

Themes Emerging from the Local Plan Update Statutory Consultation

Date: 2nd November 2021

Report of: Chief Planning Officer

Report to: Development Plan Panel

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Wards affected: ALL

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report sets out the initial findings of Local Plan Update (LPU) statutory consultation, which took place from the 19th July – 13th September 2021. In line with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the purpose of the consultation was to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the subject and proposed objectives of the Local Plan Update (i.e. its scope). That scope has been defined and agreed by Executive Board (as advised by Development Plan Panel (DPP)), as a focus on new or revised planning policy to help tackle the climate emergency. This is set within the context of the City Council declaring a 'Climate Emergency', in March 2019, prompting urgent action across the Council and with a range of stakeholders. In terms of the LPU, this scope was set out across five broad topic areas and associated objectives covering 1) Carbon Reduction, 2) Flood Risk, 3) Green Infrastructure, 4) Placemaking, and 5) Sustainable Infrastructure. As such, the aspiration is that the LPU will make a key contribution to meeting the Council's climate emergency priorities and ambitions. In addition, it is expected that the subject of the Local Plan Update will also make vital positive contributions, through closely related topics, to inclusive growth and the health and wellbeing agendas.
- The analysis of the representations is still ongoing, and as such the details provided as part of this report are interim in nature, and do not seek to pre-judge the final outcomes of the consultation when that analysis is concluded.

Recommendations

- a) Members are requested to note the contents of the report and provide comments on the emerging themes.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. Members are requested to provide comments on the themes emerging from the statutory consultation. Whilst analysis of the representations is not yet complete, some themes are emerging and these are being presented to Members at this interim stage so that Members can provide an initial view, given the crucial role of public consultation on Plan-making. The report sets out the key themes of the LPU consultation by focusing on three broad areas: 1) Did respondents support the general and/or detailed scope of the Plan (including policy options)?, 2) Were reasonable alternatives raised by respondents, either on detailed policy areas or on the overall scope of the LPU as a whole?, and 3) Have respondents provided new evidence that would help in the development of planning policies as part of the next stage of the LPU plan-making process?
2. The review and analysis of all consultation responses is still underway. To date, officers have analysed approximately 70% of the email representations and 50% of the online responses. The key themes raised by these, set out below, are emerging and it is important to note that additional themes or alternative views on these themes may emerge from the remainder of the representations that remain to be analysed. Where graphs and charts are provided in this report, they are derived from a complete assessment of the relevant Smartsurvey responses but do not include data derived from email responses or summary questionnaires (unless stated otherwise). Members are asked to comment on the findings so far.
3. The full analysis is continuing and will be presented as a full Report of Consultation to the next meeting of DPP in January. As such, as stated above, it is important not to pre-judge the results of the final analysis. However, it is felt that the emerging themes provide a helpful snapshot of some of the views that have been expressed. The representations are derived from 4 main sources, 1) Online 'Smartsurvey' responses to the full list of consultation questions, 2) Online 'Smartsurvey' responses to a summary list of questions (which had an emphasis on making the consultation accessible), 3) email responses, and 4) postcard questionnaire responses captured on-street by 'Our Future Leeds'. Taken as a whole, the representations provide a wealth of data indicating levels of support for proposed policy areas and include suggestions, advice and good practice, on ways of developing and improving policies, as well as new evidence that can help us develop these policies. The focus now is to undertake a detailed analysis of this data to help inform an assessment of reasonable alternatives to meet the objectives of the Plan.

What impact will this proposal have?

4. The impact of this report is that Members will be made aware of some of the key matters and themes that have emerged from the consultation, as part of this initial analysis. These matters are ordered in relation to 1) the Overall Scope, 2) Carbon reduction, 3) Flood risk, 4) Green Infrastructure, 5) Placemaking, 6) Sustainable Infrastructure, and 7) the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. The themes below are derived from a combination of qualitative data derived from email responses and a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data derived from the Smartsurvey full consultation and summary consultation. However, given that these are initial findings, it should not be considered as a full record of the consultation responses.

Overall Scope

Do you agree that to meet the objective of the Local Plan Update the scope should focus on the Climate Emergency, including topics 1. Carbon Reduction 2. Flood Risk 3. Green Infrastructure 4. Place-Making 5. Sustainable Infrastructure?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		80.3%	183
2	Agree		7.9%	18
3	Neither agree nor disagree		5.7%	13
4	Disagree		2.2%	5
5	Strongly disagree		3.9%	9
			answered	228

5. The chart above shows that of those who responded to the full online response form there was strong support for the proposed scope of the Plan (with the relevant data from emails and summary questionnaires still to be collated). The vast majority of consultee representations so far analysed have made it clear that they support the Plan focussing on the climate emergency, with respondents being encouraged by the proposed direction the Plan will take. Respondents have also clearly stated their feelings, that addressing the climate emergency is the most pressing issue faced by the Council and society at large.
6. However, a small number of respondents suggested that alternative matters should also be addressed in the scope of the Plan. In particular a number of consultees suggested that housing policies and allocations should be included within the scope of this Plan, including reassessing the housing requirement to include the Government's standard method and 35% urban uplift, reassessing needs for affordable housing and its delivery, or looking to curtail housing growth in order to reduce further carbon emissions.
7. In most cases where respondents are seeking to broaden the subject of the Plan and its scope, they are still overtly supportive of the inclusion of the climate emergency as the key driver for the LPU. Such consultees are seeking additions, rather than deletions to the proposed scope. These suggestions will be considered in relation to the specific subject and proposed objectives of the LPU and also within the wider Local Plan process. It is noted that in defining the objectives of the LPU the Council carried out a Review of Local Plan policies in 2020, to see if they needed to be updated, in line with Government guidance.
8. Finally, it is noted that a very small number of respondents objected to the proposed scope of the Plan on the basis of rejecting the Council's objectives of addressing the climate emergency, citing the potential for negative impacts on private car use and the knock-on effects this could have on the economy.

Carbon Reduction

9. In quantitative terms, there was strong support for new or refreshed policies on all the policy areas raised within the Carbon reduction topic.

10. The detailed comments analysed so far covered issues including:

11. **Whole Life Carbon Emissions** – general support was expressed for a policy requiring assessments to be made in whole life carbon emissions, with many consultees expressing that these kinds of assessments should be introduced as soon as possible. Detailed comments included:

- Concerns over how policy will interrelate with other policies and how it could affect the viability for small house builders, who argue that it should only apply to large schemes,
- Concerns over who will monitor/assess the information, otherwise applicants will be ‘marking their own homework’,
- Views expressed that Building Regulations may be a better place to introduce this kind of assessment. However, others considered that current Building Regulations do not go far enough,
- Clarity needed for the assessment framework/agreed standard. Also, requests were made for a transitional period to allow the housing industry to understand how to undertake an assessment,
- Better use of modular buildings that can be easily deconstructed and re-assembled to give building materials new purpose,
- The Council may need to widen the types of technology used, which may mean relaxing planning guidance on the appearance of buildings,
- The Council should be promoting the re-use of existing buildings first and foremost,
- Views expressed that developers and builders will not do this voluntarily, so policies must be robust.

12. **Operational Energy** – strong support was expressed for a zero-carbon emissions energy standard to be introduced into planning policy as shown in the tables below.

Do you think we should require new development to achieve a zero-carbon energy performance standard for the operational use of the buildings?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		88.52%	54
2	No		11.48%	7
Please note this is a collation of online responses to the above question in the FULL documentation and does not take account of responses via email or Smartsurvey to the SUMMARY consultation.			answered	61

Do you agree or disagree with the following Policy Idea: Zero carbon developments – There is an opportunity to ensure there are improvements to the energy efficiency of new developments so their operational energy use is carbon neutral.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		87.13%	88

Do you agree or disagree with the following Policy Idea: Zero carbon developments – There is an opportunity to ensure there are improvements to the energy efficiency of new developments so their operational energy use is carbon neutral.

2	Agree		9.90%	10
3	Neither agree nor disagree		1.98%	2
4	Disagree		0.00%	0
5	Strongly disagree		0.99%	1
Please note this is a collation of responses to the above question in the SUMMARY documentation and does not take account of responses via email or Smartsurvey to the FULL consultation.			answered	101

13. The following detailed points were also raised as part of the consultation:

- Carbon off-setting should be the last resort,
- All new buildings should be required to provide solar panels,
- The technology exists to introduce carbon neutral development now, and therefore this should be a requirement of development,
- Retrofitting poorly insulated older properties is a bigger priority,
- The policy will need to define what zero energy performance means and how to measure it,
- It is unreasonable for all developments to be zero carbon within such a short time frame,
- New standards can cause confusion and undermine economies of scale for product manufacturers,
- Rather than introducing new bespoke targets, the new national Future Homes Standards should be used for operational carbon performance standards. The Council needs to take Government policy into account and any future changes to the Building Regulations,
- Certain development, such as healthcare buildings, have different energy demands and have difficulty meeting high energy standards,
- General support for new development requiring on site renewable energy, however any policy would need to understand that site constraints may not allow it,
- On site renewables may not always be the most efficient way to meet standards.

14. **Sustainable Construction** – There is strong support for Leeds setting a sustainable construction standard, with many consultees expressing the view that this should be a national or international standard rather than Leeds developing their own bespoke standard. The contrary view is that existing standards do not go far enough, and that Leeds could develop its own world leading standard for sustainable construction. Concerns were expressed from some representatives of the development industry that any future standards should not be overly prescriptive, as such an approach could limit innovation and new working practices. Comments also suggested that Leeds should work with other Local Planning Authorities to avoid a fragmented approach.

15. **Resilience to Heat** – General support was expressed for a policy on this topic. Objectors raised the issue that matters related to overheating were already covered in existing guidance and regulations. However, other consultees expressed the view that these did not go far enough to meet the challenges we are likely to face. Detailed responses provided information on ventilation systems (natural and mechanical), the importance of improved fabric efficiency and the dangers of solar gain via windows.

16. **Renewable Energy** – strong support was expressed for the provision of renewable energy, with many respondents feeling that 100% of the energy needs of a development should be derived from on-site renewable sources. Below are some of the detailed comments raised:

- The requirement of on-site provision will help encourage the growth of the industry,
- Appropriate energy storage solutions also need to be factored in, as small-scale generation is not readily accommodated by the National Grid,
- Ground source heat pumps are more efficient than air source heat pumps and are ideal for larger sites,
- New builds can be designed to ensure roof mounted PV cells are perfectly aligned to the sun, to maximise efficiency,
- Rainwater harvesting should be incorporated into new developments,

- The Council should be encouraging the use of new technologies such as solar glass (a clear photovoltaic cell that can be used in windows whilst also generating electricity),
- The Canal and Rivers Trust have raised ideas on water source heat pumps, and the opportunities provided by the canal network to generate renewable energy.

17. There was also general support for the strategic provision of renewable energy, with many consultees supporting setting local targets. Evidence has been provided from Munich and Vancouver which have committed to generating 100% of their energy from renewable sources by 2025 and 2050 respectively. However, others felt that there were limited benefits for Leeds taking such an approach when the national policy approaches to energy would dwarf any contribution Leeds could make, particularly with the economies of scale of off-shore wind being far more efficient than local solutions.

Flood Risk

18. The initial findings of the consultation suggest that there is broad support for the Flood Risk topic in general and the detailed policy areas in particular to be included within the scope of the Plan. A range of stakeholders have provided comments including detailed comments from statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, as well as developers and members of the public.

19. The comments covered issues including:

20. **Development in flood risk areas** - initial results show strong support for this policy area being within the scope of the LPU. However, a range of opinions have been expressed relating to whether the Council has currently got the balance right between locating homes close to the services and facilities that people need whilst avoiding high flood risk areas. Most respondents (of those analysed) feel that we need to give priority to avoiding flood risk, with suggestions that these areas would be better used for 'rewilding' than for development. However, others have expressed the view that provided buildings can be made resilient to flooding then development can take place in otherwise sustainable locations that are subject to flood risk. The Civic Trust (amongst others) raised the view that new developments may no longer need to be located close to services due to increased digital connectivity limiting the role of physical proximity.

21. **Functional floodplain** – strong support was expressed for limiting urban expansion in unprotected high flood risk areas, with some consultees noting that an adequate land supply was protected by the Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS). The Environment Agency (EA) have requested that the Council write policy to limit development in flood risk areas and *future* high flood risk areas under climate change scenarios. It should be noted that this policy position would go beyond the existing provisions of the NPPF.

22. Related to this issue the EA also advise through their representation that the LPU should include a policy which sets out which uses would be appropriate in which flood risk zones, in order to ensure that no inappropriate development is developed in areas of high flood risk.

23. **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)** – Similarly there is general support for the LPU to consider policies relating to SuDS and the Council's suggested approaches within the consultation material to increase their usage in developments, with the notable exception of objections from some housebuilders and other developers who have expressed the view that matters relating to SuDS should be left to the NPPF.

24. **Resilience** – There is strong support for enhancing the Local Plan Policy position with regard to flood resilient housing. However, a number of representatives of the housebuilding industry have argued that Leeds should not be setting new standards for flood resilient housing on the grounds of cost and viability. It is also argued that local standards may reduce the opportunities for developers to use modern methods of construction. Other representations have raised the following issues:

- Clarity needed on the role of blue infrastructure in place-making as well as green infrastructure,
- Policy needs to get the balance right between encouraging innovation and meeting standards,
- Strong emphasis from others that resilience is an essential regardless of the cost,
- If we want to build in flood risk areas it must be demonstrated that the developments are resilient to flooding,
- The EA are keen for us to set our own policies for safe access and egress.

Do you agree or disagree with the following Policy Idea: Enhanced resilience – Making sure development is safe for its lifetime, increasing flood proofing and ensuring safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		86.67%	65
2	Agree		10.67%	8
3	Neither agree nor disagree		2.67%	2
4	Disagree		0.00%	0
5	Strongly disagree		0.00%	0
Please note this is a collation of responses to the above question in the SUMMARY documentation and does not take account of responses via email or Smartsurvey to the FULL consultation.			answered	75

25. **Vulnerable People** – broad support was expressed for the view that accommodation for more vulnerable people should not be in areas of high flood risk.

9. Should the Local Plan consider where accommodation for more vulnerable people is located?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		91.89%	34
2	No		8.11%	3

9. Should the Local Plan consider where accommodation for more vulnerable people is located?

Please note this is a collation of online responses to the above question in the FULL documentation and does not take account of responses via email or Smartsurvey to the SUMMARY consultation.

answered

37

26. **Permitted development rights and porous paving** – Strong support was expressed for the LPU considering this vital issue, whilst noting frustrations at the lack of powers that local authorities have in this regard, as a result of permitted development rights. Ideas were raised in line with a policy approach adopted in Harringay which requires a % of the site area to be kept green or natural, limiting further extensions to existing properties within flood risk areas. However, of course it must be noted that any formal policy can only be applied where planning permission is required.

Green infrastructure

27. Overall, there is strong support for the inclusion of Green Infrastructure policies within the LPU. As a general matter, a number of consultees expressed a desire to see more overt references being made to blue infrastructure as part of a combined 'Green and Blue Infrastructure' topic. As part of this, both the EA and Natural England have asked for the LPU to include policies on water quality and water resources.

28. The comments covered issues including:

29. **Biodiversity** – There is significant debate within the representations as to whether the Council should stick with the 10% biodiversity net gain baseline as established through the Environment Bill, or whether it should pursue a more ambitious local target. Generally, those within the development industry supported not exceeding the 10% figure, citing the viability of future developments as a key concern. Others felt that the real issue was not one of percentages but about the long-term management and maintenance of any gains for nature, thus ensuring that ecologically beneficial improvements were made.

30. In addition, the view has been expressed that the LPU needs to make clear mention of the 'ecological emergency' as well as the 'climate emergency', given the impact human activity is having on bird and insect populations.

31. **Trees** –

Do you agree or disagree with the following Policy Idea: Plant more trees – There is an opportunity to better protect the trees we have and plant more new trees to help capture dangerous carbon emissions, manage flood risk and create happier healthier places.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	86.32%	82
2	Agree	9.47%	9

Do you agree or disagree with the following Policy Idea: Plant more trees – There is an opportunity to better protect the trees we have and plant more new trees to help capture dangerous carbon emissions, manage flood risk and create happier healthier places.

3	Neither agree nor disagree		3.16%	3
4	Disagree		1.05%	1
5	Strongly disagree		0.00%	0
Please note this is a collation of responses to the above question in the SUMMARY documentation and does not take account of responses via email or Smartsurvey to the FULL consultation.			answered	95

32. Strong support was shown for the protection of existing trees and for increased new planting. The consultation has highlighted the tension between clarity and flexibility, which emerges when making decisions on setting clear targets for tree replacement based on a numeric approach (e.g. 3 for 1), or those based on replacing on-site levels of carbon sequestration, which would be more bespoke to each site. Generally, there is support for going further than the existing policy requirement of a 3:1 replacement, with the importance of tree diversity also being highlighted. This helps to increase resilience, by avoiding similar species in the same locality, and their potential to be collectively impacted by disease. Other ideas/matters raised included:

- Presumption in favour of native and local species,
- Promote the planning of hedgerows as wildlife corridors and ensure their management and maintenance encourages increased biodiversity,
- Policies should allow for off-site provision where sites are particularly constrained e.g. city centre,
- Trees are important in protecting the ecology of rivers,
- Use Leeds Habitat Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify suitable locations for additional woodland,
- All mature trees should be treated as if having Tree Preservation Order status, due to their carbon sequestration and biodiversity value.

33. **Nature conservation** – strong support was shown for enhancing planning policy related to nature conservation, with comments including:

- Homeowners should be encouraged to rewild their gardens and plant productive plants which enhance natural drainage, promote biodiversity, increase carbon storage and also deliver crops,
- Provision must be made for monitoring and reviewing the Leeds Habitat Network to ensure that it is a high quality and effective ecological network across Leeds District and beyond,
- Must require development to maintain and create connectivity between habitats to prevent fragmentation of nature and maintain healthy populations of animals and plants that are then more resilient to climate change,
- Bird and bat boxes should be provided on all new homes.

34. However, other respondents suggested that new policies were not required and instead reliance should be placed on national policy and regulations.

35. **Food production** – Strong support was expressed for the LPU including new policies for local food production, with many consultees noting the negative impacts food miles has on the environment and the lack of connection modern communities have to the food they eat. Many representations have included detailed responses and these comments have helped expand our understanding of the issues presented by this topic. Organisations such as Feed Leeds are keen for us to work closely with them in the future as we develop new policy. Comments raised included:

- Consideration should be given to requiring “growing space” to be part of new developments, through larger gardens, allotments and other community food growing spaces,
- Land should be set aside for local food growing and use of Shared Spaces and roof gardens,
- Support for new techniques such as hydroponics, aeroponics and mushroom farming, with places such as roofs and abandoned buildings being better utilised. As well as under-utilised land such as car parks which sit largely empty,

- Targets could be set for local food production and this could be supported by smaller allotment plots and use of Council parks to include community food growing projects
- More allotments need to be provided,
- The policy should also focus on commercial food production by better protecting good quality agricultural land,
- The 'Space Left Over After Planning' - SLOAP - runs to many thousands of square metres within the city, and policy to ensure that this land is either planted with low maintenance edible forest garden style plantings, or made available for local community growing, could open up many new opportunities for local residents.

36. However, some representatives of the development industry feel that food production areas should not be provided as part of new housing development, as this would reduce the quantity of housing that could be delivered. Instead, local food production should be considered more strategically and considers whether local parks could incorporate such provision.

37. **Green space** – Responses suggest that stakeholders are supportive of increased greenspace provision within the City Centre and beyond. However, contrary opinions suggested that the City Centre may have different needs to other areas and that the importance of hard landscaping should not be dismissed. In addition, fears have been raised that better greenspace (and other GI more generally) as part of new developments could result in higher maintenance costs, which could get passed on to consumers. Separately, strong support has been expressed for green roofs, green walls and roof gardens, to be part of the green space and wider GI solution. Further comments included:

- The Council needs to better understand the types of greenspace it would like to see on sites. More clarity and evidence needs to be provided,
- Trees are multifunctional, so are a really positive tool for meeting multiple needs,
- Green verges need protection,
- GI should be better and more clearly defined to ensure we can better protect it.

Placemaking

38. **20-Minute Neighbourhoods** – Responses indicate that consultees are very supportive of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, particularly as a means of tackling climate change and also the effects of current and future pandemics. Detailed questions and comments have related to:

- How the concept can be applied across the city,
- How can we be proactive with other Council directorates to make sure the delivery of services are co-ordinated,
- Some representatives of the development industry have also expressed support but state that the concept needs to align with housing delivery, with calls for a review of the SAP given their opinion that housing is not being distributed correctly.

39. **Presumption against cars** – General support was expressed for the Council's aspirations to be a City where you don't need to own a car and how planning policies could be used to prevent further car-borne developments, with much of the emphasis being placed on increasing the ease of active travel and public transport. Views were also expressed that new developments should be as car-free as possible. However, strong views were also expressed by those who for a range of reasons (mobility, employment access etc) felt they had to own a car and feared being unfairly penalised.

40. **Sustainable Development Checklist** – There was general support for ensuring that health and wellbeing and climate change issues were fully addressed in all development proposals. Supporters felt that such an approach would encourage greater provision of local amenities and active travel opportunities. It was also felt that it could be used to support developers taking appropriate action, provided they could be enforced. However, it should be noted that other consultees feared that such checklists would result in increased bureaucracy and red-tape for development, with little benefit.

Sustainable Infrastructure

41. **HS2** – strong support has been expressed for a policy on this topic. Some of the issues raised included:

- Greater emphasis should be placed on Northern Powerhouse Rail and Transpennine upgrades, with many feeling this is more crucial than HS2,
- The Council should not focus on just the station element of HS2; the wider scheme itself is also key and how it integrates with the wider city,
- Improving integrated transport is the key, justifying strong links to the transport strategy,
- The policy should focus on ensuring permeable and active spaces underneath the viaduct,
- There is an opportunity to enhance the river environment, given the proximity to water courses,
- Given the uncertainty surrounding HS2 there should be a focus on making Leeds Station a hub for active travel and its crucial connections with other public transport modes.

42. **Mass Transit** – general support was expressed for a policy considering Mass Transit. However, many respondents raised the argument that the Council should still be focussing on improving existing bus and rail networks, noting the risks of relying too heavily on the transformational benefits of Mass Transit, should the project not come to fruition. Comments also raised the following issues:

- Safeguarding of the route would be premature at this stage as there is a lack of clarity on that route,
- Mass transit should link to the overall spatial strategy of development, so greater densities can be delivered at key transport nodes,
- Mass Transit's role as a stimulus for new investment means that the route can have a positive impact on communities,
- Important to consider natural surveillance at stops, as well as how walking routes can be made attractive for pedestrians.

43. **Leeds Bradford Airport** – strong support was expressed for a new policy concerning Leeds Bradford Airport. However, some doubts were expressed as to whether the sustainability of the airport could be enhanced. Leeds Bradford Airport have responded to express their in-principle support for the LPU whilst also highlighting the important role the airport has for the local economy, as well as the importance of the LPU following national policy. Other consultees (including WYCA) have set out that a future policy should explicitly set out how the airport could be supported through the development of public transport, such as rail and bus, and establish who is responsible for delivering and funding these interventions and by when.
44. **Digital Connectivity** – There is strong general support for the Council providing new policies on digital connectivity, largely in response to the important role digital connectivity has in modern life, and the damage it can do for those who do not have a good level of connectivity. However, some representatives of the development industry felt (whilst clearly noting the importance of digital connectivity) that the Council should not be establishing standards that go beyond the provisions of existing national policy and building regulations, particularly in light of the Government's commitment to address this through new legislation.

Sustainability Appraisal

45. The Local Plan Update will need to be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to prepare a Scoping Report to consult with the three environmental consultee bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) which:
- identifies other policies, plans and programmes relevant to the LPU,
 - provides baseline information, either already collected or still needed,
 - identifies social, environmental and economic issues identified as a result of the work undertaken,
 - presents the SA framework, including objectives and indicators, and,
 - sets out the proposed structure and content of the SA Report.
46. An SA Scoping Report has been prepared and consultation undertaken with the Environmental Bodies during the LPU Scoping consultation period. The proposed scope was based on the SA Framework used to assess the Core Strategy Selective Review adopted in 2019 with an update to baseline economic, social and environmental data and policies, plans and programme reflecting the scope of the LPU themes.
47. Responses were received from the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England who both expressed general support for the proposed approach of the Sustainability Appraisal. The EA have suggested an additional sustainability objective around the water environment and water resources and the need to include reference to groundwater and preventing pollution. Both bodies have provided further information in relation to policies, plans and programme and baseline data that should be considered within the appraisal process.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

48. The scoping consultation for LCC's draft LPU ran from 19 July 2021 to 13 September 2021. Titled 'Your Neighbourhood, Your City, Your Planet', the draft update's main subject is on shaping policies to reduce the city's impact on the environment and its objective to help achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted interim Statement of Community Involvement.
49. During this time COVID restrictions continued to affect the way LCC could consult and engage with stakeholders, limiting face-to-face opportunities which might previously have been employed.
50. At the same time there was the appetite to change our approach from traditional PDF and print methods which are permissible under statutory obligations around planning consultation, towards digital first communications which would make materials more accessible to a wider audience.
51. Overall, 760 formal consultation submissions were made. Of these, 655 submissions were made via Smart Survey links from content on the website. 65 responses were received via email, with the remaining 40 being individual postcard submissions organised by 'Our Future Leeds'. Of the 655 Smart Survey submissions, 417 submissions (64%) related to the summaries of each topic. This demonstrates that more people were inclined to interact with shorter versions of the material. However, it should be noted that the 760 figure does not include verbal responses received as part of group workshops, including events held for young people and older people. For clarity, these comments will also be given full regard.
52. In total, 166,693 people were shown adverts for the consultation via Facebook. This resulted in 10,345 unique views of the website over the campaign duration, with 69% of people accessing content via mobile or tablet, compared to 45% for other Planning content on the City Council's website.
53. In conclusion, communications have been effective in reaching a broad range of people and communities, establishing a baseline for us to work from along with stimulating conversations around 'best practice' in how we communicate planning consultations in future.
54. Efforts to move to a more digital and accessible way of communicating have broadly been well-received but as we move out of the pandemic we need to consider how a 'digital-first' approach should be supplemented by face-to-face / traditional communications that may be more effective in other communities.
55. Digital and social media promotion and advertising has provided us with valuable data around who is engaging with our communications across the district. We should adapt our approach to future communications using this learning to ensure we are reaching as wide and as representative an audience as possible.
56. The fact that nearly two-thirds of responses came from Smart Surveys linked to summary content demonstrates demand for abridged versions of the information, and consideration needs to be given to how these should be incorporated into future communications wherever possible.

What are the resource implications?

57. The preparation of the LPU and accompanying evidence base is a resource intensive endeavour which incurs additional cost, in terms of evidence base preparation and consultation, at a time of increased budget pressure. In general, costs will be met from within existing provisions. All of the work undertaken has been with collaboration with teams from across the Council.
58. With particular consideration of the resource implications for future rounds of consultations, as we move out of the pandemic we need to consider how a 'digital-first' approach should be supplemented by face-to-face / traditional communications that may be more effective in some communities.

What are the legal implications?

59. Consultation must be in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This requires that the Local Planning Authority must notify residents, businesses and consultation bodies on the "*subject of the local plan which the local planning authority propose to prepare and invite each of them to make representations to the local planning authority about what a local plan with that subject ought to contain*". The consultation has been undertaken in this way and using the methods noted above. Representations received shall be considered prior to the preparation of the publication draft LPU ("Regulation 19").

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

60. The plan-making process is a complex one and subject to a number of inherent risks as well as the risk surrounding the overall objective of the LPU to help address the climate emergency. These risks are as follows:
61. Changes to national guidance – this remains a key risk to policy development as it is likely that by the time draft policies are submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by the Planning Inspectorate the Government may have changed the planning and building control systems. The Council will therefore need to set out clear evidential links between proposed policies and achieving its Carbon Budget as required by the Climate Change Act 2008 as well as seeking to pre-empt a national direction of travel. It is considered that the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) will help provide a broad direction of travel for national policy making. From a technical perspective, changes to the planning system may result in national Development Management policies (as expressed through a revised NPPF) not giving local authorities flexibility to set their own policies on the matters proposed to be in scope for the LPU. In addition, proposed changes to the building regulations may result in local authorities having no scope to prescribe carbon emission rates from new development. At present however, LPAs are being encouraged to continue progressing with their Local Plans.
62. The viability of development – the LPU plays a key role in helping development reduce carbon emissions and help places adapt to climate change. However, there remains a requirement for Leeds to meet its development needs to adequately house its residents and provide necessary jobs. Therefore, the policies need to be effective and viable, both individually and cumulatively. This will be a key issue in plan-making and the Council will seek to work proactively with the development industry to consider the ways in which innovative approaches to development viability can be used to help deliver the objective of the LPU.

63. Resources – the Council’s overall financial position is challenging. This may impact on the resources available for progressing the Local Plan Update No. 1 in a timely manner and, in association with other parts of the Local Plan, may involve sequencing plan-production in accordance with resources available.

Does this proposal support the council’s three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

There is a clear role for planning in delivering against all of the Council’s pillars as established through the Best Council Plan. At this early stage of preparation, the subject of the LPU could contribute positively to the Council’s key strategies, as follows:

- Climate Emergency – by managing the transition to zero carbon via policies including: increasing the energy efficiency of buildings, the design of places, the location of development, accessibility to public transport, renewable energy supply and storage;
- Health and Well-being Strategy – through people-centred policies including the design of places, quality of housing and accessibility to green infrastructure and services;
- Inclusive Growth Strategy – through policies including the links between homes and jobs, the location of development, green infrastructure and connectivity.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

64. Not progressing the Local Plan Update in the form proposed could result in key policies relating to the climate emergency being out of date. It would also mean that the Council would not be maximising opportunities to help address the climate emergency and the ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030, through Local Plan policies.

65. This consultation was concerned with notifying people about the subject of the Council’s LPU No. 1 and about what a Plan with that subject ought to contain. The proposed subject was on the introduction of new and enhancement of existing planning policies to help address the climate emergency, including policies on carbon reduction, flood risk, green infrastructure, place-making and sustainable infrastructure. This paper sets out some of the headline responses from specific consultation bodies, residents and those carrying out business in the area and the consultation will help inform what reasonable alternatives need to be assessed in order to progress an appropriate range of planning policies to address the climate emergency.

How will success be measured?

66. Success will be measured by the adoption of a LPU which introduces planning policies that help address the climate emergency. This paper provides an initial update to the first round of consultation on the scope of the Local Plan (i.e. its subject and objectives).

What is the timetable for implementation?

67. The Local Plan Update has a provisional timetable of Adoption late 2023. The next key milestone will be further public consultation on draft planning policies, with a target to bring these to DPP by Spring 2022.

68. A full report of consultation will be provided to DPP in January and at the next stage DPP will consider the policies to be addressed and reasonable alternatives for each of them as informed by the consultation, evidence, sustainability appraisal, the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, cross boundary issues and local, sub-regional, national and international guidance.

Appendices

69. None

Background papers

70. None