

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

**Lead Member/ Officer:** Cllr Brian Jones, Lead Member for Highways, Planning & Sustainable Travel

**Report Author:** Angela Loftus, Strategic Planning & Housing Manager

**Title:** Denbighshire's Replacement Local Development Plan – Draft Preferred Strategy

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 This report sets out work undertaken so far on Denbighshire's Replacement Local Development Plan and presents the recommendations from the Council's Strategic Planning Group regarding the Draft Preferred Strategy for the LDP. The Replacement LDP will provide up to date planning policies and site allocations for development to address issues and needs in the County to cover the period 2018 – 2033.
- 1.2 Having an up-to-date LDP is a fundamental part of the plan-led system, and in accordance with national legislation, LPAs must commence a review of their LDPs no more than four years following adoption. In addition, the current LDP will expire in December 2021 and there is a need to have a Replacement Plan in place by then.
- 1.3 The Denbighshire Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement sets out the timetable for producing the Replacement LDP and this was approved by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, and subsequently by Welsh Government. Appendix 1 sets out the key stages in the Council's approved timetable.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the recommendations from the Strategic Planning Group regarding the Replacement LDP Draft Preferred Strategy (attached as Appendix 2). The next step will be to report the Preferred Strategy to Council seeking approval to consult on the document. At this stage the Preferred Strategy is in draft form and if agreed by Council, would be subject to an 8 week public consultation.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the Strategic Planning Group recommendations to Cabinet and Council regarding the Draft Replacement LDP Preferred Strategy:
  - a) **Draft Proposed Levels of Growth:**
    - 68ha of employment land to accommodate a forecasted land requirement of 47.6ha
    - Land for 3,775 new homes to meet a housing requirement of 3,275 homes
  - b) **Draft Proposed Spatial Approach:**

Based on Option 3 - focus development in Bodelwyddan Strategic Site and serviced settlements: the top three tiers in the settlement hierarchy (main centres, local centres and villages) with more limited growth in other unserviced settlements (infill & small sites within development boundaries), primarily focussed on meeting local needs.

- c) To recommend the Draft Preferred Strategy (Appendix 2) in its entirety to Cabinet and Council.

- 3.2 That Cabinet confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) as part of its consideration.

#### **4. Report details**

##### **Strategic Planning Group**

- 4.1 The Group was established in June 2018 with the purpose of leading the delivery of the Replacement LDP through providing a Corporate Steer and input to support its development. The Terms of Reference for the Group state that the Group has a non-executive role but will report back and make recommendations to Planning Committee, Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate. The Group is chaired by the Lead Member with responsibility for the LDP, Cllr Brian Jones, and membership comprises the Chair of Planning Committee and one representative from each Member Area Group. Members are expected to report back to their political groups and MAGs and feedback any contributions from those groups to the SPG.

##### **Development of Draft Preferred Strategy**

- 4.2 Detailed work has taken place on developing a range of 'growth options' and 'spatial options', with the eventual choice forming the LDP 'Draft Preferred Strategy'. The Preferred Option sets the context for identifying how much development land is required for housing and employment and where that development should be located.
- 4.3 The growth options consider how much development there should be across the whole county during the life of the LDP. Six growth options taking account of population forecasts, migration trends and employment growth, have been developed and tested.
- 4.4 The spatial options consider where new development should be located. Three options were developed, taking account of the existing size and function of the County's settlements, as well as access to facilities and transport links. An additional fourth option was put forward at the Members' Workshop. Further detail on the options considered is set out in the draft Preferred Strategy document (Appendix 2).
- 4.5 As part of the work examining alternative growth options, limited stakeholder engagement has been undertaken. A Council Briefing/ workshop was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January to ensure that Members had an opportunity to discuss options for growth, in terms of scale and location. This also included information on the Candidate Sites submitted. There is not a requirement to carry out full public consultation at this stage but three informal drop-in events were also held for County Councillors, City, Town and Community Councils (week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> February) in Denbigh, Ruthin and Rhuddlan.

4.6 The Strategic Planning Group have considered the options proposed together with feedback from the stakeholder engagement. The Group has considered, and had regard to, other contextual information, in particular the Council's corporate priorities, Economic and Community Ambition Strategy and North Wales Economic Ambition Strategy. The North Wales Economic Ambition Strategy, as endorsed by all 6 North Wales Local Authorities, stresses the need for *'market responsive, well-serviced, readily available development sites that meet the needs of current and future economic sectors and clusters, especially along the A55 corridor.'*

4.7 The majority of the Strategic Planning Group at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April agreed to recommend preferred growth levels, the proposed spatial approach and the complete draft Preferred Strategy document (attached as Appendix 2) to Cabinet and Council. The Chair and Elwy MAG representative supported the housing growth figure, but not the employment land figures, so by implication also did not support the proposed spatial approach.

4.8 In summary, the draft LDP Preferred Strategy sets out the following:

**Draft Proposed Levels of Growth:**

- 68ha of employment land to accommodate a forecasted land requirement of 47.6ha
- Land for 3,775 new homes to meet a housing requirement of 3,275 homes

**Draft Proposed Spatial Approach:**

- Focus development in Bodelwyddan Strategic Site and serviced settlements: the top three tiers in the settlement hierarchy (main centres, local centres and villages) with more limited growth in other unserviced settlements (infill & small sites within development boundaries), primarily focussed on meeting local needs.

**Next steps**

4.9 The next key step in the LDP process is publication and consultation on the Draft Preferred Strategy. This is the first statutory consultation stage in the LDP preparation process and sets out the Council's draft broad approach to the scale and location of growth. Following consultation and any subsequent amendments, it will provide the strategic framework for more detailed policies, proposals and land use allocations, which will subsequently be included in the Deposit LDP. The intention is to report to Council on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019, seeking approval to consult on the Draft Preferred Strategy.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The development of a Replacement LDP will contribute to all Corporate Priorities: Housing; Connected Communities; Resilient Communities; Environment & Young People

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The cost of producing a replacement LDP will continue to be reviewed in detail over the coming months. Budget for the review has been accrued on an annual basis and will be available for this work.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment? The completed Well-being Impact Assessment report can be downloaded from the website and should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

On-going Wellbeing Impact Assessment will inform the development of the replacement LDP, alongside Sustainability Appraisal. Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the contents on the draft Preferred Strategy and its conclusions are broadly neutral or positive. Much of the mitigation identified will be included at the Deposit stage when detailed policies will be developed which will demonstrate that negative impacts can be mitigated.

- 8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?** The emerging replacement LDP will be subject to engagement and consultation with the public and other stakeholders.
- 9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**  
The costs of undertaking producing a replacement LDP will be assessed in detail over the coming months. There is a specific Council LDP Reserve set-up for this purpose to which the Planning and Public Protection service makes an annual contribution of £20k. This Reserve has been specifically established to help meet the costs associated with any review and replacement LDP.
- 10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**  
The approved Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement includes a detailed risk assessment for the development of the replacement LDP. In summary, the main risks identified include staff resources, changing legislation and national policy and timetable delays due to unexpectedly high volumes of consultation response or lack of consensus. The Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement builds in some flexibility to allow for unexpected delays and project planning will help to minimise these risks.
- 11. Power to make the Decision**  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning (Wales) Act 2015