

Background Paper 3:

Local Plan Working Group Involvement

Introduction

The Local Plan Working Group (LPWG) was established as a way to enhance the democratic process of Local Plan preparation, by expanding the opportunity for local input beyond formal periods of public consultation.

The Group has been involved with the preparation of the Plan since its inception meeting on 21 October 2019.

The Group has met regularly and has genuinely shaped the various stages of the Plan. Meetings have comprised a mix of presentations and discussion sessions, and group voting/polling where appropriate.

In summary, the LPWG has:

- **Draft Local Plan Part 1 (Reg 18)** – provided specific input on the wording of each individual policy.
- **Draft Local Plan Part 2 (Reg 18)** - provided specific input into the development strategy and on which sites to include within the consultation.
- **Draft Local Plan Part 3 (Reg 18)** – provided specific input on which sites to include within the consultation and expressed support for a permissive approach to solar/PV development.
- **Proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19)** – the LPWG has agreed the Development Strategy and has chosen the residential and employment sites that are included, and had opportunity to shape the final wording of policies.

Terms of Reference

Membership

The Group consists of 9 Members, including the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Climate Change, Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and 4 other Members nominated by the council's political groups to bring the Working Group into political proportionality overall.

The meetings have been an open forum for all District Councillors to attend if they wished and all Members were notified when meetings were held. However, the 9 named Members were the primary advisors and their involvement has ensured continuity throughout the process of preparing the Local Plan.

The LPWG meetings were attended by council planning officers and other specialist officers attended as and when necessary to advise the LPWG on specific matters.

Roles and responsibilities

The purpose of the LPWG has been to provide cross-party Councillor involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan. It has operated in the capacity of an informal 'sounding board', giving opinions,

advice and guidance to officers to progress updates to the Local Plan and other associated planning guidance and infrastructure proposals.

Some matters discussed at meetings have been voted on within the Group to check that there is broad consensus on a particular local plan matter or to provide officers with an indication of the likely level of support or objection on a particular issue. However, the LPWG has not been a decision-making body that has replaced the formal decision making Scheme of Delegation of the Council.

Administration

Members of the Group have elected the Chair and Vice-Chair, who have overseen the meetings.

Written notice of meetings, along with the agenda and associated papers, were sent to members of the Local Plan Working Group five days in advance of any meeting. Other Members were notified of the meetings via the Members Newsletter and were able to obtain papers on request. In addition, agenda items were able to be requested by the Members of the LPWG and other Members, not on the LPWG, who wished for items to be discussed were able to request they are added to the agenda via their Group representatives on the LPWG.

Whilst formal minutes were not taken, notes of the main issues raised or discussed were made and circulated for agreement by the LPWG at the following meeting. Any disagreements were amended.

How the LPWG has shaped the Proposed Submission Local Plan

The table below sets out the date of each meeting and the topics discussed.

It shows how the LPWG has been involved throughout each stage of Plan preparation, from the draft Local Plan that was published in 3 parts, to the Proposed Submission Local Plan that is being presented to Full Council on 12 January 2023. It demonstrates how officers have worked closely with the LPWG and taken on board its feedback as a group.

Draft Local Plan Part 1 (DM policies)

The LPWG was closely involved with the preparation of the draft Part 1 Plan, receiving presentations on each individual policy over 3 sessions and having the opportunity to make specific comments on all policies. These comments resulted in changes to policy wording.

Draft Local Plan Parts 2 and 3 (Possible development sites)

The LPWG were presented with each residential and employment site and agreed to consult on more sites than needed to fulfil the housing requirement, in order to give opportunity for people to make comments on as many development options as possible. In addition, the Group took a supportive approach to consulting on all possible wind turbine sites and to a permissive policy approach to solar/PV development, acknowledging the climate emergency faced by Teignbridge. Thus, the Group was closely involved with initial potential site choices.

Proposed Submission Local Plan

The Group has informed the Development Strategy contained within the Proposed Submission Local Plan, as set out below:

- Town centre first approach: urban intensification and regeneration (brownfield)
- Sustainable urban extensions which enabled new homes to be in close proximity to existing services and public transport
- Proportional growth in villages to support rural services.

In addition, the Group were directly involved in the choice of residential and employment sites to be included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan, undertaken as a whole day workshop meeting.

Further amendments have also been made to the detailed wording of policies following the sharing of the Proposed Submission Plan with Members.

It should also be appreciated that the table below only includes formal LPWG meetings. Further discussions have taken place between Members and officers in relation to specific policies or sites that are not noted below.

Date of meeting	Topics discussed
21 Oct 2019	<p>Inception Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Chair and Vice-Chair • Terms of Reference <p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 - General</p> <p>Officer presentation on progress to date – Issues Consultation 2018, internal consultation and Planning Cafes, intended publication of draft Local Plan Part 1 (policies) in early 2020.</p> <p>Local Plan Part 1 will be accompanied by Consultation Statement.</p> <p>Discussion around engagement techniques for consultation.</p> <p>Discussion around Draft Local Plan Part 1 content.</p>
28 Nov 2019	<p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 – Individual Policies</p> <p>Discussion on policies contained within the draft Local Plan 2020-2040 Part 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Sustainable Place • Chapter 2: Climate Change • Chapter 3: Design and Wellbeing (to Policy DW15)
19 Dec 2019	<p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 – Individual Policies</p> <p>Discussion on policies contained within the draft Local Plan 2020-2040 Part 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3: Design and Wellbeing (Policies DW16-DW22) • Chapter 4: Prosperity
13 Jan 2020	<p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 – Individual Policies (Reg 18)</p> <p>Discussion on policies contained within the draft Local Plan 2020-2040 Part 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5: Homes • Chapter 6: Environment
5 Feb 2020	<p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 – Revisions made to Individual Policies (Reg 18)</p> <p>A “tracked change” version of the draft Local Plan Part 1 2020-2040 was shared with the Group. This showed how comments on individual policies, raised at the previous meetings, had been incorporated within revised policies of the draft Plan.</p> <p>Proposed Community Engagement</p> <p>The Group agreed with officers that a meaningful online presence was preferred to expensive in-person drop-in events.</p>

Date of meeting	Topics discussed
11 Mar 2020	<p>Draft Local Plan Part 1 – Final revisions made to Individual Policies (Reg 18) The final changes made to the policies contained within the draft Local Plan 2020-2040 following the previous LPWG meeting discussions were shared with Members.</p>
24 Sept 2020	<p>White Paper Planning Reforms Presentation to LPWG on the Government’s consultation on proposals for reform of the planning system in England.</p> <p>Discussion around possible planning reforms as set out in the White Paper in terms of: design, affordable housing, infrastructure & housing, Development Management, and housing numbers (which were set at around 1500 homes/year). Concerns raised by officers were shared by the Group.</p>
19 Oct 2020	<p>Local Plan Timetable and Options Discussion of options available given the withdrawal of EDDC from GESP and possible planning reforms. In particular, how to incorporate strategic policies and strategic development sites into the Plan and a potential increase in housing numbers.</p> <p>The LPWG was given 5 options as to how to proceed and chose to consult on a partial draft Plan, setting out possible development sites but not re-consulting on policies. This became the draft Local Plan Part 2, and then later, also the draft Plan Part 3.</p>
16 Nov 2020	<p>Pattern, Scale and Type of Development The Group was polled on their objectives for the pattern of development to be allocated in the Plan (for example focussing site choices in urban areas, or where landscapes and soils will be protected, or where ecology will be conserved, or where greenhouse gas emissions will be minimised, or focussing on town centres etc.).</p> <p>The Group also agreed that, should the OAN be set at a higher level as proposed through the White Paper, a new settlement could be considered.</p> <p>The LPWG supported the type of development that reflects the district’s housing need and offered some support for taller buildings and higher densities in the right places.</p>
14 Dec 2020	<p>Development Strategy The notes of the previous meeting were discussed with the Group to ensure that officers had obtained the right understanding of the Group’s preferences for the pattern, scale and type of development to be contained in the Plan.</p> <p>Newton Abbot Town Centre Sites Presentation to the LPWG on the potential of Newton Abbot town centre sites to be redeveloped to help accommodate new housing on brownfield sites. The Group considered constraints affecting possible delivery, including flood risk, contamination, biodiversity and loss of car parking, as well as the need for additional sites for replacement employment/leisure uses, difficulty of multi-owner sites, viability difficulties and that redevelopment projects are usually long-term aspirations. TDC Flood Officer explained the flood constraints affecting Newton Abbot town centre sites and advised of ongoing flood risk work in relation to Newton Abbot town and Garden Community sites.</p>
23 Feb 2021	<p>Development Strategy Following the discussions of previous meetings, the Development Strategy was agreed as follows:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre first approach: urban intensification and regeneration • Sustainable urban extensions which enabled new homes to be in close proximity to existing services and public transport • Proportional growth in villages to support rural services. <p>Refining Site Options - Residential LPWG discussed the potential development distribution and sites to be published for consultation in the draft Local Plan Part 2.</p>
8 Mar 2021	<p>Refining Site Options - Residential LPWG were presented with individual brownfield site options and greenfield site options, along with strategy options on a proposed level of development distribution between the Heart of Teignbridge, Edge of Exeter, Teignmouth, Dawlish, Bovey Tracey, Chudleigh and villages.</p> <p>Discussion around whether to consult on all possible sites or to reduce the number of sites through further assessment. The LPWG agreed to consult on all possible development sites, to enable comments to be received and considered on all possible development sites.</p>
7 Apr 2021	<p>Refining Site Options – Employment and Gypsy & Traveller LPWG were presented with individual employment and Gypsy & Traveller site options. (Please note that, following further investigation, none of the 6 possible Gypsy and Traveller site options was available and this did not form part of the consultation on Part 2 of the Local Plan).</p> <p>Low Carbon Energy Generation Initial discussions following publication of the Low Carbon Study as to the level of support for consultation on permissive solar/PV policy and possible wind turbine sites.</p>
10 May 2021	<p>Final Draft Local Plan Part 2 (Reg 18) Officers shared the draft Plan with the Group and outlined the evidence supporting the Plan (SA/HRA). Advised of proposed timeline and methods of community engagement.</p> <p>Also advised of likely further public consultation on possible wind turbine sites and Gypsy & Traveller site options.</p>
4 Aug 2021	<p>Wind Turbine Sites/Renewable Energy LPWG agreed to consult on all 27 possible wind sites and a permissive policy approach to Solar/PV development.</p>
22 Jan 2022	<p>New Chair Voted</p> <p>Presentation from officers on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of work to date • Key steps moving forward
28 Feb 2022	<p>Consultation Comments – draft Local Plan Part 1 (policies) Officers presented the LPWG with a summary of the main responses received to each policy contained within the draft Local Plan Part 1.</p> <p>Torbay Local Plan Consultation Presentation on the Torbay Local Plan consultation, which set 5 options for development, 4 of which would not meet their housing need and have possible</p>

Date of meeting	Topics discussed
	<p>implications for Teignbridge in terms of providing additional sites to accommodate Torbay's unmet housing need. TDC objection being prepared.</p> <p>Flood Modelling Overview of Newton Abbot Town Centre Sites Presentation on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the sites, showing 5 of the 12 possible sites to be at considerable fluvial and tidal flood risk requiring major interventions/adaptive development.</p>
13 Sept 2022	<p>Proposed Submission Local Plan Sites (Reg 19) Following consideration of comments received on all possible residential and employment development sites, as contained within the draft Local Plan Parts 2 and 3, the LPWG was presented with details of potential development sites, chosen in accordance with the previously agreed Development Strategy.</p> <p>Each site was individually discussed, and the Group agreed whether to include it within the Proposed Submission Local Plan or not.</p> <p>By the conclusion of the session all of the sites included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan had been chosen by the LPWG.</p>
31 Oct 2022	<p>Proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19) LPWG agreed final proposed housing numbers, and residential and employment sites.</p> <p>Gypsy & Traveller Pitches Explanation of lack of land available for this use, despite efforts of officers and that unmet need to be accommodated through specific G&T policy. Group agreement to this approach.</p> <p>Wind Turbine Allocations Officers advised that, following comments received on the 27 wind turbine sites, 15 would be subject to further landscape sensitivity assessment and Heritage Impact Assessments and, as many as possible would be contained within the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The Group has always been supportive of the creation of renewable energy and agreed that any possible site should be included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan..</p> <p>Introduction to the Statement of Common Ground (required as part of the Duty to Cooperate)</p> <p>Introduction to the CIL Update</p> <p>Proposed Submission Local Plan Consultation Dates for the consultation period and the methods of consultation were agreed.</p>
15 Dec 2022	<p>This extraordinary LPWG meeting replaced the intended Full Council meeting, that was due to consider publishing the Reg 19 Proposed Submission Local Plan to 2040 for consultation. The Full Council meeting was postponed due to the letter published by the Right Honourable Michael Gove, outlining his proposed planning reforms.</p> <p>The meeting provided officers and the Group to have open and frank discussions about the implications of the letter on the preparation of the Local Plan. It was agreed that, whilst the significance of the possible changes may not be to the degree implied within</p>

Date of meeting	Topics discussed
	<p>the letter, further clarification was required, particularly in relation to flexibility over housing numbers. A letter seeking clarification on a number of matters be sent to Mr Gove by Neil Blaney, Head of Place and Commercial Services.</p> <p>In addition, there was further discussion around the wording of particular policies and as a result, Policy CC2 was amended.</p>

Conclusion

The LPWG was established to enhance the democratic process of Local Plan preparation, by expanding the opportunity for local input beyond formal periods of public consultation, through Member representation, proportional to the political make-up of the Council. It was not established as a decision-making body, but has provided feedback and local information and, has made decisions that have shaped both the three parts of the Draft Local Plan (Reg 18) and the Proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19).

Members of the Group, and other elected Members, have had the opportunity, at all stages of Plan preparation, to openly raise questions, air concerns, discuss issues and offer feedback, and this has directly influenced each published plan and the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

Officers consider that the Group has operated successfully and provided a forum for all elected Members to have their comments considered throughout the Plan preparation process.