

14 December 2016

**Draft Strategic Policies & Land Allocations and Review of
Development Management Development Plan Documents
[Local Plan for Lancaster District]**

Report of the Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek a resolution from Council to undertake public consultation on the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document. This will enable progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for Lancaster District. The policies and allocations apply to the district's urban areas and rural areas, including the Forest of Bowland AONB, where the national landscape designation is the preeminent concern. A further development plan document, jointly prepared with South Lakeland District Council, for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB, has previously been reported to Council.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- (1) Resolves to undertake public consultation on the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document.**
- (2) Publishes background evidence and supporting material, including the consultants' interim reports on the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.**
- (3) Delegates to the Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning) the authority to make minor changes, to improve the clarity and internal consistency of the Draft Documents, prior to the intended period of public consultation, provisionally, from Friday 27th January to Friday 24th March 2017.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The preparation of a Local Plan is a responsibility of the Council in its role as local planning authority. A local plan establishes how much development is required and where that development should be. The plan must identify genuinely deliverable development opportunities for meeting the community's needs, most particularly for housing and employment. Following significant work over the last few years the Council is now approaching an important stage in the plan preparation process: the publication of draft development plan documents for public consultation.
- 1.2 When complete, the new Local Plan for Lancaster District will be made up of a number of separate Development Plan Documents, also known as DPDs. This report seeks a resolution to consult on the final and most significant elements of the Local Plan; the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD and the Review of the Development Management (Planning Policies) DPD. The consultation would be for a two month period in early 2017 (provisionally; January 27th to March 24th). On 9th November 2016 Council resolved to undertake public consultation on a draft of the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB DPD. This has been jointly prepared with South Lakeland District Council. Consultation for this DPD has commenced (10th November 2016 to 5th January 2017).
- 1.3 This report describes the process of preparing these DPDs, summarises some of the key content, and, anticipates how the DPDs will be advanced towards adoption in 2017 and 2018.
- 1.4 The process for preparing Development Plan Documents is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), supported by further on-line National Planning Practice Guidance. Preparation of a local plan is a statutory responsibility of local planning authorities. The Government has made it very clear that local plans must plan positively and proactively to meet the evidenced development needs of their areas. Local planning authorities must collate their own evidence and describe how, following cooperation in plan-making with neighbouring authorities, they have prepared a plan that provides the opportunities needed to achieve development that will meet these objectively assessed needs in full.
- 1.5 The draft plan reflects the requirements of the NPPF and other Government directions. Members should be aware that the Government has repeatedly warned local authorities to make swift and efficient progress to put a local plan in place or there may be consequences. The Government has stated that Councils should have prepared up-to-date Local Plans by "early 2017". Authorities delaying the preparation of a plan may face intervention, at the Council's expense, from the Government. This would take the form of the Government appointing other parties to use the existing evidence to prepare the local plan. Also, the Government has signalled the prospect of no further payments from the Government's New Homes Bonus until an up to date local plan is in place.
- 1.6 Officers have to advise that the Council does face a significant risk of Government intervention at this time. However, that risk will be mitigated if a decision is taken at this meeting to advance the plan in accordance with the recommendations. There would be little to gain from Government intervention following the March 2017 deadline, if the Council can demonstrate that a plan is already being prepared for submission and Examination.

2.0 Background

2.1 The new local plan will be made up of the following existing or advancing Development Plan Documents (DPDs):

- Strategic Policies and Land Allocations;
- Review of the Development Management;
- Arnside and Silverdale AONB; and,
- Morecambe Area Action Plan - already adopted [December 2014].

2.2 During 2017 the Council will also re-investigate if there is sufficient viability in development in this district to support the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A CIL allows a charge to be made on development (where viable) which can contribute towards funding new local infrastructure. A CIL Charging Schedule is established by setting the local tariff on development in a further Development Plan Document.

2.3 Also during 2017, the Council will continue to explore the need for additional accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The national definitions about who qualifies as a Gypsy or Traveller, for the purposes of planning for new accommodation, have been significantly revised. Therefore further work must now be done to decide how much unmet need there is in the district, and then whether this need should be addressed by preparing a specific DPD to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

2.4 This report is about the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD and the Review of the Development Management DPD. The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD will replace the remaining policies of the 2008 Core Strategy and residual land allocation policies from the 2004 Local Plan. The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD will:

- Set requirements, based on consideration of objective evidence, for the amount of development that is required to meet the needs of a growing economy and population for at least 15 years following the adoption of the plan;
- Set the spatial strategy for the distribution of development and regeneration;
- Allocate land, both brownfield and greenfield, for development and regeneration; and,
- Identify land to be protected from development because of its environmental, economic or social value.

2.5 The Review of the Development Management DPD updates the development management policies contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. This ensures that the planning policies which are used to determine planning proposals take account of changed national guidance or new legislation, and are contemporary with the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD.

2.6 Members will be well aware that this draft local plan has taken a long time to prepare. The Council consulted on a; draft Land Allocations Document, Development Management Document, and, Morecambe Area Action Plan in October 2012. The Development Management (planning policies) and Morecambe Area Action Plan documents were progressed, and, following independent Examination in April 2014, were adopted in December 2014. However, by 2012 the government was signalling its intentions to revoke the Regional Strategies that had set development

requirements, particularly for housing, and the NPPF directed local planning authorities to instead establish their own development requirements and prepare local plans to meet these needs in full. Instead of continuing with plans informed by the out-going Regional Strategies. The Council promptly commissioned independent consultants to determine and recommend new development requirements.

- 2.7 The consultants advised that this district had much greater development needs than had previously been required by the out-going Regional Strategy. In the summer of 2014, the Council consulted with the community on approaches in principle for finding further sites, in addition to those identified in the 2012 Draft Land Allocations Document, for these much greater development needs.
- 2.8 In autumn 2015, the Council consulted again on a range of specific strategic sites where these greater development needs could be met, again in addition to the significant opportunities previously consulted upon in the 2012 draft Land Allocations DPD. These consultations allowed the Council to advance a plan by exploring reasonable options for how development could be delivered in the district in order to help choose those which are the most suitable, available and achievable. Extensive consultation and wide local media coverage has meant that consideration of these options is widely known to the community. Although it has been very challenging for the Council's Officers to consult on these strategic options, the need to undertake a thorough exploration and assessment of all reasonable options is a core principle in demonstrating to an Inspector that a local plan has been soundly prepared.
- 2.9 Members are advised that the Council must be able to demonstrate that it has thoroughly investigated all options, most particularly if, by the time of submission, it is unable to demonstrate that there is sufficient opportunity to deliver the evidenced development needs in full.
- 2.10 Members are reminded that the consultants' 'Housing Requirements Study' was completed in October 2015. This recommended an Objectively Assessed Need housing figure (OAN) for between 13,000 to 14,000 new homes within the plan period, equivalent to the development of a (mid-point) average of 675 new homes per year. During the previous two years the veracity of the OAN recommendation has been thoroughly presented, interrogated, discussed and challenged. This process concluded, with a resolution at Council on 4th February 2016, that the evidence presented on development needs should indeed be used as the basis for advancing the local plan.
- 2.11 Council Officers, with support from independent consultants, have undertaken a review of the North Lancashire Green Belt. The outcomes of this review have informed the preparation of the draft local plan and the review is part of the published local plan evidence base. It is important to note that this review is evidence, whilst it can, and no doubt will be, commented upon, it reports the findings of professional assessments. It is not itself part of the local plan. The **decisions** made on changing or maintaining Green Belt boundaries are made by the local plan (particularly the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD) in the context of the Green Belt Review findings. It is these decisions expressed through the local plan that are subject to public consultation.
- 2.12 Much other local plan evidence has been published on the Council's website. Evidence will continue to be updated throughout 2017 so that it is up to date prior to formal submission of the local plan to the Government. Evidence on viability in particular should be up to date at the time of the independent examination.

2.13 The DPDs must be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment, that considers how well the policies and proposals perform against sustainability criteria. The DPDs will also be accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will describe the infrastructure needed to facilitate development.

3.0 Content of the Draft Plan

3.1 Council is reminded that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions/elements which contribute towards sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The NPPF states that the planning system must perform;

- an **economic role** by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation;
- a **social role** by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations;
- an **environmental role** by contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; helping to improve biodiversity and use natural resources prudently.

3.2 The NPPF states that “every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth” and should “set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities”.

3.3 The NPPF states that local plans must be aspirational but realistic. Objectives for the district and the specific development requirements advanced by the draft local plan are driven and supported by evidence. The primary evidence is about the prospects for economic growth in the district. The economic opportunity that could be realised, if the opportunities and right circumstances are delivered by the local plan, are described in the work undertaken by Turley Associates, in partnership with Development Economics and Colliers International. Turley Associates reported that the district’s prospects for growth are strong in their April 2015 report: “[Prospects and Recommendation for Achieving Economic Potential](#)”.

3.4 The findings of Turley Associates report are further corroborated by independent forecasts, which anticipate a net increase of 9,600 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs over the plan period from 2011 to 2031. Whilst the district has this potential, Turley Associates have also identified a number of key weaknesses that may adversely impact upon achieving economic potential;

- An ageing workforce and population.
- Low levels of entrepreneurship and new business formation.
- Low representation of knowledge intensive businesses.
- Limited university-to-business links.
- Underperforming cultural assets.

3.5 Achieving the district’s economic potential requires these challenges to be addressed by putting in place positive planning policies. Specifically, Turley Associates recommend that consideration is given to the following spatial opportunities and potential locations for growth by the local plan;

- Growing the district's share of knowledge economy sectors.
- Investing in energy and environmental technologies.
- Supporting growth in port related logistics activity.
- Supporting growth in the visitor and cultural economy.
- Achieving the potential offered by Lancaster and Morecambe centres.

3.6 Addressing the challenges listed in paragraph 3.4 and achieving the potential identified in paragraph 3.5 will require much activity outside the local plan process, particularly; transport master-planning, city centre master-planning, action on education, training and apprenticeships, and an economic strategy. These matters are being progressed independently but in co-ordination with advancing the local plan. However, it is the local plan that is the vehicle that brings together the prospects for achieving the district's potential by providing the **opportunity** for growth and development. The local plan does not set out to prove that growth will happen, but, the potential cannot be realised unless the opportunity is provided. Members are strongly advised that to be found sound, the Council's local plan must demonstrate that the identified potential could be realised because the opportunity to grow the economy has been made available.

Overall Development Strategy for the District

3.7 Through the 2015 'People, Homes and Jobs' consultation the Council set out a strategic vision about how to achieve greater growth within the district, stating that the 'Overall strategy to meet development needs is to continue with an urban-focussed approach to development that is supplemented with additional new large strategic development sites that can be developed for housing.' This approach received general support through this consultation and has been incorporated into the strategy for the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD.

3.8 The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD seeks to build on the strong performance of securing development on brownfield land: Lancaster Moor Hospital and Nightingale Hall Farm are good examples. This approach is taken in the full knowledge that brownfield land itself is a finite resource and this resource will be insufficient to meet all the evidenced development needs of the district. Accordingly, there is a need to supplement brownfield development sites with new strategic greenfield sites on a significant scale.

Economic Growth and Regeneration

3.9 Whilst much of the growth at strategic sites focusses on the delivery of residential development to meet evidenced housing needs, another key element of the local plan is to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for economic growth. The draft local plan sets out flexible approaches to future economic growth, acknowledging that there is always uncertainty.

3.10 In the plan the Council makes it clear that it supports sustainable economic development through;

- Growth of the retail and cultural offers for Lancaster and Morecambe, including realising the potential of Lancaster Castle and Morecambe seafront.
- Expansion of the facilities at the Port of Heysham to enable growth in freight operations. Heysham Gateway is identified as a key regeneration area, including the allocated employment areas in the South Heysham area and the expansion of Lancaster West Business Park, Major Industrial Estate

(Walkers Industrial Estate) and Heysham Industrial Estate. This will provide opportunities for the development of general employment growth and modern fit-for-purpose employment units. Activity at the Port and Gateway can now take advantage of reliable access to the national road network using the Bay Gateway.

- Growth within the environmental, health and energy sectors will further the district's already established role in these employment sectors. The Lancaster University Innovation Campus retains its allocation to enable the development of land for knowledge-based businesses with strong links to Lancaster University. The Campus will provide opportunities for a wide range and scale of business with a particular focus on research into elderly healthcare.

3.11 As previously mentioned, it is proposed that there will be elements of employment growth contained within the wider strategic growth sites in south and north Lancaster due to their ready accessibility to the motorway at Junctions 33 and 34 respectively. Additionally, due to their close proximity to proposed residential development these sites will be restricted to B1 office uses, to contribute towards meeting employment needs evidenced in the Employment Land Review for the district.

3.12 The local plan also includes a proposal for an Agri-Business Centre at Junction 33, south of Galgate. This will include the relocation of the current Farmers Auction Mart from Wyresdale Road, Lancaster to a new site which has greater access to the motorway network. Supplementing the Auction Mart use, the proposal will permit for further clusters of businesses which are ancillary to land-based uses such as agriculture and forestry.

Strategic Growth Sites

3.13 Strategic development sites have been identified with reference to their suitability, availability and deliverability. A range of sites in the Lancaster and Carnforth area are proposed for development, these are described below.

3.14 Bailrigg Garden Village

Land at Whinney Carr & Burrow Heights, Bailrigg Lane, and Lancaster University is identified in the draft plan for strategic growth to accommodate in the region of 3,500 new homes and a range of employment opportunities including the delivery of the Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus (which has already received planning consent). New highways infrastructure is critical to this allocation if it is to be fully achieved. Delivery will need to be supported by the reconfiguration of Junction 33 of the M6. The reconfiguration of this junction will allow for direct motorway access into the south Lancaster area and provide a by-pass of Galgate, very significantly reducing the level of through traffic. It is important to note the scale of development in the Bailrigg Garden Village is vital to achieving development on a scale needed to ensure that the local plan has some prospect of being found sound. Without development on this scale in the south Lancaster area there is little likelihood that the Council could demonstrate to an Inspector that it has a prepared a plan that attempts to address the evidenced development needs.

3.15 East Lancaster

Land at Ridge Farm (Cuckoo Farm) is identified for strategic growth to accommodate up to 1,000 new homes. Development on this scale will require two points of access – the options being investigated are from Caton Road and Quernmore Road. To

achieve the new access from Caton Road a land-swap between the owners of Ridge Farm/Cuckoo Farm and Lansil Golf Club is required. It is the understanding that discussion between the two parties is positive and that such a land-swap is potentially achievable.

3.16 North Lancaster

Land at Hammerton Hall and Beaumont Hall is identified for strategic growth to accommodate in the region of around 1,000 new homes. This follows the completion of the Green Belt Review which has concluded that there has been a significant change in the landscape character of this area, due to the development of the Bay Gateway which has had a considerable effect on its contribution to Green Belt purposes. This will result in the land between the urban edge of Lancaster and the Bay Gateway being taken out of the Green Belt and replaced by a range of allocations, for land surrounding the A6 for a range of residential and employment uses.

3.17 South Carnforth

Land south of Windermere Road is identified for strategic growth to accommodate in the region of at least 500 new homes which will also be supplemented by a residential allocation on the brownfield site at Lundsfield Quarry (which currently has planning permission granted for 200 dwellings). As with North Lancaster, this proposal will require a change to the Green Belt designation. However, unlike at North Lancaster, the Green Belt Review has concluded that this area of land retains the purposes of Green Belt/Green Belt value, but, due to the limited opportunities for growth in Carnforth, the draft local plan takes the position that growth to the south of the Carnforth is the only viable opportunity. The allocation is therefore contrary to the findings of the Green Belt Review, but is made on the basis of the need for development.

3.18 The proposed development in South Carnforth is significantly smaller than that proposed in the 'People, Homes and Jobs' consultation and focusses on development to the eastern area of the site towards Back Lane. Development in this area will also permit improved access arrangements to Lundsfield Quarry, a stalled brownfield site which has an implementable permission but is yet to be developed – a contributing factor may be the poor access arrangements which currently exist. The local plan also anticipates that the release of greenbelt land can be accompanied by the provision of recreation facilities to meet existing deficits in Carnforth.

3.19 As part of the 2015 *"People, Homes and Jobs"* consultation the Council also investigated a number of other potential strategic development locations, these were described as;

- UE2 – East Lancaster on land to the east of the M6 Motorway;
- GB2 – East of Morecambe Green Belt;
- GB4 – Central area of Green Belt (Slyne with Hest); and,
- Village Expansion: Dolphinholme.

3.20 These potential strategic sites are not identified for development in the draft Local Plan on the basis that consideration of the responses to the consultation has

demonstrated that, on the balance of officers' assessments of suitability, availability and achievability, the strategic sites chosen and described in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16 are the preferable options. Members are advised that the Council is being asked here for authority to publish a draft plan for consultation purposes. It is fully anticipated that the forthcoming consultation is an opportunity for challenges to be made to the Council's expectation on the ability of the selected sites to be delivered and, accordingly alternative development sites to be offered in their place. Officers may have to consider the robustness of current delivery expectations in light of such comments in preparing the version of the plan that will be formally submitted next year.

Infrastructure Delivery

3.21 All development has an impact on local infrastructure, and it is important that the local plan ensures that new development addresses impacts on local infrastructure. This will be achieved in a number of ways:

- Infrastructure requirements, particularly for the larger strategic sites, have been clearly identified within the specific policies of the local plan.
- The preparation of a number of site-specific development briefs, which will be prepared and published at the next stage of plan preparation.
- The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which sets out the infrastructure requirements within the district necessary to support development and also more aspirational infrastructure which the Council will seek to deliver through the plan period.
- The investigation of whether the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be introduced to fund some of the infrastructure requirements.

3.22 It is important to note that the issues of infrastructure are continually evolving and as a result, dialogue with infrastructure providers will continue throughout, and beyond, the plan preparation process.

Protection of the Natural and Historic Environment

3.23 The local plan is not just about meeting development needs. Whilst this element is the most controversial, the local plan also performs a wider range of functions which are particularly important to protecting the environment which surrounds us.

3.24 The local plan identifies and protects areas which are of historical value, for example the identification of Conservation Areas and other heritage assets, and areas which are of natural value, for example the identification of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Biological Heritage Sites. These are key elements of the plan and ensure that the right balance is struck between meeting development needs and protecting features which are unique and important to the district.

Review of the Development Management DPD

3.25 The Council has already adopted a Development Management DPD (in December 2014). However, since its adoption there have been changes in the planning system. This is particularly the case in relation to the Council's approach to housing and ensuring that the Government's requirements for starter homes are fully addressed (and their impacts on wider deliver of affordable housing understood).

3.26 Whilst the revised Development Management document is advancing, the adopted DPD remains fully in force and provides a robust suite of policies for determining

planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.27 Members will be aware that since 2014 eight local communities have made successful requests for Neighbourhood Plan Area Designations. To date none of the eight designated areas has advanced a Neighbourhood Plan to completion. The process requires the local authority to have sight of a Neighbourhood Plan to check compliance with strategic planning policies, then it would be subject to an examination, then put to a local referendum and, if there is a majority in favour, finally it will be “made” part of the local development plan by the Council. The draft Local Plan does not make allocations in the designated Neighbourhood Plan areas. The Neighbourhood Plan groups are strongly encouraged to make progress on their Neighbourhood Plans in the next twelve months. The Council will need to take account of the progress made by the Neighbourhood Plan groups in advancing the local plan to the publication and submission stage.

4.0 Consultation Arrangements

- 4.1 Provisional arrangements have been made for public consultation, should the Council resolve that the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD and Review of the Development Management DPD, be published for consultation.
- 4.2 It is expected that consultation would commence on Friday 27th January 2017 for an eight week period, concluding on Friday March 24th 2017. Exhibition and drop-in events are planned, particularly where major development sites are proposed.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Should consultation on the draft Local Plan be successful, the Council should be in a position to make swift progress in moving to the next stage of plan preparation. Officers will spend the spring and summer of 2017 considering all the comments made on the draft plan and refining the document to ensure that any outstanding relevant issues are fully addressed, and, also update the evidence base.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that a further report will be brought to Council towards the end of 2017 to seek authority to publish and submit the Local Plan documents to government. The documents are formally published to allow the community and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the soundness of the Local Plan. The documents, the plan evidence and the comments received following publications are then all sent to Government, via the Planning Inspectorate.
- 5.3 The Inspectorate will then start the process of independent Examination to test the soundness of the plan. The Inspector will test if the plan has met all the relevant legislative requirements and has been prepared in accordance with national planning policy. The Inspector will decide what issues he or she will need to explore in testing the soundness of the plan and invite relevant people to local hearing sessions.
- 5.4 The Inspector will then send the Council a report in which he or she will conclude on whether the submitted plan is sound. Most often a finding of soundness is accompanied by a series of binding recommendations. The Council can adopt the Local Plan documents, incorporating the binding recommendations. The adopted documents will replace the 2008 Lancaster District Core Strategy and any residual saved policies of the 2004 Lancaster District Local Plan. Should the plan not be found sound then there would be a need to prepare a new or revised plan, this would take

much time to achieve. It is therefore essential that the Council has confidence in submitting a local plan that it believes to be sound.

- 5.5 Subject to a positive recommendation from the Planning Inspector, it is anticipated that formal adoption of the plan will not take place until late 2018.
- 5.6 The Local Plan Local Development Scheme (LDS) [Local Plan timetable] has been updated to ensure that it remains current. Preparation of LDS updates is delegated to the Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning). The Portfolio Holder has endorsed the updated document plan timetable and the revised document has been published on planning policy area of the Council's website.
- 5.7 The Local Plan Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which describes in advance how the Council engages with the community and stakeholders has also been updated. To ensure that there is an opportunity for the community and stakeholders to comment on how the forthcoming consultation is conducted the SCI was published on the planning policy pages of the Council's website for four weeks from 29th October 2016. Amendments have been made and the updated SCI is now the effective edition.

6.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Publish and Consult on the Draft DPDs	Option 2: Do not publish or on the Draft DPDs	Option 3: Delay Publication and consultation
Advantages	Make progress towards the adoption of an up to date Local Plan as set out in the published Local Development Scheme and thus address the need to meet development requirements and environmental protection	None	None
Disadvantages	None	Contrary to Council's timetable for preparing its Local Plan as set out in the published Local Development Scheme. The Council will not make progress on addressing its development needs.	Contrary to Council's timetable for preparing its Local Plan as set out in the published Local Development Scheme. The Council will not make progress on addressing its development needs.
Risks	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effort and resources wasted in getting to this stage. - Development pressures will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effort and resources wasted in getting to this stage. - Development pressures will

		<p>continue and may focus on land not being advanced through the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospect of Government intervention to prepare DPD in light of failure of Council to make speedy progress - Reputational damage to the Council from not following through with a consultation on a draft plan - Evidence will become out dated and will need to be refreshed incurring further costs and delays. 	<p>continue and may focus on land not being advanced through the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospect of Government intervention to prepare DPD in light of failure of Council to make speedy progress - Reputational damage to the Council from not following through with a consultation on a draft plan - Evidence will become out dated and will need to be refreshed incurring further costs and delays.
--	--	---	---

6.1 The officer's recommendation is Option 1.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 After a long period to allow extensive scrutiny of challenging evidence base documents officers have now prepared drafts of key Local Plan documents. The Council is under considerable pressure to advance a local plan and must at least, illustrate good progress to satisfy the government's exhortations to prepare a plan or face consequences. The plan has been prepared to ensure that the community can have access to jobs that can be created if opportunities are available and homes that will meet the need of a growing, but more importantly, a rapidly ageing, population. Having a plan in place will give the community and development industry greater certainty about where development is and is not anticipated. Having policies in place that allocate land to meet the objectively evidenced development requirements whilst protecting identified environmental assets from development gives the Council the ability to retain decision making at the local level.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (2012) – Requires all Local Authorities to prepare a Local Development Plan for their area setting out how objectively assessed development needs will be met and clear planning policies on what or will not be permitted.

National Planning Practice Guide (2014) – Provides guidance for Local Authorities and other interested parties on how the detail of the National Planning Policy Framework should be implemented in practice.

Lancaster District Corporate Plan – Development Plan Documents adopted by the Council form part of the Local Plan for Lancaster District and are part of the corporate policy framework. Policies within the Local Development Plan seek to deliver the Council's priorities as described in the corporate plan. Actions within the already adopted Morecambe Area Action Plan have corporate priority.

Regeneration and Planning Business Plan – Commits the service to the preparation of Development Plan Documents.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no adverse health and safety, human rights or community safety implications arising from this proposal. The Draft DPDs apply to both urban and rural areas, including the protected landscape of the Forest of Bowland. The DPDs contain policies that are designed to ensure that opportunity exists for development that will deliver new jobs in accordance with evidence on the district's economic prospects, and housing to meet to the needs of a community that will grow and change in the context of a developing economy.

The Equality Impact Assessment Form is attached. This concludes that there will be no adverse impacts on any protected groups, but that there are some potential but unavoidable adverse implications for sections of the rural communities, including people on low incomes, mostly as a result of the limited development opportunities identified in rural areas. The Draft DPDs will be subject to public consultation, allowing for feedback on these matters to be incorporated into the final version.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is not expected that there will be any additional financial implications arising from the preparation of the DPDs as costs connected with the preparation of the documents, public consultation, publication and submission, public examination and adoption have already been accounted for within the Local Plan revenue budget.

There is the prospect of additional unanticipated costs arising, however, potentially from legal challenges to the adoption of a DPD, usually as a result of actions from affected parties. It is very difficult to pre-empt whether there will be any future challenges, which could come from, for example, disaffected residents who do not wish proposed development allocations to be confirmed, or alternatively from disaffected land owners or developers with an interest in land that has not been proposed for development in the plan. However, if they did, then the associated costs and implications will be reported and dealt with as appropriate at the appropriate time.

Adoption of these local plan documents gives the Council's greater surety in decisions to refuse development proposals and defend refusals at appeal where these are contrary to an adopted local plan, thereby better achieving the aim of securing the most sustainable forms of development, thereby reducing the prospect of costs claims due appeals being upheld through planning inquires.

Additionally, earlier this year the Government consulted on the future of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme. Options involved linking an authority's progression with its Local Plan to its NHB award. (For example, one option was based on whether a local authority that has not submitted a Local Plan should not receive new NHB allocations until such time as it has submitted).

At the time of writing this report the outcome of Government's consultation was not yet known, and so this risk is highlighted.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The local plan has to date been prepared using existing staff (and budgetary resources) though recruitment to a number of permanent and temporary vacancies has proved difficult during the past 18 months, recruitment process are not yet complete on a number of vacant posts. Continuing the development of the local plan will require resources commensurate with the challenge of preparing a plan that is sufficiently well researched and evidenced to be found sound.

Information Services:

The information services implications of the proposal will be met within existing resources.

Property:

The policies and allocations of the local plan documents apply to all land and property including that which is owned by the Council.

Open Spaces:

The proposal makes provision to protect open spaces from development and anticipates the creation of further open spaces associated with development proposals but does make assumptions about future maintenance.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Plan for Lancaster District: Consultation Documents

Part One: Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD *Full Council Edition* December 2016

Attached as Appendix 1

Part Two: Development Management Policies (Refresh) *Full Council Edition* December 2016

Attached as Appendix 2

[Local Plan Policies Map](#) (*Large file size – view-able via weblink*)

1. District Wide
2. Main Urban Area
3. Town Centre Insets and Galgate

Key Evidence Reports (all the following are available on the Council's website)

[Prospects and Recommendations for Achieving Economic Potential \(Turley Economics, April 2015\)](#)

[Lancaster Independent Housing Requirements Study \(Turley Economics, October 2015\)](#)

[Lancaster Retail Review \(White Young Green, December 2015\)](#)

[North Lancashire Green Belt Review Report](#)

[Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#)

[Previous Consultation Stages on Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document including Consultation Responses and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Reports](#)

2015: *"People, Homes and Jobs"* Consultation 19 October 2015 to 30 November 2015 (Options & Issues).

2014: Meeting Future Housing Needs Consultation 2 June 2014 to 31 July 2014 (issues & options)

2012: Land Allocation Draft Preferred Options Consultation October to December 2012

Local Development Scheme [LDS] (Project Timetable)

[Revised LDS October 2016](#)

Statement of Community Involvement [SCI] (Planning Consultation Methods)

[Revised SCI October 2016](#)

[Interim Statements on Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment](#)

To follow (on the Council's website)

Contact Officer: Maurice Brophy

Telephone: 01524 582330

E-mail: mbrophy@lancaster.gov.uk