

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Executive
19th March 2024

Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme 2024 – 2027

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Alan Ashbery – Sustainable Transport & Planning
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Bob Watson / Gavin Chinniah
Report Author:	Jane Reeves – Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
Key Decision:	No
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	22/02/24
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

Local Authorities are required to produce, and keep up to date, a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the future planning documents the Council will be producing within a three-year period and the timescales and key milestones for their preparation. The Council last published an LDS in March 2023, covering the period to 2026. The Secretary of State can intervene to put an LDS in place where the current one is out of date.

The proposed LDS attached at Annex 1 focuses on the preparation of the new Surrey Heath Local Plan. It sets out the milestones and timescales to adoption in 2025 and will replace the current LDS. Publication of the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan is scheduled for Summer 2024 (starting in early July and ending in August). The purpose of this report is to seek Executive agreement to the revised Local Plan preparation timetable, following the decision to delay publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

The key stages and dates for preparation are set out in the following table:

Local Plan preparation Stage	Date
Consultation on Issues and Preferred Options	June - July 2018
Consultation on a Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)	March – May 2022
Consultation on Regulation 18 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople additional site allocations	August – September 2022

Publication of a Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)	Summer 2024 (previous date November 2023 – January 2024)
Submission to the Secretary of State for Examination	Winter 2024/2025 (previous date April 2024)
Adoption	Autumn 2025 (previous date February 2025)

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- (i) The Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex 1, covering the period 2024 – 2027 be agreed and published on the website.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The new Surrey Heath Local Plan, once adopted, will replace current planning policies in the saved Local Plan (2000), the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document and the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan. It will provide a robust and up-to-date planning framework for future development in the Borough.
- 1.2 The current LDS set out that Publication of a Regulation 19 Local Plan would take place in November 2023. In Summer 2023, it became clear that the approach to the town centre sites at London Road Block and Land East of Knoll Road, which are a key part of the future spatial strategy for the Borough, needed to be revisited. Further masterplanning and viability work needed to be undertaken to ensure that the level of development being proposed through the Local Plan was robust and supported by up-to-date evidence. This followed developer feedback and significant changes to costs and commitments in building higher rise development. In September 2023, the Council published a statement setting out the need for a delay.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The LDS focus is on the production of the new Surrey Heath Local Plan 2019 - 2038.
- 2.2 Consultation on a Regulation 18 Local Plan took place in March to May 2022, with a further consultation on Additional Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople site allocations in August to September 2022. The revised LDS timetable reflects the delay to the publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan (essentially the Council's final version of the Plan that it wants to submit for Examination), and subsequent changes to the remainder of the timetable.

- 2.3 Adoption of the Plan is now anticipated in Autumn 2025, but this will depend on Planning Inspectorate resources, which will impact on the timing of the Examination process and the receipt of the Inspectors Report.
- 2.4 The LDS also sets out that the detail and timetable of any supplementary planning guidance that is prepared to support implementation of the Local Plan policies will be placed on the Council's website.
- 2.5 A revised Local Plan timetable was considered and supported by the Local Plan Working Group on 23 January 2024.

Changes to National Planning Policy and Legislation

- 2.6 Since the last LDS was published a number of changes to national planning policy and to planning legislation have taken place including the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) in October 2023 and the publication of revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023.
- 2.7 Plan making reforms in the LURA will require secondary legislation to be formally introduced. A consultation on implementing the plan making elements of the LURA, was carried out by Government in Summer 2023. The transitional arrangements set out in that suggest that the proposed changes will not affect the preparation of the current new Local Plan provided that the following key dates are met:

The Local Plan is submitted for Examination by 30 June 2025

The Local Plan is adopted by 31 December 2026
- 2.8 The revised timetable is within these deadlines. It should also be noted that under changes that can be enacted through the LURA, new Supplementary Planning Documents would no longer be able to be produced, although existing ones would still carry weight until a Local Plan is prepared under the new planning system. There is currently no timetable for when further regulations might be introduced that would prevent new Supplementary Planning Documents being prepared.
- 2.9 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2023 will need to be taken into account in the wording of the Local Plan policies and supporting text.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The available options for the Executive to consider are:
 - i. To approve the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this Report; or
 - ii. To approve the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this report with changes; or
 - iii. To not agree the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this Report.

4. Contribution to the Council Strategy 2024 - 2028

- 4.1 The LDS sets out a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan which once produced will help to deliver on the following themes:

Protect our Environment –drive to net zero; protect and enhance our natural environment and increase local biodiversity.

Promote healthier & more inclusive communities –promote health and well-being.

Support a Strong Economy and create more homes – help create more homes to meet local needs; stimulate regeneration of Camberley; support vibrant villages and local centres and create a consensus driven Local Plan.

Campaign for Residents – promote sustainable travel options.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are resource implications arising from the production of the Local Plan, which are primarily covered by agreed budgets. The specific additional budgetary implications are outlined in section 6.1 below. Resources will be needed in the following two financial years to deliver the Local Plan and produce supporting guidance and design codes. These future resource implications are expected to be covered by existing budgets and will be agreed through the usual budget setting process.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments

- 6.1 The budgetary implications of this report relate to the need to agree carry forwards to pay for the production of supporting Local Plan evidence and legal advice, previously scheduled for completion during the current financial year, but which will now be delayed into 2024/25.
- 6.2 Further budget implications arise from a growth item to cover the cost of the appointment of an independent inspector from the Planning Inspectorate to undertake the Local Plan Examination. This growth item was approved by Executive in February as part of the 2024/25 budget.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 The preparation of a Local Development Scheme and Local Plan are statutory requirements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Local Plan must be prepared in line with relevant legislation as well as having regard to national planning policy and guidance.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments

- 8.1 No matters arising.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

- 9.1 None.

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 The LDS sets out a timetable for the production of the Local Plan and in itself does not give rise to any impact upon environmental matters or climate change.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 9.2 An equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared for the Local Plan.

Risk Management

- 9.3 The LDS (attached as Annex 1) identifies the risks to meeting the Local Plan milestones and sets out some mitigation to each risk.
- 9.4 The exact detail of the some of the changes proposed through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act are not yet available and will need to be monitored as the plan progresses.

Community Engagement

- 9.5 The LDS sets out the stages at which the Local Plan will be subject to consultation, which is focused at Regulation 18 stage. Significant public engagement was undertaken at this stage and comments received inform the content of the Local Plan which will be published at Regulation 19 stage.

Annexes

Annex 1: Draft Local Development Scheme 2024 - 2027

Background Papers

None.