Policy and Resources Committee
14 November 2018

Subject: Canterbury District Local Plan: Update

Head of Service: Simon Thomas, Head of Planning

Decision Issues: These matters are within the authority of the Committee.

Classification: This report is open to the public.

CCC Ward(s): All

Summary: This report provides an update on the Canterbury District Local Plan following the previous report to the Policy and Resources Committee in July 2018

To consider: That the Committee notes that preparatory work will begin for a review of the Council’s Local Plan

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Introduction

This Committee received an update report on housing needs in July 2018, which responded to the Local Plan Inspector’s requirement to re-assess housing needs, within one year of the adoption of the recently agreed Local Plan.

The Local Plan adopted July 2017 identified a need for 800 dwellings per annum. In his report to the Council following the Examination in Public, the Inspector required us to consider new population data to see whether this would affect the need for 800 dwellings per annum, and so require a review of the Local Plan.

Work was undertaken by officers to assess these figures, and taking into account the additional development sites given planning permission by us since the Inspector issued his findings, the conclusion of the assessment was that there was no requirement to review the Local Plan at that time, and that was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in July.

The July report also noted, however, that the Government was expected to publish a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the end of that month, to include a new “standard” method for calculating housing needs nationally. The report set out that new household projections - which are a key input to the standard method - were due for release in the autumn, and that the implications of these changes would need to be kept under review.

The current position is that the Government, having issued a revised NPPF in July, has now decided to review the position further. The housing needs methodology is, therefore, still under review.
2. **Detail**

The legal requirement, introduced in 2017\(^1\), is for local planning authorities to review Local Plans at least every five years. We are already 16 months into the current Plan and, given the amount of time that is needed to revise a Local Plan, we would expect to begin the formal processes to do that in 2019. Early preparatory work is therefore currently underway to scope a potential review of the Canterbury District Local Plan. It is anticipated that a recommendation will be made to Committee in Summer 2019, that a review of the Local Plan will formally commence.

In reviewing the Local Plan housing needs and delivery will be a key consideration.

Housing delivery is a key priority for Government and the Housing White Paper (February 2017) set out a range of measures and proposals intended to improve how the housing market operates. Among them was a proposal to increase the supply of new housing in England by changing the way local planning authorities calculate how many homes are needed in an area.

The revised NPPF was published on 24 July 2018, and includes reference to the standard method - known as the local housing need assessment – as the basis for determining the minimum number of new homes required at paragraph 60. The accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for “housing need assessment” was subsequently updated in September 2018, and sets out the method which local planning authorities are expected to follow to calculate their local needs figure.

However, following the publication of new household projections in September, the Government launched a new consultation in October on further changes to the standard method for calculating housing needs. We expect the result of this consultation to lead to a position where the new NPPF will place a far higher requirement for housing need on our Council than the current Local Plan, which would have to be addressed by a revised Plan.

Officers have now begun to scope out the work that may be required to undertake a review of the Local Plan. Once the Government has finalised the position with regard to housing needs calculations, we will then need to further consider the implications for our Local Plan.

To repeat, therefore, we are required to review plans every five years, and our expectation is that, in the next edition of the NPPF, Government will set a significantly higher housing needs target for this District than the current Local Plan can deliver. Early scoping work has therefore commenced and it is anticipated that a recommendation will be made to Committee in Summer 2019, that a review of the Local Plan will formally commence.

5. **Recommendation**

That the Committee note the content of the report

\(^1\) (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012)
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