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| Wards affected | All | Key Decision | Yes |
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| Subject | Future Mole Valley Local Plan – updating the Local Development Scheme. |
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RECOMMENDATION

To approve the revised Local Development Scheme 2019 (appendix 1).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although good progress has been made on aspects of the Plan, some delay has built up such that an update is now required to the timetable for progressing the Local Plan. A revised Local Development Scheme is proposed that seeks to strike a balance between bringing forward the Local Plan as quickly as possible while allowing sufficient time for evidence gathering and Member discussion, and which schedules public consultation in an appropriate period.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

ENVIRONMENT: a highly attractive area with housing that meets local need

- Protect and enhance the natural and built environment through land designations and policies
- In consultation with the community, develop plans for how land is used in Mole Valley, setting out proposals for residential, leisure, and commercial development, which balance residents' needs with protection of the Green Belt
- Pursue policies that encourage the creation of affordable housing
- Work with other agencies to protect the District from the effects of climate change and environmental pollution, paying particular attention to flooding and air quality

PROSPERITY: a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages

- Continue to drive the transformation of Leatherhead Town Centre and support the market-town culture and economy of Dorking
- Work with rural communities and businesses to build on their unique strengths and

address their challenges, helping them thrive and become more sustainable

- Adopt a pro-business outlook across the District addressing infrastructure needs which balance the needs of residents and local businesses

COMMUNITY WELLBEING: active communities and support for those who need it

- Improve opportunities for residents to live safe and healthy lives

The Cabinet has authority to determine the recommendation

1.0 Local Development Scheme

- 1.1 The timetable for progressing the Future Mole Valley Local Plan is set out the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This was last updated in November 2018.
- 1.2 Good progress has been made on the detailed work needed to advance the Local Plan but given the change to the administration in May 2019, it is necessary to pause to review progress so far and agree the direction forward. It is desirable to schedule public consultation on the draft 'preferred options' Local Plan so that it does not run over the main public holiday period in August. It is also necessary to strike a balance between progressing the Plan and allowing sufficient time for evidence gathering and debate amongst Members. The Cabinet wishes to involve all councillors in reaching a decision on the draft Local Plan and will seek to use existing working group meetings and/or seminars as well as the formal reporting process in providing opportunities for discussion. Although there is no constitutional requirement for Council to approve the draft Plan prior to consultation, the Cabinet is minded to seek approval in this case because of the wide ranging nature of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 For those reasons, it is recommended that the LDS be updated to reflect the new timetable (see appendix 1). This will help local communities and interested parties to keep track of progress on the Local Plan and anticipate opportunities for engagement. There remains strong pressure on local planning authorities to develop and adopt local plans in a timely manner, with the Government reserving powers to intervene if that is not done. The revised LDS will demonstrate MVDC's continued intention in adopting a Local Plan in a realistic and planned manner.
- 1.4 The evidence underpinning the Local Plan will also be used to support revision of the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule. The timing of this document has been accordingly adjusted and is included in the revised LDS.

2.0 Financial Implications

- 2.1 Funding of the Local Plan review had been budgeted as part of the Planning Department's work, including additional one-off funding for consultant support made in the 2019/20 financial year. Further one-off funding will be required for the examination in 2020/21 and has been built into the medium term financial plan.

3.0 Legal Implications

- 3.1 The form and content of development plan documents and consultations on them are subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and related legislation.
- 3.2 The revised Local Development Scheme has been prepared to meet the requirements of Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

4.0 OPTIONS

4.1 The options are:

- To agree the revised Local Development Scheme (recommended)
- To agree an alternative timetable for progression of the Local Plan

5.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Officer commentary – The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

S151 Officer commentary – The s151 Officer confirms that all relevant financial risks and implications have been taken into account.

Risk Implications - An alternative timetable for progressing the Local Plan could, if quicker, lead to publication of a Plan that was incomplete or lacking supporting evidence, and insufficiently debated by Members. If the alternative timetable was longer than recommended, without good reason for delay, this may risk the Government intervening to impose a plan. Because the current Local Plan is out of date, a 'tilted balance' with housing policies carrying less weight will continue to apply until the new Local Plan is adopted.

Equalities Implications – Not required at this stage. An equalities impact assessment will be carried out as necessary on the future draft Plan.

Employment Issues – None for MVDC. Selecting strategic options for development will affect wider employment opportunities in the District over the life of the plan.

Consultation – Statutory requirements for consultation are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Targeted consultation has take place during preparation of the preferred options plan, to inform development (for example a call for development sites, and liaison with parish councils on modest extensions to villages). A full public consultation will be carried out following publication of the draft 'preferred options' draft Local Plan.

Communications – see consultation. The revised Local Development Scheme will be published on the MVDC website.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme 2019-2021

Evidence documents that have been published may be found at www.futuremolevalley.org. All other evidence documents will be published at the same time as the draft 'preferred options' Local Plan.