obligations to ensure that restrictions are not placed on their use. This would require planning officers to identify and negotiate planning obligations for specific infrastructure projects rather than general infrastructure types during the interim period. This would ensure that the council would not lose out on potential infrastructure programme whilst progressing the adoption of a CIL alongside its Local Plan.

5. Financial Details

a) Financial Background (optional)

The cost of the proposed consultation will be met from the allocation of £15,000 made from the Housing and Planning Delivery grant. This was provisionally granted in September 2010 but this approval has now expired and requires re-approval as part of this report. Housing Planning and Delivery Grant was paid to the council as a result of the adoption of existing planning policy documents to support the delivery of planning services, however the grant funding is not ring-fenced.

b) Comments of the Assistant Director Strategic Finance

The cost of the proposed consultation will be met from the allocation of £15,000 made from the Housing and Planning Delivery grant. This was provisionally granted in September 2010 but this approval has now expired and requires re-approval as part of this report.

6. Legal

- a)** The Local Plan is a statutory development plan document as described by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Amended) and the NPPF. The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the statutory requirements for the preparation of local plans. Specifically Part 6 (Regulations 17 to 31) set out the statutory requirements for the preparation, publication, submission, examination and adoption of a Local Plan. The 'Policy Options' document has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 17 which requires the local planning authority to notify and seek

representations on the proposed Local Plan from specific consultation bodies, other consultation bodies the council consider appropriate and residents or persons carrying out business in the borough. The council's revised Statement of Community Involvement identifies the specific and general consultation bodies referred to above, and the planning policy team hold a database of consultees who have expressed an interest in being consulted on planning policy issues.

b) Comments of the Assistant Director Corporate Governance

The recommendations in this report seem appropriate to the Assistant Director Corporate Governance at this stage in the process of advancing a Local Plan and they are supported.

7. Value For Money

N/A

8. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

- 8.1 The Local Plan is subject to a detailed Sustainability Appraisal to assess the impact of the proposed policies on key social, economic and environmental objectives. The Sustainability Appraisal is one of the key tests of soundness that will be explored at the Examination in Public by the Planning Inspector. The Sustainability Appraisal will also meet the requirements of a Strategic Environment Assessment as required by Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament. The Sustainability Appraisal report will be published alongside the Policy Options for consultation.

9. Risk Management

- 9.1 Please refer to Section 4

10. Links to Council Priorities

Brighter futures for the borough's children and young people – Supporting the delivery of additional school places through the allocation of sites for school developments.

A thriving economy with more affordable housing – Contributing to delivery of additional affordable homes through the allocation of housing sites and setting an affordable housing delivery target. Protecting and allocating employment sites within the borough to maintain and attract new jobs to the borough. Supporting the regeneration of Hounslow town centre through the articulation of a vision and the allocation of development sites.

A cleaner greener borough – Reducing the number of trips made by cars by ensuring new development is allocated to sites with good public transport accessibility. Continuing the protection of the borough's nature conservation areas.

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

The final Local Plan will be subject to Equalities Impact Assessment scoping appraisal, and full impact assessment will be undertaken if required.

12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

N/A

13. Property and Assets

- 13.1 The 'Policy Options' document has been prepared in full consultation with the council's Property and Asset Management team as it may have implications for existing council land holdings and their allocation as potential development sites.

14. Any Other Implications

N/A

15. Consultation

- 15.1 See paragraph 3.9

16. Timetable for Implementation

- 16.1 The proposed consultation will commence on 14th June 2013.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Policy Options for the Local Plan document

18. Background Information

Core Strategy - Preferred Strategy July 2011 and Summary of Responses
http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/preferred_strategy_consultation_responses.pdf

Core Strategy Issues and Options May 2007 and Summary of Responses – document published as background information on website with agenda papers.

REPORT ENDS