

Update on Leeds Local Plan 2040

Date: 17th September 2024

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

Brief summary

The Leeds Local Plan 2040 was earmarked to begin its second round of Regulation 18 public consultation in November 2024. A consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published at the end of July 2024. This proposes significant changes to national planning policy that will have a bearing on the Leeds Local Plan 2040. In light of this, it is proposed that the planned public consultation before the end of 2024 will instead happen in early 2025, pending finalisation of the NPPF.

Recommendations

That Members of Development Plan Panel note the contents of this report.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report seeks to provide Members of Development Plan Panel with an update on the Leeds Local Plan 2040 (LLP2040) timetable.

Background

- 2 The Council has been progressing a revised Local Plan for a revised plan period 2022 to 2040 called Leeds Local Plan 2040. At the DPP meeting on 16th July 2024 members were informed that the Council were aiming to undertake a Regulation 18 consultation before the end of the year.
- 3 The Council is also progressing a Development Plan Document called the Local Plan Update (“Your City, Your Neighbourhood, Your Planet”). This focusses on policies that directly relate to carbon reduction, flood risk, green and blue infrastructure, place-making and sustainable infrastructure). This targeted update is now at an advanced stage of development and is largely unaffected by changes to the NPPF, with the exception of changes to renewable energy policy.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 4 The changes to the NPPF are contained within the report relating to Agenda Item 1 and relate to key issues around housing numbers, the way housing is delivered and the locations that are suitable for housing (with a change to the approach to releasing land from the Green Belt i.e. a “grey belt” assessment).
- 5 The proposal to delay public consultation on LLP2040 will avoid the following risks:
 - a) that the Government’s consultation on the NPPF infects the Council’s consultation on the LLP2040 and causes confusion locally
 - b) the LLP2040 consultation becomes a vessel for comments on the Government’s consultation on the NPPF, leading to confusion and to unnecessary resource burdens on Council officers to separate representations on national and local planning policy
 - c) longer delays to the LLP2040 plan-making process arising from a need for a further Regulation 18 consultation once the NPPF is finalised
 - d) unanswered questions from local people about what policy options for their areas look like given that the NPPF is not finalised.
- 6 The Government has estimated that its response to the NPPF consultation will be finalised by the end of 2024. The proposal is that the LLP2040 plan-making process continues in the meantime with continued development and refinement of the evidence base, assessment of potential sites and development of material in readiness for public consultation in Spring 2025.
- 7 The expectation is that there will be no overall delay to the LLP2040 timetable as the plan is still in an early stage of preparation and the slight delay to consultation would not mean a pause in the process overall.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 8 There is a clear cross-cutting role for the LLP2040 in delivering against all of the Council’s pillars as established through the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:
Have ward members been consulted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

- 9 This report is an update report and therefore does not contain material subject to consultation.

What are the resource implications?

- 10 The approach set out in this report ensures that the Council’s resources are used wisely. Public consultation is a critical part of the plan-making process and is resource intensive and time consuming. To that end, it is important to consult at the right time and in the right manner. This proposal would avoid additional costs associated with: time consulting on “what-if’s”, time analysing representations on a Government approach to national policy that is in draft and the risk of an additional round of consultation.

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

11 There is a risk that the Government does not finalise the NPPF by the end of the year and that the LLP2040 process does become delayed if national guidance on such issues as the standard method for assessing housing numbers and releasing land from the Green Belt remain unsettled. The Council would mitigate this risk by encouraging Government to finalise the NPPF quickly and considering options to progress should the NPPF finalisation be further delayed.

What are the legal implications?

12 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

13 The option to continue with public consultation in advance of the NPPF being settled was considered but for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 above has been discounted. Options for partial consultation on issues not affected by the NPPF have been considered and discounted because of the costs of carrying out public consultation more than once within what would be a relatively short time frame.

How will success be measured?

14 Ultimately success on this matter will be measured by the adoption of LLP2040.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

15 This report is an update on the LLP2040 timetable. It sets out that Regulation 18 consultation will now be earmarked for early 2025. The Chief Planning Officer and Head of Strategic Planning will be responsible for implementing this timetable.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None