

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet Member: Councillor Margaret Cooksey

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Date: 24th November 2020

Ward(s) affected: All

Key Decision: Yes

SUBJECT: Future Mole Valley Local Plan – updating the Local Development Scheme

Recommendation:

To approve the revised Local Development Scheme November 2020 (appendix 1).

The Cabinet has the authority to determine the Recommendation

Executive Summary: The Council is required to have a Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A LDS sets out the timetable for progressing a Local Plan. The Council agreed an interim LDS in July 2020 and set out that a full LDS would be provided in November following digestion of the public consultation earlier in the year.

The proposal is to publish a new LDS which sets out that the Council will undertake a Regulation 19 consultation in the new 21/22 municipal year, submit for examination in autumn 2021 and seek adoption prior to the end of 2022.

Council Strategy Priority Outcomes:

Community Wellbeing

Active communities and support for those who need it

- Promote opportunities for residents of all ages to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Environment

A highly attractive area with housing that meets local need

- Protect and enhance the natural and built environment, and ensure our areas of natural beauty and wildlife are well looked-after

- Promote sustainable development that takes into account social, economic and environmental factors, including protection of the Green Belt.
- Encourage the creation of affordable housing to meet local needs and explore innovative methods of delivery.
- Work with other agencies to lessen the impact of environmental pollution, paying particular attention to air quality and flooding.

Prosperity

A vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages

- Work towards making Mole Valley a prime business location with improved infrastructure to attract and retain creative, entrepreneurial and innovative talent.
- Continue to drive the transformation of Leatherhead Town Centre and promote the character, culture and economy of Dorking.
- Work with rural communities and businesses to enhance their strengths and address their challenges, helping them thrive and become more sustainable.
- Promote Mole Valley as a place for people to spend their leisure time and support local businesses to maximise opportunities from recreation and tourism.

1.0 Background

1.1 The timetable for progressing the Future Mole Valley Local Plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This is a statutory document required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The full LDS was last updated in September 2019. In July 2020 the Council set out an Interim LDS. This explained that the Local Plan would not progress in accordance with the timetable set out in September 2019 but that the Council would not set a new timetable until November 2020.

1.2 The Interim LDS was to ensure that the Council took enough time to consider the response to the Regulation 18 consultation carried out in February/March 2020. It was also to allow time to assess how the Covid-19 pandemic would affect further work, and how best to update the evidence base. There was also consideration of ensuring there was a realistic timetable for engagement with neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees and infrastructure bodies, including in response to specific cross-boundary strategic issues raised through the consultation process.

1.3 This report considers the specifics of the LDS

2.0 Regulation 18 and 19 Consultations

2.1 The proposed revisions to the programme are set out in the draft Local Development Scheme 2020-2023, which is attached as Appendix 1. Key dates are summarised in paragraph 2.14, below.

2.2 Local Planning Authorities (LPA) undertake local plan work in a manner set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. There are two types of consultation prior to the submission of a draft local plan for examination; consultations under Regulation 18 in which the LPA can explore options, approaches and evidence, and Regulation 19 in which the LPA consults on the version of the plan it intends to submit for examination. There is no limit to the number of consultations under Regulation 18 that can be undertaken. It would not be usual to

undertake consultation under Regulation 19 more than once.

- 2.3 There is no limitation on the changes that can be made to a draft plan between a Regulation 18 and a Regulation 19 consultation. This is provided the LPA conforms to the Regulations and provides the Inspector with a summary of the consultation responses and the actions the Council has taken to address them. However, there are changes that can be more substantive than others making it prudent to undertake further consultation under Regulation 18. In particular changes to proposed land allocations that result in the inclusion of land within the plan that have not previously been consulted upon can often be a reason to undertake further consultation prior to moving to Regulation 19.
- 2.4 Officers have made a number of changes to the site selection methodology taking account of comments made during the consultation that the site selection process was opaque and appeared to place insufficient emphasis on green belt considerations. PPWG has considered the proposed revisions to the methodology. This requires consideration of sites previously rejected and sites submitted prior to the consultation closing date as well as those in the draft Local Plan.
- 2.5 At this stage it is highly unlikely that there would be a reason, such as a number of additional sites being put into the Plan, that would necessitate a further consultation under Regulation 18 and currently the Council remains in a position to proceed to a Regulation 19 consultation. Regulation 19 is a proposed submission draft version of the plan.
- 2.6 The proposed Submission Draft must be published for a six week period, inviting representations, in accordance with Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 19 consultation is a more formal process than the recent Regulation 18 consultation. Consultees will be invited to comment on whether the proposed Local Plan is legally compliant and whether it meets the four tests of Soundness set out in the NPPF¹.
- 2.7 Representations received at this point will be forwarded in full to the Local Plan Inspector, along with a report on the Regulation 18 consultation, the issues raised and how those issues have been taken into account.
- 2.8 The programme for preparation of the proposed Submission Draft needs to include sufficient time for consideration of issues arising from consultation and evidence-gathering, and for discussion with Members. This will assist the planning team in the development of the Plan and inform key elements of the evidence-gathering process. This process is very much underway, PPWG have reviewed the substantive site

1.1 ¹ According to paragraph 35 of the NPPF, local plans are “sound” if they are:

- 1.2 a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- 1.3 b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- 1.4 c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- 1.5 d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

allocation methodology and will now be engaging in policy development.

- 2.9 The site selection methodology is not the end of the site consideration process. Any site that falls through the site selection process as one that should be developed still has to be considered as part of the Plan as a *whole* to understand how (if) the infrastructure required for the Plan as a whole can be delivered. Officers will be undertaking work on infrastructure planning to ensure the level of growth the Plan could deliver can be accommodated in line with an infrastructure led approach.
- 2.10 The earliest point at which it is anticipated all the necessary evidence could be in place is March 2021. This allows for evidence-gathering on all key topics and strategic modelling of traffic impacts and mitigation measures. The final stage is to draw all evidence together into an updated Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SA/SEA). A sustainability appraisal is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of local plans. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. It must accompany the Regulation 19 version of the Plan and it should be developed throughout the plan making process as an iterative document. It cannot however be completed until after consideration of the transport modelling and any implications therein. So whilst March 2021 may represent the end of evidence gathering it is not the end of the plan making process. It had previously been considered possible to have the evidence completed by February 2021 but the consultation required a more fundamental look at the site selection methodology than previously envisaged and the advent of the Changes to the Planning System and White Paper consultation diverted some resources. It is also fair to say that the analysis of the comments made in the consultation has been more time consuming than anticipated.
- 2.11 With the above in mind, the revised Local Development Scheme proposes that the seeking of approval of the proposed Submission draft Local Plan takes place at the first available Cabinet and Council meetings in the 2021 municipal year. Subject to that approval, the consultation period would therefore be in the summer of 2021, with the intention of submitting the plan and supporting evidence for examination as soon as practical in early autumn of 2021.
- 2.12 The period then required for examination of the Local Plan is unpredictable. There will be practical considerations outside MVDC's control, such as the time required for the Planning Inspectorate to appoint a suitable Inspector and schedule the examination hearings. It can also be anticipated that there will be requirements for further evidence and/or modifications in response to issues raised by the Inspector during the examination process.
- 2.13 However, a period of around one year from submission to adoption is considered a reasonable assumption. Therefore the revised Local Development Scheme aims for adoption by the end of 2022. This would just give the plan the required 15 year life post adoption.
- 2.14 In summary, anticipated key dates would be as follows:
- Cabinet/Council approval required for proposed Submission Draft Local Plan: June 2021
 - Publication for consultation under Regulation 19: June/July 2021
 - Submission for Examination: September/October 2021
 - Examination process: Late 2021/2022

- Adoption: By end of 2022

3. Financial Matters

- 3.1 Given the level of response to the consultation there is a need to undertake additional evidence and evidence updates in order to properly address the comments made by residents, businesses, developers, land owners and statutory consultees.
- 3.2 There will be a movement in terms of the use of budget this year, with the degree of evidence required to support the output of the recent consultation having the potential to exceed budget available. Variations to the budget in year will be reported as part of the Council budget monitoring report. The budget required for running the consultation in 2021 will be explored as part of the usual budget setting process. The level of spending is required for the production of a sound local plan irrespective of the time scale set out in the recommended revised LDS.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Local Planning Authorities are under a duty to update their Local Development Schemes, to respond to changing circumstances, at such time as they consider appropriate. 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).

5 Risk Implications

- 5.1 This would ensure communities and interested parties are able to track progress of the Local Plan process. The revised timetable would ensure that full consideration can be given to the significant number of responses made to the Regulation 18 consultation and that the evidence base can be suitably robust for examination.
- 5.2 Progressing the Local Plan earlier than recommended would have the potential for higher costs and there would be a significant risk of the Council needing to approve a consultation without sight of completed versions of all the relevant documentation. This could result in a risk of challenge.
- 5.3 Spending more time moving from Regulation 18 to 19 does increase the risk of potential government intervention in plan making. It is considered that provided the Council continues to make progress this risk remains limited. The Council wishes to ensure it maintains full control over decision making in the District. The 'tilted balance' in terms of housing delivery will continue to apply based on 5-year housing delivery. However, this has been the case for a number of years and currently, whilst the balance is tilted, protection for the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty remain in place.
- 5.4 The Government has consulted on potential changes to the methodology for setting housing targets within the Changes to the Planning System paper. The proposed changes would increase the housing target within Mole Valley by 110 dwellings per year. This proposed change can be avoided by meeting proposed transitional arrangements. These are based on when the change is adopted (not known) and the commencement of a Regulation 19 consultation in relation to the unknown adoption date. There is a very real risk the Council will not be able to meet transitional arrangements and would therefore have a plan tested against a new

target figure, although exactly what that would be is currently unknown. Higher housing targets will place more pressure on the Council to explain any under provision.

- 5.5 The government has also consulted on broad changes to the planning system. This would introduce significant changes to the method of local plan making and the way plans are examined. There is no known timetable nor any certainty over the implementation of all or some of the proposals. More especially this consultation suggests that constrained areas, such as Mole Valley, could be provided with a housing target that is modified to take account of constraints. However, it does not seem prudent to wait to see if such a change is forthcoming.
- 5.6 Members should also be aware that there is the real potential for the evidence base in respect of Sports and Playing Pitch provision to be incomplete prior to the finalisation of the plan. Officers are working closely with Sport England to minimise the risk and to address it jointly, if necessary, during the examination of the plan. It is possible that whilst the results of this work can be incorporated into the Plan it may necessitate a consultation on Main Modifications² prior to adoption.
- 5.7 The Regulation 19 version of the Plan has to hang together as a cohesive whole. Transport modelling is required on the preferred distribution of development within the Plan. This modelling generally takes around three months and there is a risk that the results include issues that cannot be mitigated. This is risk is a managed risk as modelling was undertaken for the Regulation 18 version of the plan but it's not a risk that can be entirely eradicated.

6 Options

1. The option remains to defer the issuing of a full LDS. However, having given public assurance that one would be provided in November 2020 this could be seen by interested parties as an unreasonable delay, potentially indicating an unwillingness to progress the plan. This would not outweigh the benefit of having further certainty with regard to the timetables for evidence completion.
2. Amend the LDS to seek a Regulation 19 consultation in February/March 2021. This is highly likely to result in key documents not being complete at the time of making a decision to consult and potentially not for the start of a consultation. This has a risk of challenge. If the consultation has to wait it would very likely fall into the purdah period, which is not acceptable.
3. Amend the LDS to include a further Regulation 18 consultation in respect of site allocations resulting from an adjusted methodology. This is not necessary and would significantly alter the time table. It would take a minimum of 6 weeks to prepare the minimum level of consultation, there would then be a minimum of 6 weeks and an undetermined time to collate and consider the responses. It would as a minimum delay the plan by a further 5 to 6 months.
4. Amend the LDS as recommended. .

7.0 Corporate Implications

² Any change to the submitted plan that would materially affect one or more of the plan's policies can only be made as a MM recommended by the Inspector. MMs may be suggested by the LPA, by representors and hearing participants, or by the Inspector. They can range in scope from redrafting parts of an individual policy or of the reasoned justification, to the deletion of whole policies or site allocations and the insertion of new ones.

Monitoring Officer commentary

7.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

S151 Officer commentary

7.2 The financial implications of this decision are identified in the report. In short:

- the costs of additional/reworked evidence and the maternity cover in the Planning Policy Team can be partly funded by the current year budget allocation for the Local Plan inspection which would now not take place in 2020/21. However, if all the additional/reworked evidence is to be achieved in line with the new timetable, it is likely that a net overspending will arise in the current year. This will be reported in monitoring reports during the year and efforts will be made to fund this through savings against other budgets across the Council. (Excluding the costs of Covid-19, the net cost of which will be funded from Reserves).
- Further, the subsequent need to fund the Regulation 19 consultation and inspection will then require further funding of approximately £37,000 and £90,000 respectively, in future years, (potentially 2021/22 and 2022/23). This will be formally considered for funding over the coming autumn/winter, as part of the budget planning process for 2021/22, although in reality this needs to be recognised now as a commitment, if the Council is to meet its statutory duty to produce a Local Plan, judged to be sound by an Inspector at examination.

8 Risk Implications

8.1 These are set out in the options appraisal above.

9 Equalities Implications

9.1 Not required for the LDS. An equalities impact assessment has been prepared for the Regulation 18 consultation draft Local Plan and will be kept up to date as the Local Plan progresses.

10 Employment and Resource Implications

10.1 The team will benefit from a new Planning Policy Manager being in place. The team remains slightly down on normal 'establishment' FTE with a single vacant post. This is being considered as part of the normal recruitment process. There are no additional resource implications from the recommendation in this report.

11 Sustainability Issues

11.1 Not required for the LDS. A presumption in favour of sustainable development underpins national planning policy and sustainability issues are intrinsic to the process of preparing the draft Local Plan and accompanying evidence.

12 Consultation

12.1 Statutory requirements for consultation are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Targeted consultation has taken place during preparation of the Regulation 18 consultation draft Local Plan, to inform development (for example two calls for development sites, and liaison with parish councils on modest extensions to villages).

12.2 Further consultation with statutory consultees will inform ongoing evidence-gathering.

12.3 A full public consultation will be carried out following publication of the Pre Submission Draft Local Plan.

13 Communications

13.1 The revised Local Development Scheme will be published on the MVDC website

13.2 During the next stage of Local Plan preparation, there will be continued communication with interested parties through a variety of mechanisms including the Future Mole Valley newsletter mailing list and regular meetings with representatives of Parish Councils and Residents Associations.

Background Papers

None



Local Development Scheme 2020-2022



November 2020

Foreword by Councillor Margaret Cooksey

The vision for Mole Valley in our council strategy is: **a place where a beautiful environment, enterprise and opportunity combine, creating a vibrant place to live, work, and enjoy.**

The Local Development Scheme is the programme for creating the Future Mole Valley Local Plan. It will support the vision for Mole Valley and help deliver the key priorities which are important to its success:

Environment: A highly attractive area with housing that meets local need.

Prosperity: A vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages.

Community wellbeing: Active communities and support for those who need it.

The Future Mole Valley Local Plan is being prepared in consultation with our communities and will include plans for how land is used in Mole Valley from 2020 to 2037. We will set out proposals for the homes and other development that the District will need, balanced against the equally important aim of protecting the environment. We will identify opportunities to create more affordable homes and the facilities that support residents to lead active and productive lives.

Our decisions will be informed by the views and wishes of those who live and work in Mole Valley. While there will inevitably be differing views about development we will be looking to give priority to those which meet the future needs of the District, are consistent with national planning policy, and support the key priorities in the council strategy.

Through the Local Plan, and by implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy, we will help to make sure essential infrastructure is in place to support our growing population. We will work with partners and local communities to identify local needs and priorities for investment.

The Future Mole Valley Local Plan will support the council's key priorities for the district's towns and villages, including those to facilitate the transformation of Leatherhead town centre and the promotion of the culture and economy of the market town of Dorking.

Rural communities and businesses will be supported by planning policies which allow them to thrive. At the same time, we will continue to protect and enhance the natural and built environment and ensure our areas of natural beauty are looked after.

Throughout the process, the council will work with local communities, businesses, parish councils, residents associations, neighbourhood forums and partner organisations. Our aim is to bring forward a local plan that promotes responsible decision making, to deliver sustainable development while safeguarding the places we value.

Margaret Cooksey

Cabinet Member for Planning

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the programme for producing a new Local Plan for the period 2020-2037, to be known as the Future Mole Valley Local Plan.
- 1.2 Mole Valley adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy in January 2017. To support the strategic framework set out in a new Local Plan, the Community Infrastructure Levy will also be reviewed. Details of the programmes for both these documents are included.
- 1.3 This Local Development Scheme was adopted in November 2020 and supersedes all previous versions.

2. Existing Planning Documents

- 2.1 The plans and documents that currently make up the Development Plan are listed in Annex 1. These include neighbourhood development plans for the Ashted, Bookham, Capel and Westcott neighbourhood areas.
- 2.2 Mole Valley has published a number of supplementary planning documents. These do not form part of the Development Plan, but do provide guidance on particular planning issues. A list of current supplementary planning documents is also included in Annex 1.

3. Proposed Planning Documents

- 3.1 A profile of the Future Mole Valley Local Plan is provided in Annex 2. In summary, it will set out plans for development in the District from a base date of 2020 until 2037. It will include targets for delivering new housing, identify locations for new development, and contain policies for guiding the type, scale and mix of new development. It will also set out those areas which will continue to be protected for landscape, heritage or nature conservation purposes.
- 3.2 Once adopted, the Local Plan will supersede the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000, Core Strategy 2009 and Dorking Town Area Action Plan 2012. It will form the basis on which planning applications will be decided in the District. It is a key document in meeting the aims of MVDC's Council Strategy 2019-2024.
- 3.3 This Local Development Scheme has been updated following completion of the Regulation 18 consultation stage in March 2020 (see section 5 Community Engagement). The updated timetable for completion of the Future Mole Valley Local Plan is set out in Annex 3.
- 3.4 The plan period was amended by the Council in July 2020 as part of an Interim LDS. The plan period runs from 2020-2037. Paragraph 22 of the 2019 NPPF now requires

that strategic policies look ahead 15 years *following adoption*. The original plan period of 2018-2033 would not comply with this new requirement and the plan period has therefore been amended and relevant elements of the evidence base will be updated.

- 3.5 It is also proposed to carry out a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy, details of which are set out in Annex 2.
- 3.6 The supplementary planning documents will be reviewed, as required, following adoption of the new Local Plan. As an interim measure, the existing supplementary planning documents will continue to apply where they are consistent with policies contained in the new plan.
- 3.7 On adoption, the council will publish a statement setting out which neighbourhood plan policies remain in conformity with the new Local Plan. It will be open to parish councils or neighbourhood forums to decide whether their neighbourhood development plans need to be reviewed. A review will depend on the extent to which the adopted NDPs remain in general conformity with the new Local Plan and whether neighbourhood forums and parish councils decide to undertake a review.
- 3.8 The Council has adopted a Climate Change strategy. This includes a commitment to produce a supplementary planning document to assist in identifying suitable areas for renewable energy and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure.
- 3.9 The Dorking Town Area Action Plan 2012 will be replaced. Timings for the production of this document and that referred to in paragraph 3.8 will be included in a future version of the LDS.

4. Evidence Base

- 4.1 Decisions on future development in Mole Valley need to be based on up-to-date and relevant evidence. Since the new Local Plan will cover a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues, the evidence base will likewise be broad in scope.
- 4.2 The evidence-gathering phase of the Local Plan commenced in 2016 and has, to date included the following items of evidence:

Land Availability Assessments

- Brownfield Call for Sites Report June 2017
- Brownfield Land Availability Assessment, June 2017
- Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment January 2020

Housing

- Kingston upon Thames and North East Surrey Authorities Strategic Housing Market Assessment, June 2016
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, February 2018

- Draft Affordable Housing Strategy 2020-2025, published January 2020 for consultation
- Evidence Paper: Development Opportunity Areas, January 2020
- Evidence Paper: Optional Technical Standards, January 2020
- Evidence Paper: Specialist Housing to Support People with Disabilities and an Ageing Population, January 2020

Economy

- Economic Development Needs Assessment, March 2017
- Addendum to Economic Development Needs Assessment, July 2018
- Addendum to Economic Development Needs Assessment, January 2020

Environment

- Constraints Analysis, May 2017
- M25 Strategic Noise Assessment, March 2017
- Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation Air Quality Impact Assessment, June 2018
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (Regulation 18 draft Local Plan), December 2019
- Constraints Analysis Update, January 2020
- Green Belt Review, January 2020
- Countryside Beyond the Green Belt, January 2020
- Heritage Strategy, January 2020

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure Needs Assessment, June 2016
- Existing Transport Trends & Constraints, March 2017
- Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, December 2017
- Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, May 2019
- Strategic Highways Assessment, Part 1, April 2019
- Strategic Highways Assessment, Part 2, May 2019
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Regulation 18 version), January 2020
- Evidence Paper: Strategic Flood Risk Sequential Test, January 2020
- Evidence Paper: Parking (January 2020)
- Local Parking Standards - Draft Supplementary Planning Document, January 2020
- Green Infrastructure and Play Space Strategy, January 2020

Other Documents

- Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement May 2017
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and initial assessment of Spatial Strategy Options, June 2017
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (Regulation 18 version), January 2020

- Viability Assessment, April 2019
 - Equalities Impact Assessment, January 2020
- 4.3 Two Calls for Sites have been undertaken. The first took place from 26 September to 7 November 2016 and focussed on the availability of previously developed (brownfield) land. This informed the contents of the 2017 Issues and Options consultation with respect to brownfield capacity and potential options for increasing delivery on brownfield land.
- 4.4 The second Call for Sites took place from 11 December 2017 to 5 February 2018 and invited submission of greenfield sites, additional brownfield sites and small sites suitable for modest additions to rural villages.
- 4.5 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment also takes account of additional sites brought to MVDC's attention after the Calls for Sites, up to 31 January 2019.
- 4.6 Further details, including additional evidence to be prepared, are set out in Annex 4. The list is not exhaustive and may need to be supplemented by additional evidence to inform more detailed planning work as choices about the strategic direction of the Plan are made.
- 4.7 Where relevant, input into the evidence base will be sought from stakeholders including infrastructure providers, landowners, statutory consultees and local representative groups such as parish councils and residents' associations.

5. Community Engagement

- 5.1 The views of those who live and work in Mole Valley are important in shaping future development in the District. MVDC wishes to ensure there is early and meaningful engagement with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses.
- 5.2 With that aim in mind, the first stage of public consultation took place between 1 July and 1 September 2017, entitled Future Mole Valley: Issues and Options. This Regulation 18 consultation focussed on key evidence, including about the level of development need, the capacity of the District to absorb development, and the options for addressing development needs. A 'brownfield first' approach was taken, seeking to make the best use of previously developed land before looking at options for greenfield release.
- 5.3 Views expressed during this first consultation helped to identify preferred strategic options for subsequent work. A summary of responses is available online at www.futuremolevalley.org.
- 5.4 One particular preferred option – modest additions to rural villages – prompted further engagement with parish councils and village associations in rural areas to

help determine how this particular option should be progressed. Throughout 2018, parish councils and village associations were invited to consider how their villages might accommodate a modest amount of new homes. This included consideration of appropriate sites submitted during Calls for Sites.

- 5.5 Following further evidence gathering and analysis, a further Regulation 18 consultation took place from 3 February to 23 March 2020. A consultation draft Local Plan was published, together with all the supporting evidence as listed in paragraph 4.2 above.
- 5.6 The consultation draft Local Plan includes draft strategic and non-strategic policies, together with draft Site Allocations. It is available online at futuremolevalley.org.
- 5.7 Approximately 4000 responses were received during this second Regulation 18 consultation, representing 3700 consultees. A consultation report is under preparation at the time of updating this LDS.
- 5.8 A further opportunity for engagement will occur as part of the formal process of publication, submission and examination of the draft Local Plan by an independent inspector. The timetable for all these stages is set out in Annex 3.
- 5.9 As set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016, Mole Valley will continue to use a wide range of media to provide opportunities for individuals and organisations to input to the process. The SCI will be updated as required, including taking account of guidance affecting consultation arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 6.1 Responsibility for preparation of neighbourhood development plans lies with their respective forums or parish councils. There are currently four adopted neighbourhood development plans in Mole Valley:
 - Ashtead, by Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum
 - Bookham, by Bookham Neighbourhood Forum
 - Westcott, by Westcott Village Neighbourhood Forum
 - The Parish Wards of Beare Green, Capel, and Coldharbour, by Capel Parish Council
- 6.2 The four neighbourhood development plans listed above are all made and form part of the Development Plan for their respective neighbourhood areas.
- 6.3 A fifth neighbourhood area has been agreed in the parish of Ockley.

6.4 Malden Rushett Community applied to be recognised as a neighbourhood forum in September 2019, with the neighbourhood area including a small parcel of land in Mole Valley. However, the application was subsequently withdrawn.

7. Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

7.1 As part of the planning process, Mole Valley will appraise the emerging Local Plan against defined economic, social and environmental criteria to demonstrate that the plan is sustainable. This is an ongoing process, using an established set of sustainability objectives developed in partnership with other East Surrey planning authorities to appraise the new Local Plan.

7.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment is a similar requirement to appraise emerging plans and programmes, focussing on environmental impacts. This requirement is being met as part of the sustainability appraisal work.

7.3 A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and initial assessment of Spatial Strategy Options was published in June 2017, along with the Future Mole Valley Issues and Options consultation.

7.4 An updated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal was published in January 2020, as part of the evidence base underpinning the Regulation 18 consultation draft Local Plan.

7.5 The SA/SEA process is ongoing and will continue to be kept up to date as plan preparation proceeds.

7.6 The Future Mole Valley Local Plan will also be subject to an appropriate assessment (Habitat Regulations Assessment), to appraise its impact on European Sites for Nature Conservation. The two sites nearest to Mole Valley are:

- Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

7.7 Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Regulation 18 consultation draft Local Plan was undertaken during 2019 and published in January 2020.

7.8 This is also an ongoing process and further Habitat Regulations Assessment will be undertaken as plan preparation proceeds, informed by engagement with Natural England.

8. Monitoring

8.1 Progress against the Local Development Scheme will be reported annually in the Mole Valley Authority Monitoring Report.

8.2 The preparation of a Local Plan is complex and can be influenced by many different factors. In particular, MVDC's Local Plan process has already been adapted to take account of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018 and 2019. Should any further changes in national policy result in the need to alter the Local Plan programme, Mole Valley will publish an amended Local Development Scheme to alert interested parties to changes to the timetable.

9. More Information

9.1 If you have any questions about this or any other local development plan document:

- visit the Future Mole Valley Local Plan website at:

www.futuremolevalley.org

- contact the Planning Policy team at:

✉ Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook, Dorking
Surrey, RH4 1SJ

💻 planning.policy@molevalley.gov.uk

☎ 01306 879281

Annex 1 – Existing Planning Policy Documents

Title	Adopted	Document Type ³
Saved policies from the Mole Valley Local Plan	October 2000	DPD
Core Strategy	October 2009	DPD
Statement of Community Involvement	October 2016	LDD
Dorking Town Area Action Plan	December 2012	DPD
Ashted Neighbourhood Development Plan	June 2017	NDP
Bookham Neighbourhood Development Plan	June 2017	NDP
Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan	December 2017	NDP
Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan	December 2017	NDP
Shopfronts and Advertisements	March 1999	SPD
Design Guidance for House Extensions	October 2000	SPD
Trees on Development Sites	March 2007	SPD
Built Up Areas Character Appraisal: Ashted	February 2010	SPD
Built Up Areas Character Appraisal: Bookham and Fetcham	February 2010	SPD
Built Up Areas Character Appraisal: Dorking, North Holmwood and Pixham	February 2010	SPD
Built Up Areas Character Appraisal: Leatherhead	February 2010	SPD
Affordable Housing: A Guide for Applicants on Core Strategy Policy CS4	February 2010 Updated July 2014	SPD
Designing Out Crime	December 2011	SPD

³ DPD = Development Plan Document; LDD = Local Development Document; SPD = Supplementary Planning Document

Title	Adopted	Document Type³
Landscape	April 2013	SPD
Larger Rural Villages Character Appraisal	July 2013	SPD

In addition to the documents adopted by Mole Valley, the following documents have been produced by Surrey County Council and are relevant to planning in Mole Valley:

Title	Adopted	Document Type
Surrey Waste Plan	May 2008 (under review)	DPD
The Surrey Minerals Plan (Core Strategy and Primary Aggregates)	July 2011	DPD
Minerals Site Restoration	July 2011	SPD
Aggregates Recycling	August 2011	DPD

The following three documents are not Development Plan Documents or Local Development Documents but have been published as guidance notes:

Title	Adopted	Document Type
Policy Statement for 1-41 Lower Road, 33-35 Lower Road and 2 The Mount, Fetcham	October 2002	Guidance Note
Surrey County Council Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance	January 2018	Guidance Note
Mole Valley to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation Guidance Note	September 2013	Guidance Note

Annex 2 – Profiles of Proposed Planning Policy Documents

Title	Future Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2037, including Policies Map		
Subject	Overall planning framework for Mole Valley including spatial strategy, housing and economic strategy, site allocations and detailed planning policies for the period 2020-2037		
Coverage	District wide		
Document type	Development Plan Document		
Joint working?	The Plan will be developed by Mole Valley alone although it will fulfil its duty to cooperate fully with neighbouring authorities throughout the preparation of the plan, and will use opportunities for joint working in obtaining evidence where appropriate.		
Supersede plans?	Will supersede the Core Strategy 2009, saved policies of the Local Plan 2000, and Dorking Town Area Action Plan 2012.		
Timetable	Stage	Regulation⁴	Date
Completed			
	Initial Evidence gathering (including Call for Sites 1 - brownfield land)		Spring 2016 to Spring 2017
	Issues and options consultation	R.18	Summer 2017
	Preferred options selected		November 2017
	Call for Sites 2 – greenfield land		Winter 2017/18
	Discussions with parish councils and village associations on modest additions to rural villages		January 2018 – February 2019
	Continued evidence gathering and site analysis		Summer 2018 – Winter 2019
	Consultation Draft Plan consultation	R.18	February – March 2020
Proposed			
	Review responses and prepare Submission Plan		April 2020 to May 2021
	Submission Version consultation	R.19	June/July 2021
	Submission	R.22	Sept/Oct 2021
	Examination	R.24	Commencing Winter 2021

⁴ Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

	Adoption	R.26	Winter 2022
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Title	Community Infrastructure Levy Review		
Subject	A revised CIL charging schedule		
Coverage	District wide		
Document type	Local Development Document		
Supersede plans?	Supersedes CIL charging schedule 2016		
Timetable	Stage	Regulation(CIL)⁵	Date
	Draft charging schedule consultation	R.16	Summer 2021
	Submission	R.19	Autumn 2021
	Examination	R.20	From Winter 2021
	Adoption	R.25	Winter 2022

⁵ The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010, as amended

	2020				2021				2022		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
consultation on draft Local Plan											
responses, further evidence, points of Common Ground											
Submission Plan and finalise evidence base											
on Plan consultation (Reg 19) July 2021)											
ion (Reg 22) (Sept/Oct 2021)											
ion											

Annex 3 – Local Plan Timetable

Annex 4 – Local Plan Evidence Base

Study	Purpose	Comments
Land Availability Assessments		
Brownfield Land Availability Assessment	Analysis of availability of previously developed land to inform Issues and Options consultation.	<p>Published June 2017, together with report on 2016 Brownfield Call for Sites. Further engagement with landowners and developers during preparation of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Analysis incorporated in Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment published January 2020.</p>
Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment	Identify land that is suitable, available and deliverable to meet the needs for housing and employment land.	<p>Published to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan, January 2020.</p> <p>To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>To include updates to site-specific evidence (e.g. phasing, flood risk, landscape, ecology etc), as required.</p> <p>Update to incorporate site-specific analysis of Exceptional Circumstances to support consideration of site allocations involving release of land in the Green Belt.</p>
Housing		

Study	Purpose	Comments
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Determine the objectively assessed needs for housing, including housing mix and affordable housing.	<p>Published June 2016. Now partly superseded by the standard methodology for calculating objectively assessed need in the revised NPPF.</p> <p>To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	To assess the need for traveller accommodation in Mole Valley.	<p>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment published February 2018. To inform site allocations for additional gypsy and traveller sites and preparation of appropriate policy framework in draft Plan.</p> <p>To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Affordable Housing Strategy	To analyse needs for affordable housing, including overall level of need, tenure mix to address local needs and viability issues relating to delivery of affordable housing alongside market housing	<p>Draft published January 2020.</p> <p>Adopted Summer 2020</p>
Evidence Paper: Development Opportunity Areas	To identify capacity for increased density in targeted locations.	<p>Published January 2020</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and any new evidence.</p>

Study	Purpose	Comments
Optional Technical Standards	To gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards, covering Accessibility and Wheelchair Housing Standards, Water Efficiency Standards, Internal Space Standards and any other related Optional Technical Standards introduced during plan preparation.	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. Updates as required in response to consultation responses and any new evidence.
Evidence Paper: Specialist Housing to Support People with Disabilities and an Ageing Population	To analyse the specific housing needs arising from an ageing population in Mole Valley, including future needs for accommodation with care in Mole Valley and affordability issues for specialist housing and nursing care.	Published January 2020 Updates as required in response to consultation responses and any new evidence.
Economy		
Economic Development Needs Assessment	Determine the objectively assessed needs for economic development.	Published June 2017. Addendum updates June 2018 and January 2020. To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.
Environment		

Study	Purpose	Comments
Constraints Analysis (including Green Belt Review)	An assessment of the key constraints on development in Mole Valley, including NPPF para 14, footnote 9 constraints.	<p>Report published June 2017. Identified requirement for further work on Green Belt Review and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), in order to inform development and selection of strategic option(s).</p> <p>Updated January 2020.</p> <p>Green Belt Review and Evidence Paper on Countryside Beyond the Green Belt published January 2020, to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>HRA published January 2020.</p> <p>Evidence on Air Quality to be updated Autumn/Winter 2020.</p> <p>Additional evidence on site-specific constraints (e.g. landscape, ecology) to be incorporated in preparation of Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
M25 Strategic Noise Assessment	Assess noise issues along M25 corridor and their implications for future housing development	Completed March 2017 and published June 2017 with Constraints Analysis.
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation Air Quality Impact Assessment	Joint evidence to assess impact of growth in MVDC and neighbouring authorities on air quality in relation to the Special Area of Conservation	Published June 2018 and used to inform Habitat Regulations Assessment published 2020

Study	Purpose	Comments
Habitats Regulation Assessment (Appropriate Assessment)	Assesses the new Local Plan on European sites for nature conservation.	Commenced 2019 and published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.
Green Belt Review	Assess performance of broad areas against purposes of Green Belt	Published January 2020 to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. Further evidence gathering on site-specific Exceptional Circumstances to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.
Evidence Paper: Countryside Beyond the Green Belt	Assess characteristics of, and constraints affecting, Countryside Beyond the Green Belt.	Published January 2020 to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.
Heritage Strategy	To prepare a strategy for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in Mole Valley.	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.

Study	Purpose	Comments
Landscape Character Assessment	To assess the character and value of landscape in Mole Valley.	<p>A landscape character assessment carried out by Surrey County Council in partnership with other Surrey authorities was published in 2015 and has been referred to as part of the evidence base.</p> <p>Account will also be taken of any emerging conclusions from a review of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary by Natural England.</p> <p>Updates as required to site-specific landscape evidence, to inform site selection and preparation of the Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Design and Amenity	To review Development Management policies on design, layout and amenity including development of residential garden land; and development in rural areas.	<p>No specific evidence document. Design policies included in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and further evidence-gathering, to be incorporated in preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Infrastructure		
Existing Transport Trends and Constraints	Establish evidence base on transport-related data and constraints relevant to Local Plan	Completed March 2017 and published June 2017 with Constraints Analysis.

Study	Purpose	Comments
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	To assess areas at risk from flooding.	<p>Level 1 SFRA Published December 2017.</p> <p>Level 2 SFRA published January 2020 to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>To be updated as necessary to support site selection and flood risk policy in Submission Draft Local Plan</p>
Strategic Highways Assessment	To model the transport implications of alternative strategic option(s)	<p>Strategic Highways Assessment Report prepared 2019 and published January 2020 to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Further modelling of strategic transport impacts and mitigation measures to be undertaken to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Summary of plans and programmes by MVDC and partner organisations to deliver new or improved infrastructure to support development	<p>Last updated through engagement with infrastructure providers during 2018/19. Published January 2020 to support Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Update to incorporate preparation of Infrastructure Funding Plan.</p>
Evidence Paper: Strategic Flood Risk Sequential Test	To summarise application of the sequential test to potential sites	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.

Study	Purpose	Comments
Evidence Paper: Parking	To set out evidence relating to parking requirements for new development.	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. Updates as required in response to consultation responses and any new evidence.
Evidence Paper: draft Parking Standards SPD	To establish parking requirements for new development.	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. Updates as required in response to consultation responses and any new evidence.
Green Infrastructure Strategy	To review green spaces and the extent to which they meet sporting, recreational, biodiversity, and well-being objectives.	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. Further evidence gathering to focus on sports pitch needs assessment and updated assessment of play space and open space requirements.
Other evidence		
Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement and Statements of Common Ground	Identify scope and progress statements of common ground with neighbouring authorities and other bodies under the Duty to Cooperate	An initial Scoping Statement was completed May 2017 and published June 2017. Cross boundary matters identified in the Scoping Statement, and relevant strategic matters identified through ongoing engagement with Duty to Cooperate bodies, will continue to inform preparation of statements of common ground on cross-boundary issues throughout the plan preparation process, and the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate.

Study	Purpose	Comments
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment	To appraise emerging options and draft Plan against economic, social and environmental criteria.	Scoping report published 2017 and SA/SEA published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.
Viability Assessment for Whole Plan	Assesses the cumulative impact of Local Plan policies on development viability to ensure that the objectives of the Plan are deliverable.	Undertaken 2019 and published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. To be updated to support preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.
Equalities Impact Assessment	To assess the impact of the emerging Local Plan on protected groups and against other equalities issues identified by MVDC	Published January 2020 in support of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan. To be kept updated as plan preparation progresses.

Study	Purpose	Comments
Settlement boundary reviews and site allocation	To review existing rural village boundaries and possible site allocations in consultation with parish councils and village associations	<p>No specific evidence document – incorporated in preparation of Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Meetings held during January-February 2018 and July-September 2018, to inform development of preferred option for modest additions to rural villages.</p> <p>Draft settlement boundary changes included in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and further evidence-gathering, to be incorporated in preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Town Centres	Review work carried out for the Dorking Town Area Action Plan and Transform Leatherhead study, carry out additional retail assessment as necessary, and incorporate objectives into Local Plan.	<p>No specific evidence document – over-arching policies for town centres included in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and further evidence-gathering, to be incorporated in preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Area Action Plans for Dorking and Leatherhead Town Centres, anticipated to follow adoption of Future Mole Valley Local Plan.</p>

Study	Purpose	Comments
Neighbourhood Centres	Review boundaries and policy framework for District and Local Centres providing local shopping and other facilities not within town centre locations.	<p>No specific evidence document – policies for neighbourhood centres included in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and further evidence-gathering, to be incorporated in preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>
Monitoring Framework	Develop an appropriate Monitoring Framework for the policies contained in the Future Mole Valley Local Plan, to inform preparation of Authority Monitoring Reports following adoption of the Plan	<p>No specific evidence document – monitoring framework included in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Updates as required in response to consultation responses and further evidence-gathering, to be incorporated in preparation of Submission Draft Local Plan.</p>