



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	12 January 2016
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Local Planning Framework Review
Contact:	<p>Cllr Graham Sutton - Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officers;</p> <p>James Doe – Assistant Director, Planning, Development and Regeneration</p> <p>Laura Wood – Team Leader - Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p>
Purpose of report:	To update members on progress with regards to Dacorum's Local Planning Framework and preparations for work on the new single Local Plan.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That this content of this report are noted; and 2. The Committee advises Officers and the Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder regarding the role Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to play in the development of the new plan.
Corporate objectives:	<p>The Council's Local Planning Framework helps support all 5 corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe and clean environment:</i> e.g. contains policies relating to the design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access; • <i>Community Capacity:</i> e.g. provide a framework for communities to prepare area-specific guidance such as Neighbourhood Plans, Town / Village Plans etc; • <i>Affordable housing:</i> e.g. sets the Borough's overall housing target and the proportion of new homes that

	<p>must be affordable;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dacorum delivers:</i> e.g. provides a clear framework upon which planning decisions can be made; and • <i>Regeneration:</i> e.g. sets the planning framework for key regeneration projects, such as Hemel Hempstead town centre and the Maylands Business Park.
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u> Funding is provided from the LDF reserve. A budget has been agreed for 2015/16. The 2016/17 budget is currently being reviewed as part of the annual budget cycle.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u> Every effort has been made to secure external funding – most recently through the New Homes Bonus, to reduce the impact on the Council’s budget. Where possible, evidence base work is undertaken jointly with other authorities to ensure cost is optimised (through economies of scale). Collaborative working with landowner consultants will continue to help extend the resources available to the Council and avoid the duplication of site specific technical information.</p>
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment included within the Project Initiation Document for this area of work and monitored through the Corvu system. The Local Development Scheme also contains its own risk assessment
Equalities Implications	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Core Strategy. This is currently being converted and updated into a broader Community Impact Assessment. An independent Sustainability Appraisal Report which accompanies the Core Strategy also considers equalities issues separately. It concludes that the Core Strategy avoids any discrimination on the basis of disability, gender or ethnic minority.
Health And Safety Implications	None in this report.
Consultees:	<p>James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration</p> <p>Chris Taylor – Group Manager, Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p>
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Scheme (February 2014) • Adopted Core Strategy (September 2013) • Pre-Submission Site Allocations DPD, incorporating Focused Changes (August 2015) • Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011 and related supplementary planning advice • National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) • Authority Monitoring Report 2014/15

<p>Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i></p>	<p>Work on the Council's Local Planning Framework began in 2006, with consultation on 'Issues and Options' for the Core Strategy DPD. This document progressed through the statutory stages of consultation and examination, before being found 'sound' by a planning Inspector and adopted by the Council in September 2013. The Council subsequently defended a legal challenge to the plan brought by Grand Union Investments Ltd. Consultation on the Site Allocations DPD began in parallel with the Core Strategy i.e. in 2006. The document was however put on hold in 2009, to enable Officers to concentrate on progressing the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The remaining elements of the Local Planning Framework (LPF) comprise the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan, upon which issues and options consultation was held in 2009, and the Development Management DPD, consultation on which has yet to commence. Development Management policies have however been 'saved' from the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011, and remain in operation.</p> <p>Consultation on a new single Local Plan for the Borough will commence in 2016. This will incorporate the 'early partial review of the Core Strategy' required by the Planning Inspector, and also provide an opportunity for the Council to fully superseded the previous Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011.</p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>AMR – Authority Monitoring Report LDS – Local Development Scheme LPF – Local Planning Framework LDF – Local Development Framework <i>(note: this is the same as the LPF above; the terms are used interchangeably)</i> SPD – Supplementary Planning Document SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance GUI – Grand Union Investments Ltd DPP – Development Plan Document DDP – Dacorum Development Programme ED Strategy – Economic Development Strategy NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework PPG – National Planning Policy Guidance SPAR – Strategic Planning and Regeneration PDL – Previously Developed Land (i.e. brownfield land)</p>

BACKGROUND

1. The Local Planning Framework

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and The Town and Country planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing a development plan for the Borough.
- 1.2 The development plan is essentially a document, or series of document, containing the planning policies that the local planning authority will take into account when determining planning applications. The Borough Council is

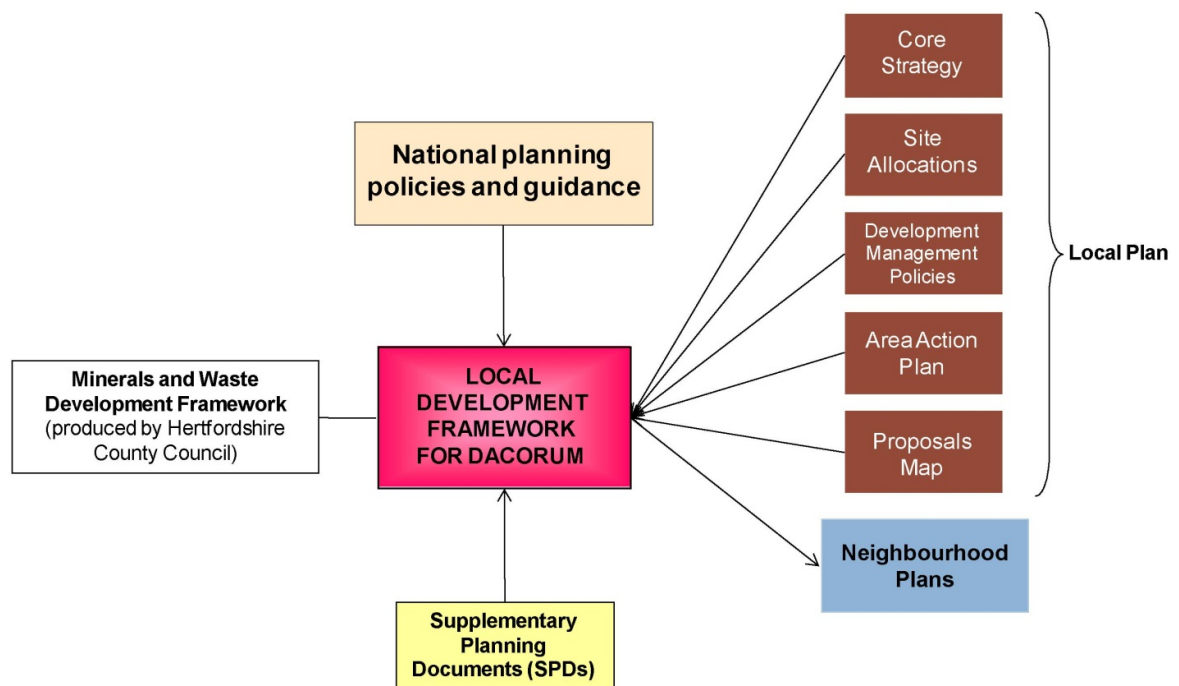
responsible for preparing most, but not all, documents that comprise the development plan.

1.3 The current development plan for Dacorum Borough Council is made up of the following:

- Minerals and Waste Plans prepared by Hertfordshire County Council;
- Dacorum Borough's Local Planning Framework Core Strategy (adopted September 2013); and
- 'Saved' Policies from the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011, not superseded by the above.

1.4 As other documents that comprise the Local Planning Framework (also known as the Local development Framework) are prepared (see Figure 1), they will superseded further 'saved' polices and proposals.

Figure 1: Dacorum's Local Planning Framework



1.5 The following report sets out progress made on the LPF to date, together with information about the new local Plan for the Borough, upon which we will seek initial views in 2016.

Core Strategy:

1.6 The Core Strategy DPD was adopted in 2013, and forms the first part of the Local Planning Framework (LPF), [also referred to as the Local Development Framework], for the Borough. As Members will be aware, a legal challenge to this adopted plan by Grand Union Investments Ltd was dismissed by the High Court Judge in June 2014.

1.7 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for the 2014/15 will be published shortly and sets out what progress has been made so far on implementing the

policies within the Core Strategy. Headline figures for the key issue of housing for the 2014/15 period are as follows:

- 411 (gross) (379 (net)) dwellings were completed over the monitoring period. The net figure is below the annual Core Strategy target (430 dwellings per year), but is higher than the completion rate in the previous monitoring period of 219 (net). This chiefly reflects increasing levels of activities on larger sites and an improving supply of commitments (2,359 (net) at 1st April 2015 compared to 2,168 (net) commitments a year ago). These factors should continue to boost future levels of completions.
- The supply of new housing remains good at 5.9 years' worth (bearing in mind the minimum requirement is for a 5 year rolling supply to be maintained). This maintains the same amount of supply as in last year's calculations.
- 72% (gross) of all dwellings (70% net) were completed on previously developed land (PDL). This is an improvement on last year's figures (resp. 50% and 41%) However, previous high levels of performance (90%+) are unlikely to be repeated in the future as the PDL resource in our built-up areas depletes.
- A total of 254 affordable homes were secured in 2014/15. 128 were delivered directly through the operation of the planning system (i.e. through on-site provision by developers) and a further 126 homes were delivered through the 'First Buy / Home Buy' scheme. The former equates to 33% of the total (net) completions and if First Buy / Home Buy is added in, this equates to 67% of total (net) completions. The 'First Buy / Home Buy' scheme is operated by Government for first time buyers seeking to access new build properties and they also play an important role in helping to meet local housing needs.

Site Allocations DPD

- 1.8 The Site Allocations is the second LPF document. It is the 'delivery' document for the Core Strategy: focussing on the delineation of site boundaries and designations, and setting out planning requirements for new development. It does not cover the Maylands Business Park as this area will either be covered in a separate East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (AAP), or through the new single Local Plan (see below).
- 1.9 The level and broad location of new development, including the principle of releasing 6 'Local Allocations' from the Green Belt, has been established and accepted through the Core Strategy and has therefore not been re-opened for consideration through the Site Allocations process. Rather these issues will be reassessed through the development of a new Local Plan for the Borough.
- 1.10 While good headway has been made on this DPD during 2015, the timetable has been delayed from that originally envisaged as a result of the need to consult on the 'Further Changes' on the Pre-Submission version of the document during August / September.
- 1.11 The Council's response to this consultation and the submission of the Site Allocations document to the Planning Inspectorate was agreed by Cabinet on 15 December 2015. Subject to this recommendation being endorsed by full Council on 20 January, the Site Allocations DPD and also supporting

documentation will be submitted in early February, with the examination hearing sessions expected to take place in May.

Local Allocations master plans:

- 1.12 Work on the Site Allocations DPD has also involved seeking feedback on a number of associated Local Allocation master plans. This feedback and the Council's response to the issues raised was considered and agreed by Cabinet in October 2015. Updated versions of all of the master plans are now on the Council's website. They will be submitted to the Inspectorate as part of supporting information for the Site Allocations DPD: but will not themselves be covered by the formal examination process.
- 1.13 The intention is that the master plans will be finally adopted by the Council at the same time as the Site Allocations DPD, to ensure the documents are consistent. This adoption is scheduled for late 2016.

Other Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 1.14 Work on the Development Management DPD has proved difficult to progress given available resources and a continuing challenging LDS programme. The intention is now to include appropriate policies within the new single Local Plan for the Borough.
- 1.15 The Area Action Plan (AAP) for East Hemel Hempstead is currently on hold. This is due to St Albans City and District Council, with whom the AAP needs to be drawn up, needing to focus their time and resources on progressing its new Strategic Local Plan (equivalent of DBC's Core Strategy). Members should be aware that whilst there remains reference to the joint AAP within St Albans' own Local Development Scheme (LDS), this document remains un-programmed. Officers will endeavour to re-start discussions on the AAP in the new year. This liaison is extremely important given Dacorum's Core Strategy Inspector's view that greater consideration needs to be given to the role of land to the east of Hemel Hempstead in meeting our Borough's housing needs.

2. New Local Development Scheme

- 2.1 The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act require all local planning authorities to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS). This sets out the Council's programme for preparing planning documents and a summary of the role and function of each. It contains a timetable that is updated annually in the light of Authority Monitoring Reports.
- 2.2 The current LDS was published in February 2014. An updated document was agreed by Cabinet on 15 December and, subject to the agreement of full Council, will come into force on 20 January 2016. This new LDS will move the current programme forward to 2017/18, to ensure it covers the adoption of the Single Local Plan (see Figure 2).
- 2.3 The revised timetable is challenging and based on the assumption that the Strategic Planning team will maintain a full complement of appropriately qualified staff. It does not take into account the need for Officers to support production of any additional Neighbourhood Plans or Community Right to Build Orders that may be progressed by Town or Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood

Forums in non-parished areas), or to support additional work that may arise out of the Housing and Planning Bill which is due to be enacted in 2016.

3. Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.1 Consultation on the Local Planning Framework has followed requirements set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The current SCI was adopted in 2006 and so does not fully reflect changes that have occurred since then in terms of:
- a) Government regulations;
 - b) changes in the Council's own processes and procedures; and
 - c) the increased use of electronic communication, websites and social media.
- 3.2 Cabinet agreed the draft of a new SCI in December and informal feedback will be sought on this from Town and Parish Councils and other key interest groups during January and February. Once this consultation has taken place, Cabinet and full Council would be asked to consider the responses received and any changes required to the document as a result, before adopting the new document and its requirements coming into effect.
- 3.3 It is very important to have an up to date SCI to govern consultation on the new Local Plan, and also to ensure the Council has a clear approach to seeking feedback on planning applications and other Development Management processes.

4. New Local Plan

- 4.1 Technical work to inform the single Local Plan (incorporating the early partial review of the Core Strategy) is at an advanced stage with the bulk of this anticipated to be completed by early 2016. The LDS (see above) establishes a programme for consultation on, and completion of, the new Local Plan itself, with initial 'Issues and Options' consultation programmed for August 2016.
- 4.2 Preparing the new plan brings with it significant challenges for the Council. This is in part due to the Core Strategy Inspector requiring the Council to assess the following:
- (a) Household projections;
 - (b) The role and function of the Green Belt affecting Dacorum, including long term boundaries and the potential to identify safeguarded land beyond 2031; and more significantly;
 - (c) The role that effective co-operation with local planning authorities could play in meeting any housing needs arising from Dacorum. This element will include St Albans district and relevant areas lying beyond the Green Belt.
- 4.3 The views of this Committee are sought regarding how they wish to be involved in considering these issues, and how this input relates interrelates with a Task and Finish Group that will be established to provide informal advice and guidance to Officers and the Portfolio Holder as the plan progresses.

Figure 2: Programme of Development Document Production

SUBJECT	2016												2017												2018											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Development Plan Documents																																				
Site Allocations		S			E					A																										
LA Master Plans										A																										
Single Local Plan (incorporating Partial Review)								I								P						S					E		A							
East Hemel Hempstead Action Plan																																				
Policies Map - Updating																																				

Key:

- I - Issues and options consultation (consultation stage)
- P - Pre-Submission / Proposed Submission consultation (representations stage)
- S - Submission of plan and associated documents to Secretary of State
- E - Examination of plan by the Planning Inspectorate
- A - Adoption of plan by the Council

Notes:

- The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2013 and so is not shown on this programme
- All timings are subject to the programming of Cabinet and Full Council meetings and the availability of Planning Inspectors to conduct the Examinations.
- The timetable will be subject to review through the Annual Monitoring Report and any necessary changes to programming made.
- Paragraph 29.9 of the adopted Core Strategy refers to an 'early partial review' of the Core Strategy. This will be incorporated into the new single Local Plan. The reference to this plan being in place by 2017/18 is interpreted as being the end of the 2017/18 financial year i.e. end of March 2018.