

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	SOUTHAMPTON CITY VISION LOCAL PLAN UPDATE
DATE OF DECISION:	15 OCTOBER 2020
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR GREEN CITY AND PLACE / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLACE

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
N/A
BRIEF SUMMARY
<p>Southampton City Vision is the new Local Plan for the city. Once adopted it will set out the planning policy framework for the city which gives us the ability to effectively guide and control future development. A local plan is also a key place shaping tool which is both city wide and community focussed. The plan must meet the development needs of the city whilst recognising the needs and diversity of individual communities. It is also a legal requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states that all local planning authorities should have a local plan.</p> <p>The first consultation on Southampton City Vision commenced on 10 February 2020. It was due to run for 10 weeks to 19 April 2020 but was extended to 31 May 2020 due to disruption caused by Covid-19.</p> <p>This report includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the results of this first consultation, and the key messages to be considered as the Local Plan is developed; • Our current stage in the plan-preparation process and the next steps to be taken, including how we will use these consultation results and develop options working with the Council's leadership team, elected members and key partners; • Details of the actions Strategic Planning intend to take in order to meet the 'Tackling Childhood Obesity in Southampton' scrutiny inquiry recommendations numbers 1 and 3; and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of the key impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the timetable of the plan and how we will continue to consult throughout the development of the Local Plan, given restrictions on public gatherings. 		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
	(i)	To note the update on Local Plan progress and summary of the impacts and reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic.
	(ii)	To support the proposed 'next steps' relating to the publication of consultation results and follow-up engagement activities including internal workshops.
	(iii)	To support the proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement as appropriate reaction to Covid-19 impacts.
	(iv)	To support the proposed actions proposed to meet the 'Tackling Childhood Obesity in Southampton' scrutiny inquiry recommendations numbers 1 and 3.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS		
1.	To provide an update and maintain transparency.	
2.	To ensure progress on the Local Plan is continued.	
3.	To ensure the public are receiving timely feedback on consultation results.	
4.	To provide appropriate response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as per Government guidance.	
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED		
5.	Do not publish consultation results – This was rejected as it is both a project objective and wider Council aim to ensure that all consultation results are fed back to the public and in a timely manner, where appropriate. To not publish the results of this initial consultation would be considered a failure of Council service and would likely cause members of the public to feel their voices are not heard and considered as part of the plan-making process. To not make the effort to publish results may also impact on the number of people taking part in future engagement events and the Strategic Planning team having to use an unrepresentative sample of Southampton's population to guide the formulation of planning policies.	
6.	Do not update Statement of Community Involvement – This option was also rejected as it is currently impossible to meet the standards of the current SCI given current national restriction related to Covid-19. To not amend the SCI would mean that all future engagement, whilst restrictions are in place, would be contrary to our own standards and SCC's new Local Plan could be open to challenge. If upheld, this could result in the new Local Plan being found 'unsound' by a Planning Inspector which means the plan cannot continue in the process to adoption.	
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)		
	Consultation results	
7.	The objective of the consultation was to start understanding priorities, ideas and aspirations for the city centre and local neighbourhoods from residents, businesses and anyone with an interest in the future of Southampton. It was also important that the consultation enabled wide engagement with a	

	representative sample of the city's population and businesses by being accessible and relevant with supporting communication and promotion across a range of channels.
8.	The consultation was predominantly carried out through an online survey and supported by a series of community drop-in sessions and workshops with a range of community, school and business groups.
9.	Over 3,000 responses were received across all channels, the vast majority (2,670) being made via the on-line survey and over 270 attended the community events that took place.
10	<p>The consultation was framed around six key challenges/themes. Of these 'environment and climate change' was considered to be the most important, closely followed by 'growth and investment' and 'getting around'. Respondents were also asked to identify priorities both in their local area and the city centre. The same three came out as most important locally and for the city centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, open spaces, nature and conservation • Reducing air pollution and improving air quality • Access to frequent and reliable public transport.
11.	Over 3,100 individual comments were received through the on-line survey, with further responses received by email. Overall, the comments support and help us to understand the results of the structured questions.
12.	<p>Key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and climate change is the top priority. People want to have more sustainable and environmentally friendly options, particularly when it comes to transport, but neither public transport nor cycle/walking routes are currently adequate to deter the use of cars. • Some felt that more radical decisions should be made such as the city centre being completely car free. • Whilst there is a recognition of the importance of the port there are concerns about how this is contributing to air pollution. Many also commented on the limited access to the waterfront. This is a fundamental part of the city's identity and heritage, but Southampton doesn't feel like a waterfront city. • There is a clear demand for local high streets, and people feel it is important to support business start-ups and local independent businesses, with some feeling that Southampton has too many chains and needs to be more individual and ensure money is going back into the local economy. • A large number of comments were made about the 'state' of the city; rubbish, poor pavements, homelessness and general upkeep and look of the city. People feel it is tired and run down and people lack pride in their local area. This is not the right impression to give to visitors and there is potential to make Southampton a destination, particularly with the cruise ship passengers. • Identifying enough space for new homes is a fundamental part of a local plan and most felt that adopting space standards was important, but this also extended to outside space.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of high rise needs to be investigated further. Few are in favour of very high rise blocks, however lower rise of perhaps 4-6 storeys with good outdoor space seemed more acceptable. • Many feel the city has great potential but there is a need to be bold and take a different approach, at present there is a slight feeling of despair and little faith that change will happen. <p>The full report on the consultation results is attached for information.</p>
	Current stage and next steps
13.	With the initial consultation and its analysis complete, we are now at a stage in which we need to feed back the results to all stakeholders, both internal and external, and to progress with research and targeted engagement activities which will guide our review of existing policies. In doing so, we must identify the key strategic options for the city, all of which will need to be presented in a draft version of the plan and we aim to run a consultation on in 2021. Whilst we have been conducting research and review of policies throughout the summer, we have not yet conducted any targeted workshops. Plans for delivering a series of virtual workshops are currently being made with aims for delivery in Autumn 2020.
14.	Consultation results will be published to all groups who were invited to participate in the consultation and generally to the public, together with information about how the results will be used and when the next opportunity will be for people to have their say.
15.	The information gathered through this consultation will be used, together with other evidence, to help shape potential options of how and where growth can best be accommodated in the city in a way that addresses the key priorities identified through this consultation. This will involve a number of workshops with the Council's leadership team, elected members and key partners over the coming months. It is important that the policies we develop in this plan also support and enable the key corporate priorities of a greener and healthier city.
16.	Information gathered will also be shared across Southampton City Council and with relevant partners to help inform other priorities and decisions, as appropriate.
	Impact of COVID-19 pandemic
17.	Our initial consultation was disrupted by restrictions that were introduced in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our immediate response was to extend the consultation deadline, to enable further digital promotion and more time for responses to be made. This has had an impact on the overall timetable of the Local Plan, as has the ability and willingness for certain stakeholders to be able to take part in engagement activities due to Covid-related priorities and in some cases being furloughed.
18.	In addition to this, and like many others, our timetable for the Local Plan (Appendix 1 of the Local Development Scheme, Dec 2019) is no longer considered up to date nor a reliable tool for monitoring performance. With Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) all over the country experiencing significant impacts to their plan-making processes, the Government issued communications encouraging all LPAs to take a proactive approach to

	engagement and continue as much as possible with their plan-making, even if adjustments to timetables are required.
19.	In response to the above, we have continued with in-house work on the plan and previously agreed to begin review of the timetable in September once impacts had settled. Unfortunately, this is still very much an ongoing issue with a lot of uncertainty and frequent changes to rules, restrictions and policies. However, we believe we should review our initial timetable, as well as our general approach to plan-making in this instance, factoring in all impacts and changes in the effort to formulate a more accurate, efficient and achievable timetable for preparation of the Local Plan. Once prepared, the amended timetable will be submitted for Cabinet approval and updated on our website
20.	The Council's Statement of Community Involvement is also in the process of being amended, in line with government guidance released this summer. This is to ensure that plan making can continue using a range of consultation methods even if restrictions mean that we are unable to carry out face to face meetings or events.
	Tackling childhood obesity in Southampton
21.	Two recommendations from the 'tackling childhood obesity in Southampton' scrutiny inquiry have been allocated to the Place directorate and relate directly to the Strategic Planning team and the Southampton City Vision Local Plan: 1. City Vision Local Plan – Incorporate guidance published by Public Health England - 'Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments' in the developing City Vision to ensure that the facilitation of a healthy city is a priority in the city's development. 3. Restrict the growth in hot food takeaways – Include within the developing City Vision a policy that helps to manage the increase in exposure to takeaways in Southampton. Following consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Rights of Way Panel, the city should learn from other local authorities and adopt planning regulations that restrict the exposure of children to unhealthy snacks, beverages and hot food takeaways in and around schools and on routes to and from schools.
22.	The Strategic Planning team have been liaising with Public Health for the past year to ensure that health takes more of a priority in the plan-making process than it has done before. Both teams have agreed that the best way to meet the above aims and ensure that health is more embedded in our planning policy is to bring in a specialist officer to assist with or lead on these matters, depending on experience. The officer will be responsible for conducting research and producing technical evidence documents to support any proposed policies and to consider the implementation of a health impact assessment for the Local Plan as well as any other 'best practice' approaches that may be appropriate for Southampton.
23.	The job description for the post is due to be finalised in the coming months with aims for the officer to be recruited and begin work by the start of 2021. The works will then follow the stages to be set out in the updated LDS timetable, beginning with formulation of a 'draft plan with options' in 2021.

	Further details of timings can be provided, upon request, once an updated Local Plan timetable has been produced and approved.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
24.	The publication of the consultation results and changes to the SCI and LDS will not incur any financial charges or adverse resource implications. Both will be dealt with in-house and published directly to our SCC webpages.
25.	Public Health will be funding the planning officer for health post.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
26.	N/A
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
27.	As the Local Planning Authority, Southampton City Council has a statutory duty to produce a Statement of Community Involvement, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This document is required to be kept up to date and reviewed at least every 5 years. The document may be amended at any time the Local Planning Authority deems necessary.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
28.	N/A
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
29.	If the Council does not update the current SCI it will not be able demonstrate that it has used its principles in consultation, engagement and subsequent formulation of planning policies. If compliance cannot be demonstrated, SCC's new Local Plan could be open to challenge. If upheld, this could result in the new Local Plan being found 'unsound' by a Planning Inspector which means the plan cannot continue in the process to adoption.
30.	As stated above, amendments to the LDS Local Plan timetable will not incur any penalty by Government given that Covid-19 impacts have been experienced by all LPAs across the country.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
31.	The Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme are both statutory documents which Southampton City Council is required to produce, and keep up to date, in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

KEY DECISION?	Yes/No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Southampton City Vision Consultation Results (Sept. 2020)

2.	Involving You in Planning (SCI) – Covid update
3.	Preparing Our Development Plans (LDS) (Adopted December 2019)

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	N/A
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	Yes/No
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Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	Yes/No
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Other Background Documents

Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	N/A