

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

COUNCIL 11 JULY 2013

'SHAPING PLACES' LOCAL PLAN – STRATEGY & OPTIONS

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING SPECIALIST

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is preparing a new Local Plan called 'Shaping Places'. It will bring forward planning policies to support growth, job creation and sustainable development in the borough up to 2031, responding positively to the revised national approach to plan-making introduced last year.
- 1.2 The Strategy & Options document has been produced following engagement with key stakeholders and seeks views on the proposed strategy for development in advance of preparation of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 Cabinet approved the Strategy & Options document on 30th May for public consultation and recommended Council approve the document.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Council approve the Strategy & Options document

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The Council's priorities have been reflected in the vision, aims and objectives of the Strategy & Options document to ensure the plan, and any associated development which arises from it, contributes positively to all of them. For example, the document addresses the role of development in addressing local housing needs and regeneration of existing communities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The document relates to the whole Borough and communities who live, work and visit the area. The consultation will be open to everyone and takes into account the need to employ different methods to ensure the widest possible response. The methods used will accord with the Statement of Community Engagement approved by Cabinet in December 2012
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Consultation on the Strategy & Options document commenced on 10th June and will run to 26 th July	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The preparation of and consultation on the Strategy & Options document will be resourced and funded from existing budgets and available reserves. Financial advice and support will be provided as necessary throughout the consultation process. JAC 18/04/13
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Inviting representations on the Strategy and Options document is part of the Council's consultation and engagement which is being undertaken in advance of the more formal processes to be followed prior to adoption of the Local Plan. Full Council needs to approve this consultation document. However, on 30 th May 2013, it was considered appropriate for Cabinet to give its approval to the document in order for the consultation process to begin as soon as possible.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>Having a Local Plan which covers the period up to 2031 provides the opportunity to establish a clear planning framework for future development in the borough. This will provide long term certainty and confidence to investors who will want to take advantage of the opportunities. Well planned development will benefit local communities directly by providing good quality places to live, work and visit and indirectly through an improved local economy which enhances economic prospects and quality of life.</p> <p>In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, development of the Local Plan is subject to formal processes including a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment. This ensures that any potential impacts are identified and either removes or mitigates any adverse effects.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Borough wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4 INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council is producing a new Local Plan for the borough called ‘Shaping Places’. It will replace the existing Core Strategy and policies saved from the Wrekin Local Plan. As set out in the Local Development Scheme, approved by Cabinet in February 2013, the new plan is scheduled for adoption in January 2015 and will run to 2031. It will assist in delivering current priorities around the economy, housing, regeneration and support the retention and development of services. It will also be a powerful tool in the support of growth, allowing the Council to manage the location, scale and pace of development and provide clarity and certainty to developers on development opportunities, helping to build market confidence.
- 4.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2007 there have been significant changes in the rules of plan making, including the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government’s requirements for Local Plans and associated planning decisions.
- 4.3 The NPPF mirrors many of the Councils priorities, with a “presumption in favour of Sustainable Development”. “Sustainable” in the sense of ensuring better lives for everyone and “Development” in terms of “positive growth”, meeting the housing needs of a growing population, creating vibrant, well educated, healthy communities and achieving a high quality built and natural environment. Significant emphasis is placed on establishing a strong, competitive economy through inward investment and job creation.
- 4.4 The Local Plan plays a significant role in the delivery of the Council’s budget strategy, enabling housing and employment development that will attract new homes bonus, council tax, business rates and developer contributions, supporting economic growth and sustaining local communities.
- 4.5 The national framework also recognises the importance of having “sufficient land of the right type available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation” and the need to “coordinate development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure”. As well as setting out the scale and distribution of development, the Local Plan will look at the phasing of development, ensuring priorities, such as the regeneration of Target Intervention Area’s are addressed. With regard to infrastructure, while there is a good existing network, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared in parallel with the local plan to ensure this is adequately planned to accommodate and support growth.
- 4.6 The Plan will be subject to examination by a Government appointed Planning Inspector who will test the compliance of the Plan with National Strategy and that it is responding to local priorities, including those identified in the Council’s Community Strategy and through a process of ongoing engagement with partners.

4.7 Stakeholders, including representatives from a range of organisations such as the West Mercia Police, Telford Business Board, Health & Wellbeing Board, Homes and Community Agency, house builders and parish councils, have been consulted in developing initial strategy proposals. There has been general support for growth, with a number of key messages the plan needs to address, including:

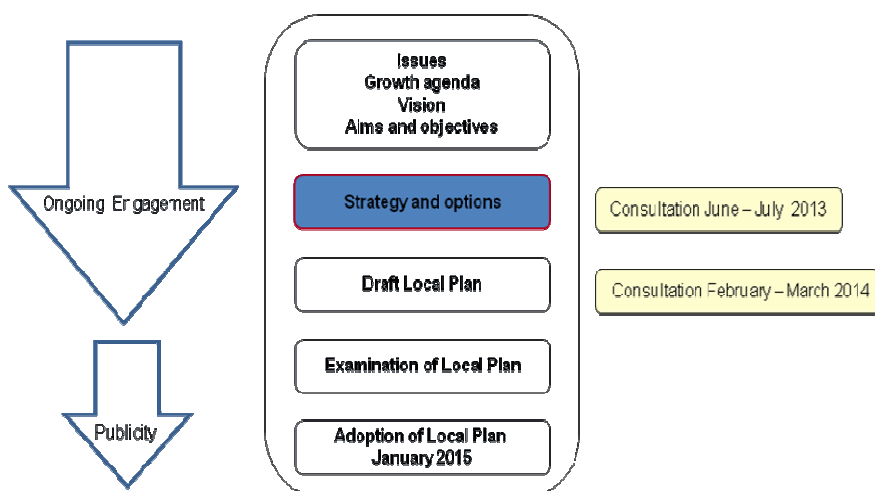
- Reducing inequality between communities and providing a choice of homes to meet different needs
- Regenerating existing communities
- Supporting job growth
- Providing certainty on planning requirements to help investment
- Linking up with service providers to ensure they make provision for areas of growth
- Enhancing the image of Telford in order to attract investment
- Having well maintained infrastructure and public transport which connects people and their places of work

4.8 The Council has also begun discussions with neighbouring authorities on a number of issues, including minerals provision. This 'Duty to Cooperate' is a requirement of Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011.

4.9 Strategy & Options Document

4.10 The Strategy & Options document www.telford.gov.uk/shapingplaces is an early stage in developing the Draft Local Plan (Figure 1). While it is not part of the statutory adoption process for the Plan, it provides the opportunity to receive feedback on a proposed spatial strategy and policy options relating, for example, to housing, economic development and green space, reflecting both national and local ambitions. Once the Draft Plan has progressed through the statutory process, including a formal consultation, and is adopted, the policies will provide the basis for future development management decisions.

Figure 1. Local Plan Process



4.11 The Strategy & Options document is structured into the following main sections:

- Telford & Wrekin's Offer
- Vision, aims and objectives
- Scale of growth
- Spatial distribution
- Policy Issues and Options
- Delivery & Monitoring

4.12 The contents of these are summarised below.

4.13 Telford & Wrekin's Offer

4.14 Telford & Wrekin is a place of opportunity with significant scope for investment by those wishing to develop and set up business. This section identifies the key characteristics and Unique Selling Points

(USP) of the borough which provide these opportunities, setting the scene for the whole document and emerging Local Plan.

4.15 Vision, aims and objectives

4.16 This section builds on the strengths of the offer, outlining the Council's latest thoughts on what development needs to achieve by 2031. It reflects the views of stakeholders engaged to date and the priorities contained in the Community Strategy. It has been clear from engagement so far that people want Telford & Wrekin to be a place they are proud of, recognising the importance of it growing to become a destination of choice.

4.17 The proposed vision reads:

By 2031 Telford and Wrekin will have grown to serve a population of over 200,000. Development will realise the borough as an outstanding destination for living, working and visiting that its residents are proud of and combines the best of town and countryside

4.18 In delivering this vision, the document establishes a number of aims which identify the need for development proposals to address:

- ***Cohesive, healthy and prosperous communities***
- ***Economic prosperity***
- ***Transformation of education***
- ***Accessible and integrated transport network***
- ***Rich cultural experience***
- ***Environmental enhancement***

4.19 The objectives go into more detail, setting out how each of these aims might be achieved through spatial planning. For example, for economic prosperity "***a range of sites need to be identified to meet the needs of existing and new businesses of all types and sizes***".

4.20 Scale of Growth

4.21 The revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies means that Telford & Wrekin must establish a locally derived housing target which helps to deliver the spatial vision and objectives, meeting both national and local needs. To accord with regulations on Plan preparation a number of options need to be considered before arriving at a final housing target. These are set out in the Strategy & Options document, along with supporting evidence.

4.22 The document proposes in order to deliver the benefits of growth, regeneration and job creation a figure of 26,500 new homes be included in the draft Plan. This figure has previously been tested through the Regional Spatial Strategy process and found to be a sound basis for the Borough's growth given its original planned size, infrastructure and opportunities to strengthen the local economy.

4.23 The Borough already has a significant amount of land either with planning approval for housing use or allocated through an adopted development Plan. In total it is estimated that some 13,000 of the 26,500 are already identified in this way. It will be important to work proactively to delivery this supply. Housing completions in recent years have bucked the national trend putting the borough in a strong position to deliver growth and in-ward investment. The recent "Invest in Telford" report, approved by Cabinet in February 2013, established further measures being taken to drive delivery.

4.24 The Strategy & Options document focuses on the options available for the location of the remaining 13,500 homes. One of the Borough's most significant selling points is its wealth of serviced, development land. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides an indication of land that may come forward for development. The Plan must determine which sites to allocate for development considering market deliverability, achievement of local priorities and need and the potential to use phasing to manage supply to the market.

4.25 Spatial Distribution

4.26 At this stage broad locations are provided for consultation. Once the strategic approach is established there will be further engagement to determine specific sites to be included in the Local Plan.

4.27 The document sets out three strategic areas where the 13,500 homes could be located, namely; urban, urban fringe and rural. Options are then considered which look at how housing could be distributed across each of them. Options 1 and 2 are relative extremes, the first based upon a relatively unconstrained approach to development with a more dispersed pattern across all three areas and the second focusing housing principally in the urban area. Option 3, illustrated spatially in Figure 2, is identified as the Councils preferred approach which seeks to achieve opportunity and choice across all areas with high, medium and low housing numbers in the urban, urban fringe and rural areas, respectively. The document asks if consultee's agree with this and provides an opportunity to put forward comments.

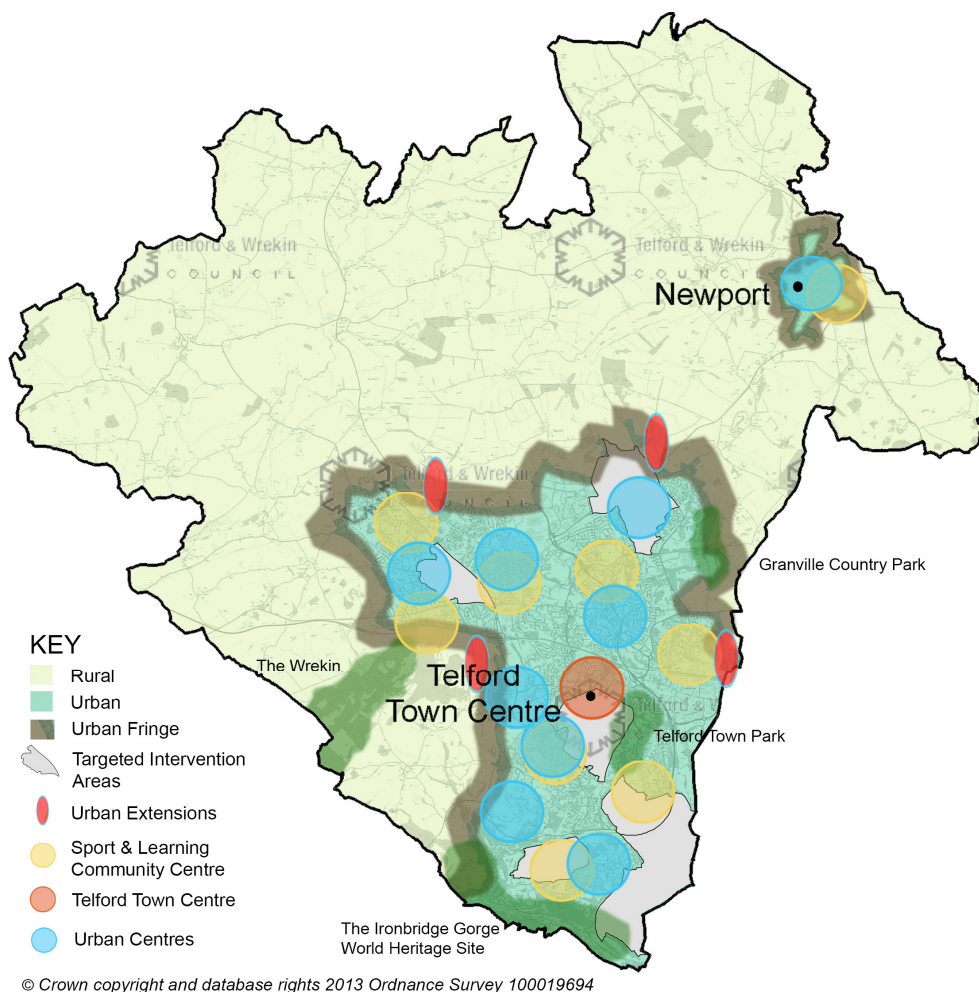


Figure 2. Approach showing possible ‘conceptual’ locations for future development in the 3 Strategic Areas

4.28 The following factors have been taken into consideration in selecting this preference:

- Contribution to achieving the six key strategic aims
- Conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework
- Technical, physical and policy constraints
- Market economics and viability; and
- Sustainable urban design principles

4.29 The views of stakeholders, have also been taken into account, including the importance of addressing local needs, supporting regeneration including the Southwater development and increasing employment opportunities.

4.30 On this basis and considering comments from stakeholders, Table 1 summarises the key benefits of the preferred approach.

Table 1. Key benefits of the preferred approach

Strategic Area	Distribution	Key Benefits
Urban	High	Focusing new homes in and around existing centres and sports and learning communities helps to retain strong sense of local identity and maintain the viability of local services. It allows investment in regenerating existing communities and maximises opportunities for existing infrastructure.
Urban Fringe	Medium	Provides opportunities to regenerate neighbouring communities such as the Donnington and College Target Intervention Area, easing the pressure on urban areas where issues, known to be important to local people, such as retaining important green infrastructure, need to be considered. Provides opportunities for wider mix housing development and bringing forward locations accessible to major transport routes.
Rural	Low	While it is recognised that there may be some limitations to development in this area, there are rural housing needs to consider and recognition that the benefits associated with in-ward investment and growth are felt across the whole borough, including existing rural communities. There are a number of rural previously developed sites which provide opportunities to establish sustainable rural communities and broaden development opportunities.

4.31 As well as housing, the Strategy & Options document identifies the employment needs associated with the councils proposed levels of growth being planned for and the location of employment sites. As a business winning, business supporting council, the Local Plan is an important mechanism for attracting and retaining business in the borough, providing investors with certainty and market confidence with a strong “open for business” approach.

4.32 Policy Issues

4.33 The Local Plan will set out specific policies to guide the detail of development proposals and to form the basis for development management decisions including developer contributions. The Strategy & Options document identifies potential areas where detailed policy could be developed and proposes options for policy approaches.

4.34 Key policy areas identified include:

- Economic development
- Retail and Town Centres
- Tourism and Culture
- Transport
- Telecoms and Broadband
- Housing
- Health
- Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment
- Climate Change and Energy
- Water
- Minerals
- Waste
- Pollution and Land Stability
- Built Heritage
- Urban Design

4.35 The document sets out issues and evidence in relation to these policy areas and a proposed approach. Where key choices (or options) have been identified for developing the policy areas, these have been presented along with a series of questions to seek views. The findings of the consultation exercise will be used to prepare policies which will be subject to further consultation as part of the statutory process to produce the Draft Plan

4.36 To be found 'sound', policies must accord with national policy and be supported by local evidence. .
Reference is made to both these aspects through out the document.

4.37 Engagement

4.38 In December, Cabinet approved the Statement of Community Engagement (SCI) for the Local Plan.
This set out how people will be engaged in all stages of developing the Local Plan.

4.39 Engagement has already begun, including a public engagement exercise last year to establish key issues and the more recent series of stakeholder engagement workshops. The findings of the engagement can be found at:

http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5404/early_engagement_feedback_report

4.40 The formal, six week period of public consultation on the Strategy & Options document commenced on 10th June 2013. The range of media being used includes:

- Email and on-line questions using Council's consultation portal
- Council Website pages
- Press releases
- Public Meetings and focus groups (e.g. Young Persons Forum)
- Leaflets and copy of document in Public Buildings
- Social media

4.41 The consultation also includes engagement with individual Parish and Town Councils .

4.42 Conclusion

4.43 The Strategy & Options document is part of the process of producing the Shaping Places Local Plan for the borough. The final Plan will set out the spatial strategy and planning policies to support growth and sustainable development, addressing national and local priorities with an underlying vision for ***development to realise the borough as an outstanding destination for living, working and visiting.***

4.44 The findings arising out of the consultation will feed into the Draft Plan which will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in early 2014 prior to further formal consultation.

5.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet – 20th December: Statement of Community Involvement

Cabinet – 28th February: Time Table for Shaping Places Local Plan: Local Development Scheme

Cabinet – 28th February: Invest in Telford – A Programme of Change

Cabinet – 30th May 2013: Strategy & Options document

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

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