

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Executive

8 December 2022

TITLE:	Local Plan Early Engagement
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Anthony McKeown - Council Leader HPBC
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark James - Principal Planning Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	All outside the Peak District National Park

Appendices Attached – Draft Local Plan Early Engagement document

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the publication of the Local Plan Early Engagement document for feedback from the public

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive approves the publication of the draft Local Plan Early Engagement document, subject to any requested amendments from the Local Plan Steering Group.
- 2.2 That the Executive delegates authority to the Executive Director for Place to make amendments to the draft Local Plan Early Engagement document (appended) as requested by the Local Plan Steering Group and approved by the Executive.
- 2.3 That the Executive delegates authority to the Executive Director for Place to and to make non-material amendments to draft Local Plan Early Engagement document to the address formatting issues and insert / update images to aid interpretation and improve aesthetic quality.
- 2.4 That the Executive approves the arrangements for the public engagement, subject to any requested amendments from the Local Plan Steering Group.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council's adopted Local Development Scheme make provision for early engagement on the Local Plan in Q1 2023. As discussed with the Local Plan

Steering Group, the engagement is intended to focus on gathering opinions on the key issues, objectives, vision and policy areas that the next Local Plan could focus on as well as providing an opportunity for the community to suggest sites for development or protection.

- 3.2 A six week period of engagement between 19th January and 3rd March 2023 is proposed. An Early Engagement Document has been prepared for publication. It sets out the background to the Local Plan review, summarises requirements for plan preparation, the evidence gathered to date and likely implications for the next plan. It also highlights possible uses for sites that the Council is keen to assess, namely housing, employment, Local Green Spaces, ecological improvements and renewable energy.
- 3.3 Details of the early engagement will be made available online, at Council offices and local libraries. A press release, social media and posters will be used to raise awareness alongside direct notifications to be sent out to all contacts on the planning policy consultation database.
- 3.4 All feedback received will be analysed and will inform the development of options for the Local Plan that will be subject to further consideration by Councillors ahead of an Options Consultation in Q3 2023.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Local Plan directly links to all four aims of the Corporate Plan.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Option 1 (recommended) – to follow the recommendations set out in section 2 of this report. This option enables early engagement on the Local Plan to proceed in line with the agreed timetable (Q1 2023) as set out in the adopted Local Development Scheme.
- 5.2 Option 2 (not recommended) – not approving the publication of the early engagement document would lead to a delay in Local Plan preparation and would result in the Council not adhering to its commitment of public engagement in Q1 2023 as per the Local Development Scheme. A delay would result in this stage being deferred until after the local elections in May and have consequential implications for the timing of the following consultations and risk delaying adoption.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

None direct

6.2 Workforce

Officers from the Development Services team will lead on the

engagement with input from colleagues in other services.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment accompanies this report.

6.4 Financial Considerations

Costs associated with the early engagement will be met from the agreed Development Services budget for 2022/23.

6.5 Legal

Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the requirements for public consultation during the preparation of the Local Plan which are applicable now. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) must notify consultees of the subject of a Local Plan which the LPA propose to prepare, and invite them to make representations about what a Local Plan with that subject ought to contain.

Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires LPAs to produce a Statement of Community Involvement. The involvement of the public in preparing planning documents must follow the approach set out in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. For the purposes of this stage of the Local Plan, this is the version of the SCI adopted in February 2019. Subject to the outcome of parallel review of the SCI, future Local Plan consultations will need to adhere to a newly adopted SCI from 2023.

6.6 Climate Change

The early engagement document summarises work undertaken to date in respect of climate change, namely working through Vision Derbyshire to commission the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study and to prepare climate change planning guidance that will help to shape Local Plan policy.

6.7 Consultation

This report seeks approval for a six week period of public engagement on the key issues, objectives and policies that the Local Plan should focus on as well as inviting the submission of sites for consideration by the Council for development or protection / environmental enhancements.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Risks have been addressed in the body of the report.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

Adopted Statement of Community Involvement:
https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/media/4047/High-Peak-SCI-adopted-February-2019/pdf/High_Peak_SCI_adopted_February_2019.pdf?m=1553776998070

Adopted Local Development Scheme:
https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/media/579/Local-Development-Scheme-2022/pdf/Local_Development_Scheme_2022.pdf?m=1663772405660

Contact details

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7. **Detail**

7.1 Following consideration of the potential timetable for a new Local Plan by the Local Plan Steering Group in July 2022, the Executive agreed to adopt a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) on 11th August. The LDS identifies the following key milestones for the Local Plan:

Timetable	
Early engagement	Q1 2023
Options consultation	Q3 2023
Preferred Options consultation	Q2 2024
Publication of Local Plan for formal representations	Q1 2025
Submission of Local Plan	Q2 2025
Examination	Q3 2025 - Q1 2026
Adoption	Q2 2026

7.2 This report considers the content and arrangements for the early engagement stage scheduled for Q1 2023.

7.3 Following the adoption of the LDS, the Local Plan Steering Group met on 18th October 2022 to discuss the initial outline plans for the early engagement. It was envisaged that the early engagement planned for Q1 2023 would serve two primary purposes:

- Scoping the issues that next the Local Plan should address and how
 - Asking the community and stakeholders to identify potential sites for development or protection through a “call for sites” exercise.
- 7.4 There was broad support for the outlined structure and headline content for a proposed early engagement document as well as initial plans for consultation but with a request for the opportunity to review further details prior to approval by the Executive.
- 7.5 At the time of writing, the date for the next Local Plan Steering Group has yet to be agreed. The Steering Group is expected to review the draft Local Plan Early Engagement document appended to this report and summarised below along with the following plans for public engagement before the Executive meeting. Forthcoming feedback from the Local Plan Steering Group should inform the Executive’s decision on the report and may inform amendments to the document or arrangements for engagement.

Engagement document

- 7.6 An outline of what each chapter of the document contains is provided below:
1. Introduction and how to respond
 - Purpose and scope of the engagement
 - Overview of national policy regarding the content of Local Plans
 - Overview of 2016 Local Plan (key issues, strategic objectives, spatial vision, key policies)
 - How the new plan preparations affects the current (2016) local plan and current sites.
 - Details of how to respond
 2. Review of the current Local Plan
 - Summary of recent assessment of policies and the Council’s conclusions that policy relating to housing and employment requirements as well as affordable housing have been deemed out of date (Policies S3, S4 and H4)
 - Commentary that other policies may also need to be updated to reflect new and emerging national and local priorities
 3. New and emerging issues for the next Local Plan
 - Summaries of new and emerging evidence and issues that have informed Local Plan review to date and possible implications for current or new policies
 - Outline of proposals for further evidence to inform the plan
 - Consultation questions relating to the issues, vision, objectives, evidence and potential future policies for the next Local Plan
 4. Call for sites
 - Background information the purpose of the call for sites and how they will be assessed
 - Summary of the type of uses for which the call for sites applies, namely;

- Housing
- Employment
- Local Green Space
- Ecological improvements (biodiversity net gain and tree planting)
- Renewable energy
- Site suggestions for other uses
- Consultation questions seeking site suggestions

5. Next steps

- Summary of next stages of Local Plan process and timetable

Engagement arrangements

7.7 The following is proposed for a six week period of public engagement between 19th January 2023 and 3rd March 2023. This adheres to the Q1 2023 commitment in the LDS and allows for the engagement to conclude before the purdah period ahead of the local elections in May.

7.8 This has regard to the requirements under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as well as the more detailed provisions for the early phase of Local Plan preparation as set out in the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Notifications and publicity

- Email / letter to all those on consultation database including statutory consultees
- Press release
- Notifications on social media (Facebook, Twitter) at the start of the consultation and throughout the duration – signpost to consultation website
- Publicity posters in Council buildings and on Parish notice boards

Providing Information

- Publish consultation document on online portal (in accessible format)
- Link from website home page to a consultation webpage that will also host concurrent consultations of the revised SCI and Developer Contributions SPD.
- Step-by-step guidance note on how to use consultation portal
- Paper copies of document in Council offices and libraries

Gathering Opinion

- Response forms / questionnaires (online and in places with paper copies),
- Parish / Town Council engagement through the Parish Forum.
- Hard to reach groups - liaison with High Peak CVS regarding protected characteristic groups

Next steps and other consultations

7.9 Following the period of public engagement, feedback will be analysed and a Consultation Statement will be prepared that summarises how the consultation

was undertaken, who was consulted, feedback received and how it has been considered.

- 7.10 This feedback will then inform the development of options for the Local Plan Options consultation scheduled for Q3 2023. This consultation will be preceded by consideration of the feedback and possible options by the Local Plan Steering Group and member workshops.
- 7.11 The Local Plan Early Engagement period is scheduled to run in parallel with two separate planning policy consultations, namely a revised SCI and the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that are subject to separate reports to be considered by the Executive. For the avoidance of doubt, the early engagement on the Local Plan must adhere to the current SCI adopted in 2019. The Developer Contributions SPD seeks to provide additional guidance in relation to the current Local Plan and national policy, not the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.12 It is acknowledged that the form of Local Plans and requirements for their preparation are currently under review by Government alongside wider reforms to the planning system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill currently passing through Parliament. However, the Bill is subject to change and Royal Assent is not expected until Spring 2023 at the earliest. At that stage, there is likely to be a transitional period to allow local planning authorities to adapt plan making accordingly.
- 7.13 Nevertheless, given the fact that this early engagement is merely an information gathering exercise with no actual proposals, the Bill and related reforms are not expected to have any adverse implications at this stage. The Council will need to monitor and review the wider implications moving forward though.