

REPORT TO:	Planning Policy Committee 28 November 2023
SUBJECT:	Direction Of Travel Consultation Document
LEAD OFFICER:	Kevin Owen (Planning Policy & Conservation Manager)
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Martin Lury (Chair of Planning Policy Committee)
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
<p>The recommendations supports:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the Wellbeing of Arun; • Delivering the right homes in the right places; • Supporting our environment to support us; • Fulfilling Arun’s economic potential. 	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
<p>Engagement and consultation on what should be within the Arun Local Plan update will ensure residents can help shape sustainable new communities and places, where new homes meet the needs of current and future generations by reducing their carbon footprint, enhancing biodiversity , promoting active healthy lifestyles through walking and cycling, leisure, arts and culture and through enhancing the quality of heritage, natural and built environments while promoting economic growth, in a sustainable manner.</p>	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this Direction of Travel public consultation document.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Committee’s approval that the draft Direction of Travel Document to be used for early engagement with key stakeholders (e.g. infrastructure providers, government agencies, interest groups and Parish and Town Councils) in the winter 2023 on preparing the Arun Local Plan Update.
- 1.2. Following early engagement, in the early February 2024 the Direction of Travel Document be revised and published for public consultation with a Regulation 18 Notice forming an Issues & Options consultation seeking views on what should be in the Local Plan.
- 1.3. This report outlines the content and purpose of the Direction of Travel document.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee agrees:

- i. To publish the Direction of Travel Document for early engagement on the scope and content of the Arun Local Plan Update in winter 2023;
- ii. That delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Policy Committee, to refine the Direction of Travel Document for publication in the early February 2024 for public consultation forming part of a Regulation 18 Notification and Issues and Options stage consultation. (For 6 weeks).

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. On 19 July 2023 Full Council approved the Planning Policy Committee's recommendation to lift the pause to the Arun Local Plan Update. Officers are now progressing work on early engagement and steps towards the first stage public consultation on Issues & Options in the early February 2024.

3.2. To aid the process of early engagement, a Direction of Travel Document (DoT) has been produced. The DoT includes the council's Vision & Objectives which scope and provide a framework for the Local Plan and identifies issues and challenges (grouped under relevant themes) followed by potential policy options across a range of planning topics, inviting views on these or whether other matters should also be included. The DoT will be used for several stakeholder workshops in the winter following which it will be refined to form part of the Issues & Options consultation in the early February 2024 alongside the statutory Regulation 18 Notice asking what should be in the plan.

4. DETAIL

4.1. Part of the process for preparing the Local Plan update requires the council to undertake early engagement and consultation with key stakeholders. How this is done is not prescribed at Regulation 18 but best practice includes publishing an Issues & Options public consultation and setting up workshops with key infrastructure providers, government agencies, interest groups, adjacent planning authorities and Parish and Town Councils. Arun's Issues & Options consultation is therefore, provided by the Direction of Travel (DoT) document. Several workshops are also planned in the winter in order to invite views on what should be in the plan, and the DoT document will form a basis for doing this.

4.2. Following this engagement, the DoT can be fine-tuned in the light of comments and then be published forming an 'Issues & Options' consultation in the early February 2024. This will include the statutory Notice under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Notice must set out; the title of the Local Plan to be prepared; the Plan period; the area it covers (i.e. the Arun Local Planning Authority area); and invite representations on what the Plan should contain.

4.3. The DoT document sets out:-

- The introduction and context for preparing the Local Plan update;
- Council's Vision & Objectives for the Local Plan update and invites comment on the V&O;
- Themes based on the Vision & Objectives;
- Key challenges and issues by theme;
- Potential policy options by theme;
- Questions on the policy options and whether there are others including whether to save existing policies that are 'fit for purpose' or remain to be implemented or otherwise amend, replace or provide new policies to make them more effective.

4.4. The specific themes covered broadly following the V&O include:-

- Climate Change
- Environmental Life support Network
- Homes in the Right Places
- Economy, Health and Wellbeing
- Placemaking, Heritage & Culture
- Infrastructure to support our Needs

4.5. Some of the headline options raised include how planning policies can tackle climate change and key questions on the most sustainable spatial approach to where and how people should live and work, to meet future housing and development needs including:-

Climate Change

- Ensuring that we build communities resilient to the extremes of climate change, that avoids areas of flood risk including from river, coastal and ground/surface water and prevents flooding elsewhere;
- Delivering net zero carbon and emissions targets, e.g. via decentralised energy (e.g. solar/PV, biomass, geothermal, wind/wave and tidal/ power);
- Ensuring waste water and water supply infrastructure meets the needs of development and the environment.

Environmental Life support Network

- Making the best use of existing previously developed land before greenfield land is developed to protect conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and nature-based solutions to flooding and carbon offsetting;
- Expanding Biodiversity Opportunity Areas including connectivity via corridors and stepping stones (e.g. a potential bat corridor linking to the Singleton to Cocking Tunnels and scope for designation of any marine BOAs where appropriate (e.g. related to initiatives such as the Sussex Kelp).

Homes in the Right Places

- Ensuring that the housing target and distribution is realistic and set at a level that is supported by infrastructure capacity and which can be viably financed by new developments over the plan period to maintain housing delivery rates;
- Whether to grow existing communities and or new settlements or options between these approaches at large or smaller scales;
- Achieving higher densities at sustainable transport nodes including Active Travel routes (walking and cycling) to achieve 20-minute communities;
- Balancing housing with Jobs and to reduce commuting;
- Set out specific housing distribution for Parish and Town Councils.

Economy, Health and Wellbeing

- Identify and set out how much additional employment space is needed and where within the district to generate jobs to serve additional population, including urban and rural communities and to minimise the need for commuting or travel;
- Foster green business sectors, local enterprise, innovation and the higher skilled/technology sectors through opportunities for linking Chi University technology;
- To create healthy new communities and places that people want to live and work in ensuring that infrastructure and development reduces noise and air pollution.

Telecommunications

- Enable telecommunications infrastructure to be zero carbon and integrated within development and the environment safely, and discreetly, with minimal impact on landscapes, heritage or biodiversity;
- Ensure that policies require new developments to deliver trunking and utility space within developments e.g. to facilitate access to ultra-fast broadband network.

Placemaking, Heritage & Culture

- Provide a clear vision and expectations for the design of development in the district setting out design codes which respect local heritage, landscape and character and help to create '20-minute neighbourhoods' coordinated via Masterplans setting out a spatial approach to density based on transport nodes, supported by essential services (e.g. shops and health) and green infrastructure, including high quality digital broadband infrastructure to reduce the need to travel;
- Achieve the highest design standards possible including for energy efficiency, passive solar and renewables, decentralised and low carbon energy including climate change resilience (extreme heat/cold etc) whilst also protecting the historic built environment;

- Encourage the most to be made of Arun's attractive features and cultural hubs (particularly on the coast and Littlehampton and Bognor Regis) to attract facilities of true excellence to raise Arun's profile as a centre for arts and entertainment, that are sensitive to and respect the coastal environment.

Infrastructure to support our Needs

- Set out supporting policies which require strategic and local scale infrastructure to support the scale of new growth and creation of new or expanded sustainable communities;
- Create infrastructure policies that improve east-west connectivity to neighbouring areas of employment and services via the A27 and A259 including north south connectivity to Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The DoT document is meant to be a 'thought starter' and does not necessarily cover every single issue or policy requirement which is the purpose of engagement and consultation.
- 5.2. Some of the policy topics overlap across the themes and so there is necessarily, some repetition initially, to ensure that there is a comprehensive understanding of the potential policy relevance to the themes. As engagement progresses the DoT can be fine-tuned before the Regulation 18 Notice and public consultation in the early February 2024.
- 5.3. The Committee are asked to endorse the Direction of Travel document for the purposes of early engagement with the key stakeholders in December 2023 and consultation in early February 2024 following fine-tuning in the light of the workshops, under delegated authority.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1. No consultations have yet been undertaken because this document is not setting out policy, it is intended as a means of undertaking early engagement with stakeholders leading to a subsequent public consultation inviting views on what should be included in the Local Plan Update.

7. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 7.1. The options are to agree the DoT to progress with the Local Plan update or not to agree the Direction of Travel document with the risk that progress on the Local Plan update timetable is delayed.

8. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 8.1. The implementation of the recommendation accords with the key decision to lift the pause to the Local Plan update and the budget resource allocated to this task including the need to ensure that under or overspends are reported against the financial year and the councils Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1. Implementing the recommendation will help to minimise the risk that the council will fail to meet national policies and regulations for plan making.

10. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 10.1. There are no governance or legal implications arising for the recommendation in this report.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 11.1. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

12. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

- 12.1. There are no direct health and safety impacts arising from this report. As plan making progresses to adoption informed by public consultation, it is likely that health and safety associated with growth and development of Arun will improve through appropriate policies and mitigation.

13. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

- 13.1. There are no direct implications for council property.

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

- 14.1. The proposals may have a positive impact on community health and wellbeing through engaging with stakeholders and the public on what should be included in the Arun Local Plan to address specific needs of sections of the community.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

- 15.1. The DoT document does not have direct implications climate change although as plan making progresses informed by engagement and consultation, any potential positive and negative impacts of policies in the Local Plan update should balance and mitigate being subject to Sustainability Appraisal.

16. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 16.1. There are no direct adverse implications for crime and disorder.

17. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

- 17.1. There are no direct adverse implications for human rights.

18. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

- 18.1. There are no implications.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Background Paper 1: 'Direction of Travel Document' Arun Local Plan November 2023':-

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/arun-local-plan-update-2023-2041>