

 Executive 2nd March 2011		Agenda Item No. 9
Title	Local Plan Consultation	
For further information about this report please contact	Gary Stephens Group Leader (Policy, Projects & Conservation)	
Service Area	Development Services	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive 6 th January 2011, and Executive 29 th September 2010, minute no. 70	
Background Papers	Background evidence and reports available online at (www.warwickdc.gov.uk/planning) Planning Policy Statement 12 available online at www.dclg.gov.uk	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes, 294

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Deputy Chief Executive	07.01.11	Bill Hunt
Chief Executive	12.01.11	Chris Elliott
CMT	12.01.11	
Section 151 Officer	07.01.11	Mike Snow
Legal		
Finance	07.01.11	Marcus Miskinis
Portfolio Holder(s)	17.01.11	Councillor Hammon
Consultation Undertaken		
Consultation with all members of the Development Plans Working Party on January 31 st and February 15 th .		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Executive's approval to authorise public consultation as part of the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the District. This report was deferred at the Executive of February 9th in order to allow the Development Plans Working Party further time to consider the matter. A meeting of the Working Party took place on February 15th and their views have informed the paper attached as **Appendix One**.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Executive authorises the undertaking of public consultation for a period of 16 weeks from mid March through to the early July 2011 as part of the process for preparing a new Local Plan for the District.
- 2.2 That the content of the draft paper attached as **Appendix One** forms the basis for the public consultation.
- 2.3 That the Executive receives a report of public consultation containing a summary of the responses received in due course, and before considering the next stage of the process.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Council are required by legislation to prepare a Core Strategy (now to be referred to as the new Local Plan) for the District. In September 2010, Executive resolved not to proceed with preparing a draft core strategy until such time as it has considered and reviewed all evidence on future growth and tested alternative options through consultation and sustainability appraisal. That decision was informed by the Secretary of State's decision in July of this year to revoke regional spatial strategies using his powers under Section 79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Although his decision was subsequently found unlawful by the High Court, the Executive resolved in January 2011 to reaffirm its resolution in light of the Government's intent to abolish regional spatial strategies through the Localism Bill which is now before Parliament.
- 3.2 Officers in consultation with Senior Management Team and the Development Plans Working Party have therefore prepared a paper that will form the basis for the consultation on future growth. The text to be included is attached as **Appendix One**.
- 3.3 As referred to in the report to September Executive, the paper has been drafted on the basis of re-positioning the new Local Plan as a more 'corporate document' that informs the spatial elements of all Council and public sector partners services, not just planning. It has also sought to reflect the emerging Government's localism and growth agendas, and has had regard to the recently published Localism Bill and White Paper on Local Growth. Both documents have re-enforced the primacy of the Local Plan to establish the key strategic framework for infrastructure, economic growth, housing, etc. as the basis for local planning decisions and planning by local communities (for example through the preparation of neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders). The proposed consultation and overall approach is therefore considered consistent with the Government's emerging proposals.

- 3.4 The purpose of this paper and the consultation as a whole (and this stage of the process of preparing the new Local Plan) is threefold. Firstly, to ask local communities (residents, businesses, community groups and organisations, public and third sector providers, landowners, etc.) what they consider to be the 'important issues' facing their local area and the District, and how they would prioritise between the 'issues' in terms of which are the most important to address. A number of key issues are suggested in the paper to trigger debate based upon previous consultations, surveys and socio-economic data.
- 3.5 Having regard to the fact that new development (and the potential income generated from new development) can be a potential means of addressing issues, the second purpose of the consultation is to ask local communities how much new development should the Council plan for through its new Local Plan. Three possible scenarios are put forward within the paper and described in terms of their potential ability to address the issues. Again, these scenarios are intended to trigger debate and are based upon differing assumptions of economic and housing growth, need, demand, supply and delivery. Other scenarios are clearly available, and respondents will be given an opportunity to put forward alternatives. Finally, the paper also sets out a number of draft objectives for the Local Plan and local communities are asked for their views on these objectives.
- 3.6 The paper is supported by a background technical report which provides further information, including details of the sustainability appraisal of the new Local Plan and an initial appraisal of the three scenarios.
- 3.7 The paper and background technical report will be supported by a programme of actions and events designed to raise the public's awareness of the consultation, and engage them in responding to the questions posed in the paper, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This will include the use of various channels of communication; such as the Focus Magazine, local media, website/social media, other service areas contacts, as well as an already extensive database of contacts from previous consultations. In terms of engagement, officers and Members will have the opportunity to engage in various ways; including forums, meetings, focus groups, and drop-in sessions for the general public.
- 3.8 It is proposed the consultation will take place over a period of four months, starting in mid March and running through to early July 2011. This has been extended to take account of the local elections in May, and Members should note that they would not be able to front any public meetings during the purdah period, i.e. likely to be between March 24th and two weeks from the election date. During this period, public meetings which officers are fronting can still be held and elected members would still be able to attend such meetings.
- 3.9 Following the close of the consultation, all comments received will be analysed by officers and will be reported back to Executive in order to inform the next stage of the process of preparing the new Local Plan which will need to consider options to address the issues, including where new development should be directed having regard to the issues. The analysis is proposed to be reported back to Members in the early autumn.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council has previously committed to consulting on options for future growth. Not to do so now would deny the public an opportunity to comment, and increase the risk of the new Local Plan ultimately being found 'unsound' by an Inspector due to a lack of public involvement in its preparation. This may leave the Council without a planning framework for the future growth of the District and vulnerable to ad hoc proposals for development that are inconsistent with its Plan.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 It is anticipated that this consultation can be undertaken within the existing budgetary framework, as set out in the report to Executive on January 6th.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The recommendations conform with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme and will help to work towards achieving many of the targets within the Corporate Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy.