



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 31 January 2018

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL LOCAL PLAN – REPORT OF PROGRESS SINCE 2004
REPORT OF:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

Sajid Javed, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, wrote to the Leader of the Council on 16 November 2017, to express concern about the Council's lack of progress on plan-making, which is particularly directed toward increasing the national delivery of housing.

The letter sets out the Secretary of State's previously expressed intention, in a White Paper in February 2017, to intervene in areas where the least progress in plan-making has been made; policies in plans had not been kept up-to-date; there was higher housing pressure; and intervention would have the greatest impact in accelerating Local Plan production. He has written to Wirral because of the failure to meet the deadlines to prepare an up-to-date Local Plan set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

The Secretary of State has asked the Council to outline any exceptional circumstances that would justify the failure of the Council to produce a Local Plan and any measures that the authority has taken to accelerate plan publication. A response is required by 31 January 2018.

What constitutes an exceptional circumstance is not defined but the general tests that will be applied are whether the issue significantly affects the reasonableness of the conclusions that can be drawn from the data and criteria used to inform decisions on intervention; and whether the issue had a significant impact on the authority's ability to produce a local plan, for reasons that were entirely beyond its control.

The Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee considered this letter at a Special Meeting on 7 December 2017 and resolved that the Assistant Director for Environmental Services report to a future Scrutiny Committee detailing the timetable to date and reasons for slippage (Minute 40 refers).

This report therefore sets out further detail about previous progress on the Local Plan, including the reasons that have been published in previous Local Development Schemes and Annual Monitoring Reports.

This report also provides a further update of current progress. A copy of the reply sent by the Council Leader to the Secretary of State will be provided to the Committee when it becomes available.

The Local Plan is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety and could support a wide range of Wirral Plan pledges related to People, Business and Environment, including good quality housing which meets the needs of residents; and Wirral Plan Housing Strategy objectives to build more homes to meet our economic growth ambitions and improve the quality of Wirral's housing offer for our residents.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the report is noted**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the issues arising from a letter from the Secretary of State, attached as Appendix 1, with regard to progress on plan-making in Wirral.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There are no alternative options. A further report on progress in plan making was requested by the Committee on 7 December 2017. A reply to the Secretary of State is required to be submitted by 31 January 2018.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has been preparing a Local Plan to replace the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000, since the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act was enacted in May 2004.

- 3.2 Progress on the Local Plan has been regularly publicly reported in a statutory monitoring report, published in December each year. Copies of the monitoring reports published since December 2005 have been published on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/development-monitoring>

- 3.3 Statements of current progress have also been continuously updated on the Council's website on the pages for:

- local plans at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans>;
- the local development scheme at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans>; and
- the Core Strategy at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan>

- 3.4 Members have, in addition, been notified individually, as each stage has been reached. A detailed timeline of previous activity associated with the preparation of the Council's local plans is included as Appendix 2.

- 3.5 Section 15 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme, to set out the documents that will comprise their local plan and the timetable for their preparation and revision. Until the Localism Act 2011, Local Development Schemes had to be approved by the Secretary of State before they could come into effect. Since then, they need only be approved at a local level. In Wirral's case, this requires a resolution of full Council.

- 3.6 The current action by the Secretary of State has focused on those local authorities who have yet to adopt a post-2004 Act Local Plan and where current Local Development Schemes have been assessed by his officials as being out of date when measured against actual progress in Local Plan preparation.

- 3.7 The Council has undertaken six reviews of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for Wirral since the first LDS was adopted in May 2005.
- 3.8 The following paragraphs summarise the changes in the timetable for the production of a Core Strategy Local Plan as recorded in the five adopted LDSs to date. They also summarise the reasons for the revisions to the timetable as reported in the LDS documents themselves and in the yearly reviews of progress set out in the Council's published monitoring reports.

FIRST LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR WIRRAL (EFFECTIVE FROM MAY 2005)

- 3.9 The Council's first LDS was adopted, following prior approval by the Secretary of State, by Council in May 2005 (Minute 7 refers). The target date for the adoption of the Core Strategy was April 2008.
- 3.10 Initial consultation on the content of the Core Strategy was undertaken between October and December 2005 with a report of consultation published in July 2006.

FIRST REVIEW (EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 2006)

- 3.11 The first review of the LDS was adopted by Council on 10 July 2006 (Minute 30 refers). The target date for adoption of the Core Strategy was amended to October 2008 (a delay of six months on the May 2005 LDS timetable).
- 3.12 The Core Strategy timetable was adjusted to accommodate delays in the preparation of a new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), with which the new Core Strategy needed to conform.
- 3.13 The Draft RSS was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent public examination in January 2006 (rather than in September 2005 as originally intended). Public consultation did not begin until March 2006, with the final RSS expected to be published in September 2007 (rather than May 2007). The final RSS was not, however, issued by the Secretary of State until September 2008.
- 3.14 Later in 2006 (effective from December 2006), a further amendment was made to the LDS, to incorporate Halton Borough Council as a partner in the preparation of the Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – there was no change to the Core Strategy timetable (effective from December 2006).
- 3.15 Two public workshops were held in November 2006, to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and needs of the Borough and the potential vision, objectives and indicators for the Core Strategy and a report of consultation was circulated for public comment in January and February 2007.
- 3.16 A Statement of Community Involvement was approved by Council on 18 December 2006 (Minute 86), following public consultation between May and July 2006 and public examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State in September and October 2006.

- 3.17 Supplementary planning documents for flats, hot food takeaways, telecommunications and parking, linked to the previous Unitary Development Plan, were adopted in October 2006 and June 2007.

SECOND REVIEW (EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 2007)

- 3.18 The second full review of the LDS was adopted by Council on 16 July 2007 (Minute 30 refers). The target date for the adoption of the Core Strategy was amended to October 2009 (with all stages after Preferred Options pushed back by 12 months on the July 2006 LDS timetable).

- 3.19 The revised timetable took account of the need to:

- respond to progress on the draft RSS;
- provide evidence to a public inquiry into housing development at Reeds Lane;
- ensure that the potential priorities and objectives for the Core Strategy, identified through public consultation, were properly appraised;
- complete more detailed technical studies, originally planned for later on in the process, arising from the experience of the first authorities to pass through the new-style public examination process, where Core Strategies were rejected by Planning Inspectors as unsound because of deficiencies in their evidence base; and
- undertake additional work to respond to the emerging proposals for Wirral Waters.

- 3.20 Further consultation with under-represented groups was undertaken between June and October 2007 and evidence base studies for housing; employment land and premises; flood risk; retail, town centres and leisure; biodiversity; landscape; renewable energy; and cultural services were commissioned.

- 3.21 Public consultation on the Issues, Vision and Objectives for the Core Strategy was undertaken in February and March 2009 and reported in November 2009.

THIRD REVIEW (EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 2010)

- 3.22 The third review of the LDS was adopted by Council on 15 February 2010 (Minute 97). The target date for adoption of the Core Strategy was put back to June 2011 (a delay of a further 20 months on the July 2007 LDS timetable). The revised timetable took account of:

- the delays to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS);
- the need to consult on Spatial Options before consulting on the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy;
- progress on the necessary evidence base studies;
- revised guidance from the Planning Inspectorate on the minimum achievable timescales following submission; and
- changes to national Regulations, in June 2008, which combined the previous Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages of consultation into a single un-regulated stage and moved the statutory period for making

representations to be made before rather than after submission to the Secretary of State.

- 3.23 Consultation on the Spatial Options for the Core Strategy was undertaken between January and March 2010; and on the Council's Preferred Options between November 2010 and January 2011, which was reported in July 2011.
- 3.24 Additional evidence was commissioned on sub-regional capacity; water cycle; and habitats regulations impacts; and a review of sites of biological and geological importance.

FOURTH REVIEW (EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 2012)

- 3.25 The fourth review of the LDS was adopted by Council on 15 February 2012 (Minute 111 refers). The target date for the adoption of the Core Strategy was put back to August 2013 (a delay of 26 months on the February 2010 LDS timetable). The revised timetable took account of:
- an additional round of public consultation on emerging Settlement Area Policies, which took place between January and March 2012;
 - the major national planning reforms, introduced by the Coalition Government, including the intention to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy, (initially expected in 2012 but eventually delayed until May 2013); the introduction of 'soundness tests' for local plans; new Local Planning Regulations; and the issuing of the National Planning Policy Framework (in March 2012); and
 - the commissioning of updated employment forecasts and retail capacity figures and additional work on housing viability and transport capacity modelling.
- 3.26 The LDS no longer needed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval before it could be adopted by the Council
- 3.27 A Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy was approved by Cabinet in July and September 2012 (Minutes 61 and 92 refer); approved for publication by Council on 15 October 2012 (Minute 60); and was published for public comment between December 2012 and February 2013, with a view to submitting it to the Secretary of State for public examination during 2013.
- 3.28 The issues surrounding publication and submission were set out in the report to Cabinet on 27 September 2012 (Minute 92), including the relationship with the Regional Spatial Strategy, which still remained in force pending revocation; the unexpected increase in population and households recorded in the 2011 Census; and the need for additional housing evidence once RSS had been revoked.
- 3.29 The comments received were reported in a Delegated Decision published on 20 June 2013, which recommended further consultation on a series of proposed modifications; the need for further up-to-date evidence to support issues related to housing, Green Belt, gypsies and travellers, development viability and retail floorspace thresholds; and that any further modifications necessary to address these issues would be reported back to Cabinet before Council was recommended to approve the final text for submission to the Secretary of State.

- 3.30 The initial modifications were published for public comment between July and September 2013; and a series of further modifications to policies for town centres and for gypsies and travellers were published for consultation between December 2014 and February 2015, following a Delegated Decision published on 25 November 2014.
- 3.31 A revised Statement of Community Involvement, to take account of the national reforms, was also approved by Council on 10 March 2014 (Minute 90), following public consultation between July and September 2013.
- 3.32 The additional information on retail floorspace thresholds was completed in January 2014. The additional evidence related to gypsies and travellers was reported to Cabinet in September 2014 (Minute 51) and on development viability in January 2015 (Minute 131).

FIFTH REVIEW (EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 2015)

- 3.33 This is the Council's current LDS, which was approved by Council on 6 July 2015 (Minute 23 refers). A copy of the approved Scheme can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/local-development-scheme>
- 3.34 The target date for the adoption of the Core Strategy was put back to December 2016 (a further delay of 40 months on the February 2012 LDS timetable). The revised timetable took account of:
- the delay in the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS);
 - the publication of the proposed modifications, in July 2013 and December 2014; and
 - the need to complete the additional housing evidence (referred to in the approved LDS at paragraph 5.9).
- 3.35 The revised housing needs assessment was not, however, completed until May 2016.
- 3.36 The preparation of the assessment was complicated by the unexpected increase in population and households from the 2011 Census, which rendered previous projections unreliable, with high levels of unattributed change; nationally acknowledged limitations in the subsequent 2011-based interim household projections; and the late publication of stage two 2012-based household projections, in December 2015.

4.0 THE CURRENT POSITION AND SIXTH REVIEW

- 4.1 The findings of the completed housing needs assessment and the issues surrounding its preparation were reported to Cabinet on 18 July 2016 (Minute 31 refers), who resolved that further consultation should be undertaken on the Borough's housing needs and land supply. Consultation took place in August and September 2016.

- 4.2 The results of consultation were reported to Cabinet on 27 February 2017 (Minute 96 refers), who resolved to undertake a wider review of development options, before deciding on the sites that will need to be allocated for development in the Core Strategy. The review, which is currently underway, includes:
- a revised methodology for assessing the suitability of potential housing sites (the SHLAA), which was published for public consultation between July and September 2017;
 - the preparation of a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) for the Liverpool City Region, to consider the need for new housing and employment land across the City Region as a whole, which was published for consultation in October 2017;
 - an initial review of land in the Green Belt, for which a proposed methodology was published for public consultation between October and December 2017;
 - a new Brownfield Land Register, which was published in December 2017, following public consultation in October 2017;
 - a Playing Pitch Strategy Update, which was published in November 2017;
 - an Employment Land and Premises Study Update, which is due to report in early 2018;
 - a Development Viability Study Update, which will report in early 2018; and
 - a new SHLAA, applying the revised methodology, prepared for April 2018.
- 4.3 The results of the review will be reported to Cabinet in July 2018, with a view to consulting on any new sites in September 2018 and agreeing an informal draft plan for approval for statutory appraisal in December 2018.
- 4.4 The final Core Strategy, for approval for publication and submission to the Secretary of State, would then be presented to Cabinet in July 2019 and, subject to the approval of Full Council, would be published for final public comment in October 2019, with potential submission to the Secretary of State in early 2020 and a target date for adoption of January 2021.
- 4.5 As previously indicated, progress on the Local Plan has been regularly and publicly reported, in addition to reports to Cabinet, in a statutory monitoring report, published in December each year.
- 4.6 The monitoring report for 2017 was approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety in a Delegated Decision published on 21 December 2017, which can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4365>
- 4.7 The monitoring report for December 2017 was also accompanied by a formal update to the Local Development Scheme, which will be presented for approval to Council on 19 March 2018.
- 4.8 The proposed timetable was previously set out in Frequently Asked Questions, as part of public consultation on the proposed methodology for the initial review of the Green Belt, in October 2017, which can currently be viewed in public libraries and on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and->

- 4.9 The revised timetable for the Core Strategy, to be included in the new 2018 Local Development Scheme, is set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

5.0 FUTURE DECISION MAKING

- 5.1 National legislation states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The statutory Development Plan for Wirral currently comprises the Council's Unitary Development Plan, adopted in February 2000; the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton, adopted in July 2013; the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Devonshire Park, made in December 2015; and the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Hoylake, made in December 2016.
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, grant permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (NPPF, paragraph 14, sometimes known as 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development').
- 5.4 Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites, which remains a key issue in the preparation of the Core Strategy Local Plan (NPPF, paragraph 49 refers), as reported in previous annual monitoring reports.
- 5.5 With regard to the Green Belt, national policy currently states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan and that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances (NPPF paragraphs 83 and 87 refer).
- 5.6 National practice guidance currently indicates that unmet housing need is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the very special circumstances justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt (NPPG Paragraph: 034 Reference ID: 3-034-20141006).
- 5.7 Decisions to refuse planning applications for new housing development in the Green Belt have continued, on this basis, to be supported by Planning Inspectors at appeal.
- 5.8 The Housing White Paper, published in February 2017, indicated that the Government proposed to amend the National Planning Policy Framework, to make clear that authorities should amend Green Belt boundaries only when they

can demonstrate they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements, which has not yet been implemented.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The potential interventions by the Secretary of State, set out in further detail in section 7.0 below, could have financial consequences, which are as yet unknown.
- 6.2 The Council may be required to reimburse the Secretary of State for any expenditure incurred in relation to an intervention.
- 6.3 The delivery of new housing, in particular, has implications for income from Council Tax and New Homes Bonus and could have implications for the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 6.4 The national allocation of New Homes Bonus has already been restricted, to incentivise the impact of the Bonus, to a national baseline of 0.4% of dwelling stock, below which allocations will not be made, equivalent in Wirral to 602 dwellings in 2017/18.
- 6.5 Technical consultation, in December 2015, also proposed to withhold the allocation of New Homes Bonus from areas where no Local Plan has been produced, which has not yet been implemented but is to be reviewed from 2018/19, for authorities that were not planning effectively, making positive decisions on planning applications and delivering housing growth.
- 6.6 The Government are also considering withholding payments for homes that are built following a successful appeal against a refusal of planning permission.
- 6.7 The absence of an up-to-date Local Plan also has implications for the ability of the Council to apply a Community Infrastructure Levy.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council is currently required to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development and to prepare a local plan under Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 7.2 The Local Plan must be prepared in line with the statutory process set out in national legislation and can only be adopted by the Council if it is found to be legally compliant and sound by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 7.3 To be sound, a local plan must be: positively prepared, to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements; justified, in terms of being the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives; effective, in terms of being deliverable and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and be consistent with national

policy, by delivering sustainable development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 182).

- 7.4 To be legally compliant, the local plan must be prepared to fully comply with national legislation and regulations.
- 7.5 The Council will not be able to successfully submit a Core Strategy Local Plan to public examination without basing its housing requirement on up-to-date evidence of objectively assessed need or without being able to demonstrate a credible five-year housing land supply and the broad locations for future housing land supply over the rest of a fifteen-year plan period, in line with the requirements of national policy.
- 7.6 Section 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, once formally commenced, will, in particular, require local planning authorities to have plans in place which set out their strategic policies for:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
 - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 7.7 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 significantly increased the powers of the Secretary of State to intervene in plan-making, at any stage in the plan making process.
- 7.8 The Secretary of State can now intervene if he thinks that a local planning authority are failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a local plan and may prepare or revise the document or give directions to the authority in relation to the preparation or revision of the document but must give reasons for any action that he takes (section 146 refers).
- 7.9 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 also enables the Secretary of State to make regulations to require a local planning authority to review local development documents at prescribed times; and extended powers over their content, with which the Council must comply (sections 11 and 12 refer).
- 7.10 Regulations under section 12, which will come into force from April 2018, will require local planning authorities to review their local plans at least every five years.
- 7.11 The Secretary of State can also direct two or more local planning authorities to prepare a joint local plan, if this would facilitate the more effective planning of the development and use of land in one or more of their areas, including setting a timetable and specifying the areas and matters to be covered. The Secretary of

State or combined authority will then be able to apportion liability for expenditure on joint plan preparation as the Secretary of State considers appropriate (section 9 refers).

- 7.12 Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme, to set out the documents that will comprise their local plan and the timetable for their preparation and revision. The Scheme must be brought into effect by a resolution of Council.
- 7.13 The requirement for a Local Development Scheme to be approved by the Secretary of State before being brought into effect, was withdrawn by the Localism Act 2011 but the local planning authority must still revise their Scheme when directed to do so by the Secretary of State (section 15 (8) refers).
- 7.14 The Localism Act 2011 also requires the Council to publish up to date information on their compliance with the timetable set out within the Scheme (section 111 refers).
- 7.15 Under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Secretary of State can prepare a Local Development Scheme for a local planning authority, if one has not been prepared and direct that the local planning authority bring it into effect and can direct a local planning authority to make such amendments as he thinks appropriate to ensure the full and effective coverage of the area, with regard to both geography and content (section 143 refers).
- 7.16 Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to prepare and publish monitoring reports, on at least an annual basis, to set out progress on the preparation of local development documents and the extent to which the policies within them are being achieved.
- 7.17 The requirement to submit monitoring reports to the Secretary of State was withdrawn by the Localism Act 2011.
- 7.18 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations, which include national policy and guidance, indicate otherwise.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 8.1 The preparation of the Core Strategy Local Plan is undertaken by the Forward Planning Team in Environmental Services.
- 8.2 The preparation of the Core Strategy must be supported by IT and staffing sufficient to meet statutory requirements and maintain an appropriate up-to-date evidence-base, including co-operation with specified bodies and consultation with key stakeholders, sufficient to demonstrate the soundness and legal compliance of any proposed policies and land allocations to a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 8.3 Under a new Housing Delivery Test, announced in the Housing White Paper in February 2017, the Council will be required to produce an action plan for

boosting housing delivery, where the number of homes being built falls below 95 percent of the local target; and will be required to plan for an additional 20 percent of housing land where the number of homes being built falls below 85 percent of the local target, to ensure that further land is brought forward where targets are not being met. Wirral is currently building, during 2016/17, at 41 percent of the Government's indicative figure of 803 additional dwellings each year between 2016 and 2026.

- 8.4 Following the Budget Statement in November 2017, the Government is proposing to consult on measures to further strengthen the Housing Delivery Test, with tougher consequences where planned homes are not being built, by raising threshold at which the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF, paragraph 14) applies, to 75 percent by 2020, rather than the 65 percent proposed in the Housing White Paper.

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 9.1 The principal risks to the Council are reputational and financial.
- 9.2 The letter attached at Appendix 1 to this report is the beginning of the process of potential intervention but does not specify the type of intervention that the Secretary of State will envisage as suitable for Wirral.
- 9.3 The Secretary of State has indicated that his decision to intervene will be informed by the wider planning context of the area, including the extent to which authorities are working co-operatively to put strategic plans in place and the potential impact that not having a plan has on neighbourhood planning activity; and that he will take into account any slippage against the timetable that authorities have set for themselves.
- 9.4 Subject to the outcome of the development options review, the delivery of a sound up-to-date Local Plan may involve the allocation of land for new housing development in the existing Green Belt.
- 9.5 The Government has indicated that further changes to national planning policy are expected to be published in early 2018, with which the Council will also need to comply.

10.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Core Strategy Local Plan is being prepared subject to a statutory process, including public consultation.
- 10.2 The timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy has been continuously publicly reported as set out in section 3.0 of this report

11.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This report does not have any equality implications.

11.2 This preparation of the Core Strategy Local Plan is subject to an ongoing equality impact assessment which can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Letter from Secretary of State dated 16 November 2017

Appendix 2 – Local Plan Timeline Since 2004

Appendix 3 – Proposed Timetable for the Core Strategy Local Plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as originally enacted, (Part 2 refers) can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Localism Act 2011 (Part 6, sections 109 to 113 refer) can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Housing and Planning Act 2016 (sections 143 to 148 refer) can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/contents/enacted>

Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (sections 8 to 13 refer) can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/contents/enacted>

The Council's existing adopted Unitary Development Plan, the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton and the Neighbourhood Development Plans for Devonshire Park and Hoylake can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans>

The content of previous stages in the preparation of the Council's Core Strategy Local Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan>

Frequently Asked Questions for the Council's Initial Green Belt Review (October 2017 – page 4, Q13. When will a final decision be taken? refers) can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-plans/core-strategy-local-plan-6>

The Secretary of State's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) can be viewed at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

The Secretary of State's National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) can be viewed at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/>

Technical Consultation on Implementation of Planning Changes (February 2016, Chapter 6 Local plans refers) can be viewed at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/507019/160310_planning_consultation.pdf

New Homes Bonus Sharpening the Incentive Government Response (December 2016) can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-homes-bonus-sharpening-the-incentive-technical-consultation>

The Government's Housing White Paper (February 2017) can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

Further consultation on 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' (September 2017) can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Core Strategy Local Plan – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update	18 July 2016 (Minute 31)
Cabinet – Core Strategy Local Plan – Report of Further Consultation on Housing Need and Land Supply	27 February 2017 (Minute 96)
Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Wirral Local Plan – Letter from Secretary of State	7 December 2017 (Minute 40)
Delegated Decision - Local Development Framework for Wirral – Monitoring Report 2016/17	21 December 2017