

Committee(s): Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	Date: 24 November 2021
Subject: Southend Local Plan, Refining the Options consultation (Regulation 18)	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Phil Drane, Corporate Director – Planning and Economy	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Andrea Pearson, Senior Policy Planner Telephone: 01277 312572 E-mail: andrea.pearson@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

This report seeks approval on a formal to the Southend Local Plan, Refining the Options consultation (Regulation 18). This conveys broad support of Southend’s aims in preparing a new local plan. The Southend Plan is currently at the early stages of the plan-making process with little specific details provided on the strategic approach for the area.

The Refining the Options consultation document makes it clear that Southend Borough is unable to meet its full housing needs. Southend has formally asked if Brentwood Borough Council is able to take any of Southend’s unmet housing need. The proposed response highlights the Brentwood Borough limitations to doing so being wholly within Green Belt. Both authorities are members of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and there is ongoing joint working regarding cross-boundary issues such as unmet needs.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

R1. Approve the response to the Southend Local Plan, Refined Options consultation (Regulation 18), as set out in Appendix A

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is currently working towards replacing their existing Core Strategy with a new local plan, with a plan period of 2020 to 2040. The document does not set out specific proposals of how Southend Council will

progress strategic planning in the area, but rather outlines possible options for planning appropriately on a number of matters, with a specific focus on identifying all the available sites within the borough in an effort to provide for as much of their housing needs as possible. The sites identified within the consultation document have not yet been tested to determine if they are suitable and economically viable as required by paragraph 68 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. Brentwood Borough Council is duty bound by the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on preparation of their local plans. Southend Council is not a neighbouring authority but is within the neighbouring South Essex housing market area and a partner through the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). Therefore, ongoing joint working and discussion on cross-boundary planning matters, such as unmet housing need, is discussed as part of the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Framework.
3. It is Southend Council's intention to undertake further Local Plan consultation on the preferred approach (Regulation 18) in the third quarter of 2022, followed by a Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) in the second quarter of 2023, and submission of the plan for examination in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4. The NPPF requires each local planning authority to produce a local plan. This should set out strategic priorities for the area and plan positively for development and infrastructure needs, in line with national policy and guidance.
5. Local plans should include strategic policies to deliver:
 - a) Housing and employment needed in the area;
 - b) Provision for retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - c) Provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, water supply, waste water, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - d) Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - e) Climate change mitigation and adaption, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historical environment, including landscape.
6. Southend Council is at the beginning stages of developing their local plan. The Refining the Options document outlines key strategic planning topics and identifies possible approaches.

7. The majority of options identified in the document do not have a direct impact on Brentwood Borough, other than Southend's formal request for Brentwood to take some of their unmet housing needs (Appendix B). Therefore, the response is limited to addressing the need for both councils to continue to engage through the duty to cooperate and highlighted the ongoing co-operative working through ASELA and the South Essex Joint Strategic Framework.
8. The Refining the Options consultation document identifies a local need for 23,620 new homes by 2040, equating to 1,181 homes per annum. It is clear from the consultation document that Southend Borough is unable to physically accommodate its full objectively assessed needs. Southend Council has included all sites that have been identified as available for development within the Refining the Options consultation. The available sites have not yet been tested to determine their suitability and economic viability as required by paragraph 68 of the NPPF.
9. Four different strategies have been explored for addressing Southend's housing needs, illustrated in the table below:

Strategy Options	Potential new homes
A. Increasing Urban Capacity	10,600 (4,000 of which is windfall*)
B. Facilitating Urban Change	2,250
<i>Within existing urban area of Southend</i>	<i>12,850</i>
C. New Neighbourhood within Southend (largely Green Belt)	7,200
<i>Within Southend Borough</i>	<i>20,050</i>
D. Development outside the Borough (expanded / series of neighbourhoods on edge of Southend to be determined by Rochford District Council)	4,900

Source: Southend's request regarding unmet need (Appendix B)

NOTE: Option A which identifies 4,000 new homes of windfall has yet to be tested. This figure is an estimate and subject to change.

10. The inclusion of the new settlement as identified in option D, in partnership with Rochford District Council, is an approach supported by Brentwood Borough Council. The ASELA Strategic Growth Location Study, which assesses the availability of land for housing developments across South Essex, concludes that there is not enough land within urban locations to enable the South Essex authorities to meet their housing needs. As a result, ASELA joint working is currently exploring options for developing new settlements. Dunton Hills Garden Village will be the first garden community delivered in South Essex and

this presents an opportunity to work with partners by leading and learning lessons on bringing forward new settlements.

Reasons for Recommendation

11. Southend Council is at the early stages of the plan-making process. No policies or site allocations have been proposed as part of this consultation and so the proposed response focuses on high-level strategic issues.
12. It is considered appropriate that the Council express broad support for Southend Council's efforts to develop a local plan in accordance with national policy and guidance, and the commitment to continue collaboration through the duty to cooperate on strategic planning matters that affect South Essex.

Consultation

13. The Southend Local Plan Refining the Options was published for public consultation between 31 August and 26 October 2021. Southend Council agreed to accept an officer's response to the consultation pending approval from Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee. Local planning authorities have a statutory obligation to allow a minimum of six weeks to respond to formal consultations as part of the plan-making process.
14. A further Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation is planned on the Southend Preferred Approach in the third quarter of 2022, which will provide greater detail on planning strategy and proposed allocated sites in Southend Borough.

References to Corporate Strategy

15. The Southend Local Plan will have a close relationship with the Brentwood Local Plan, the production of which is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Strategy. Combined, local plans across South Essex will provide a key vehicle for the delivery of ASELA priorities and in-turn, Brentwood Borough Council corporate priorities.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and S151 Officer

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16. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

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17. The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other defined local bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. It is currently not a duty to agree, but local planning authorities must make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation before they submit their Local Plan for examination. The cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary issues.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning & Economy)

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18. There are no direct economic implications, although the Southend local plan should be prepared in accordance with ASELA joint working, helping to deliver economic growth across South Essex.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager (Communities Leisure and Health)

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19. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
20. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
21. The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

Background Papers

- Southend Local Plan Refining the Options consultation document (<https://localplan.southend.gov.uk/>)

Appendices to this report

- Appendix A: Brentwood Borough Council response to the Southend New Local Plan 2018-2038 Refining Options (September 2021)
- Appendix B: Southend-on-Sea Borough Council letter regarding capacity of South Essex authorities to accommodate development needs (15 September 2021)