

# **CABINET**

**Friday, 15 November 2019**

## **LOCAL PLAN UPDATE**

### **Report of the Strategic Planning Manager**

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#### **Recommendation**

**It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress made by the Council in preparation of the Examination in Public of the draft Local Plan, in particular the level of cooperation and agreement on key issues with a range of partners.**

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#### **Summary**

The report summarises the Council's preparations and successful negotiations with key stakeholders in the approach to the Examination in Public of the draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan.

#### **Statutory Powers**

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2011, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### **Strategic Implications**

1. The report relates to all of the Corporate Plan 2015-2025 objectives.

#### **Introduction**

2. The Council submitted its draft Local Plan in October 2018 according to its Local Development Scheme. Since then the Planning Inspectorate have set the timeframe for the next formal stage of the planning process i.e. examination of the Plan by a Planning Inspector and public hearings of the Plan.

#### **Statements of Common Ground**

3. The Council has actively sought to agree key areas of common ground with various neighbouring organisations and statutory bodies. The production of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) will help the Inspector narrow down the range of issues to be discussed at the Hearing Sessions as they identify the matters and issues on which there is clear agreement between key

parties. The Council has agreed Statements of Common Ground with the following bodies / on the following topics:

4. Winchester City Council (WCC) – this SoCG sets out the respective positions of the two authorities on various matters including the funding, delivery and potential impacts of the proposed Strategic Growth Option (SGO) link road. It confirms that WCC agree that Eastleigh Borough Council has complied with the Duty to Cooperate – a key legal test for the Local Plan – and WCC has agreed to withdraw its objection to the Local Plan on that key point. It also confirms that WCC have no objection in principle to safeguarding that part of the proposed route of the SGO link road that lies within Winchester District in WCC’s own emerging Local Plan.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/5642/ed30-wcc-socg.pdf>
5. Natural England, the Forestry Commission, Highwood Group Limited and Galliford Try Partnership / Drew Smith Limited - Statement of Common Ground on the Strategic Growth Option and Ancient Woodland. This sets out modifications agreed by the Council that the environmental bodies wish to see made to the Local Plan in order that they can consider its approach to the protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation including Ancient Woodland to be ‘sound’. <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/5714/ed31-socg-on-the-strategic-growth-option-and-ancient-woodland.pdf>
6. Hampshire County Council as Local Education Authority. This sets out the agreed costs of delivering the new schools and associated education infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the SGO. This ranges between c£48m and c£50m depending on the precise number of dwellings which are eventually delivered at the SGO.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/5772/ed37-socg-education-190819-final.pdf>
7. Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). This sets out the agreed position between the Council and the Partnership that Eastleigh’s Local Plan complies with all the key policy requirements of the PfSH Spatial Position Statement (SPS) and the evidence base which underpins it. The SPS and its evidence base formed the starting point for the preparation of the SGO and not only helped establish the Local Plan’s housing and employment targets but also the principle of considering the development of the SGO alongside consistency with other PfSH policies on matters such as countryside gaps and green infrastructure. <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/5852/ed39-socg-ebc-and-partnership-for-south-hampshire-21-august-2019.pdf>
8. South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). This SoCG sets out the wording of some agreed modifications to the Local Plan to address the SDNPA’s concerns about the impact of development proposed in the borough on the National Park, particularly in terms of highway impacts, impacts on Dark Skies and on the agreed need to promote the National Park objectives.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/6005/ed44-final-without-sdnpa-signature-with-cover-11-10-19.pdf>

9. Network Rail on the Allbrook Rail Bridge. This SoCG sets out the agreed position between the two parties on the highway works which will need to be undertaken in order to mitigate the impact of additional traffic at Allbrook railway bridge. This will include a realignment of Highbridge Road and a new bridge crossing over the Itchen Navigation and agreement that studies undertaken so far demonstrate, as far as it is possible at this stage, that the works proposed are feasible, viable and, in principle, would provide an effective solution to the traffic issues identified.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/6150/ed45-socg-between-ebc-and-network-rail-allbrook-bridge.pdf>
10. Network Rail on General Issues. This SoCG primarily addresses the issue of whether or not a new rail station at Allington (in connection with previous alternative SGO options D &/or E) would be viable, feasible and deliverable. It concludes that, on the basis of the information currently available, it is unlikely that a business case could be made for a new rail station at Allington based on any combinations of alternative SGOs D &/or E. It does identify that there may be capacity on the wider network for some existing trains to stop at a new Allington Station but there is minimal capacity for additional services, the main constraints being the two single line sections between Eastleigh and Fareham and capacity constraints on the line to Southampton.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/6148/ed46-socg-between-ebc-and-network-rail-general-issues-october-2019.pdf>
11. The Environment Agency and Natural England on Biodiversity. This SoCG sets out the proposed modifications that it is agreed need to be made to the Local Plan in order that the two environmental bodies consider it can be declared legally compliant and 'sound'. It largely addresses matters arising out of the Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal legislation and the Habitats Regulations in term of the protection afforded to internationally designated habitats and species.  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/6149/ed47-socg-between-ebc-environment-agency-and-natural-england-161019.pdf>
12. The Council (along with other participants at the hearing sessions) has also produced Hearing Statements which respond to questions asked by the Inspector. The list of Hearing Statements in response to Matters 1-6 raised by the Planning Inspector can be found at this link:  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-examination/hearing-statements>. (A further set of Hearing Statements, for Matters 7-14 to be considered in hearing sessions in January 2020, will be submitted to the Planning Inspector by 22 November 2019.)

### **Hearing sessions and programme**

13. Hearing dates have now been set for 15 days, starting at 10am on 21 November 2019 and concluding on 30 January 2020. All the hearings will take place at the Millennium Suite at the Botleigh Grange Hotel, Hedge End. Details of the programme for the hearings can be found on the Local Plan Examination webpages: <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and->

[building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-examination/hearing-sessions](https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-examination/hearing-sessions)

## **Financial Implications**

14. None relating to the decision in this report.

## **Risk Assessment**

15. There are no risks relating to the decision in this report.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

16. None relating to the decision in this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the submitted Local Plan (October 2018):  
<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/3479/eqia.pdf>

## **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

17. None relating to the decision in this report. The Local Plan has been subject to significant environmental and sustainability appraisal.

## **Conclusion**

18. Cabinet are asked to note the Council's preparations for Local Plan hearings commencing on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019.

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Appendices Attached: none

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

Local Plan Documents submitted and prepared for Examination, all available on the Local Plan Examination webpages: <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-examination/examination-library>.