

Appendix A: Breckland Local Plan Preferred Directions Consultation Strategy

The consultation strategy sets out the list of tasks and events associated with the preferred directions consultation on the Breckland Local Plan. The strategy has been devised having regard to Breckland's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2013), which sets out the consultation requirements for all planning functions. In addition to this it is in accordance with the requirements of regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations (2012). The strategy has also been prepared in consultation with Breckland's communications team.

Under regulation 18, the consultation must run for at least a six week period. The consultation dates agreed through Cabinet are **11th January – 22nd February 2016**.

Key messages

The following key messages will be promoted through the plan. A frequently asked questions section has also been prepared:

The Plan

The Local Plan for Breckland set out a vision for growth to deliver the Council's aspiration that the District develop and thrive. It will support the aims of developing a vibrant economy that continues to grow and building stronger and more independent communities. It identifies the quantity and broad location and key sites for new housing, community facilities, shops and employment.

The Local Plan process lets Breckland set its own housing targets, based on assessed local need, rather than on a national formula.

The Benefit

Having a Local Plan gives us (Breckland Council) greater control over where new developments are built – by identifying a five-year housing supply – and reduces the likelihood of ad-hoc developments that might not be as beneficial to the area.

The Process (as of 1/12/2015)

We're launching a public consultation on 11 January to get views on our Preferred Directions Local Plan documents – available on our website [here](#).

This will be the second public consultation on the Local Plan following the 'Issues and Options' consultation which took place in December 2014/January 2015

The Consultation

Nothing has yet been decided and all the sites put forward remain options – so this is the time for you (residents, businesses and community groups) to have your (their) say on plans that will shape the future growth of Breckland.

Statutory Notifications

The local planning regulations require statutory notifications to be sent to a number of key stakeholders. These requirements are defined within the Statement of Community Involvement and will be in the format of letters and emails. In addition to this we will also write to all people who have pre-requested to be notified of the consultation.

A statutory notification will be placed within the EDP advertising the consultation, the events which are proposed and where the documents can be viewed.

Key Consultation Events

The forthcoming events are proposed:

- Parish Council briefing session. It is intended that this takes place as a double session. The first half of the session would be solely for those parish councils preparing or intending to prepare a neighbourhood plan and would be in the style of a formal meeting. The second half of the session would be aimed at all parish councils and act as a drop in session. Displays boards would be prepared for this and planning officers would be available to answer queries. The provisional date for this meeting is 18th January, in the committee suite.
- Public consultation events are proposed within the five market towns, where officers will be available to answer queries on the Local Plan. It is proposed at these sessions there would be 3 policy planners available and 1 development management officer. The following dates and locations are provisional and subject to agreement.

Town	Location	Provisional Date
Attleborough	Town Council	14 th January
Dereham	Memorial Hall	28 th January
Swaffham	Assembly Rooms	20 th January
Thetford	Guildhall	25 th January
Watton	Queens Hall	First week of Feb – No date confirmed yet

- Four public consultation drop-in events are proposed within the rural parishes. These will occur in villages in the north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west. It is proposed to investigate availability of parish halls in North Elmham, Necton, Mundford and Shropham,

In order to facilitate these events it is proposed that displays are provided. These will be prepared in conjunction with the communications team and reprographics. It is envisaged that these will be in the format of A2 boards on display stands. Whilst a number of these boards will be standard across the District (i.e. around housing target) we would ensure that information is also tailored to specific locations.

A senior member of Capita together with more junior staff and a Development Management Colleague will be present at each event. Senior Council staff will also attend events but are not part of the core staffing.

Posters will be prepared to advertise the consultation events. It is proposed that these should be displayed within suitable venues in advance of the events and may include schools, leisure centres and village halls. In addition to provision of posters to schools it is proposed to request that they include information in any newsletters they are sending out immediately prior to or during the consultation.

Local Plan Printing

It is envisaged that the Local Plan documents will be printed in house. The following Local Plan printing requirements have been identified:

- **Ward members**
1 x copy of both Part 1 and Part 2 document. It is proposed that these should be available for collection at the Members' briefing session.
- **Town and Parish Councils**
2 x copies of Local Plan Parts 1 and Part 2 documents
3 x copies of maps (sites or settlement boundary) including related text. This is found within the part 2 document.
Where there are community hall(s) in addition to a Parish Hall an additional set(s) of documents will be provided.
- **Libraries, Mobile Libraries, Council Presence Offices,**
1 x copy of both Part 1 and Part 2 Local Plan document
1 x copy of both Part 1 and Part 2 Sustainability Appraisal
- **Leisure centres, Area Partnership Offices, Healthy Living Centres, Health Centre Attleborough and potentially Aldous Park Football Club**
1 x copy of both Part 1 and Part 2 Local Plan document

Social Media

The Local Plan consultation will be promoted through the following social media channels:

- Twitter
- Facebook

Social media will be used in conjunction with press releases as detailed within the tasks list.

Date	Event/Task	Responsible	Action/Comment	Status
16 November	Write and e mail suggested text for Council and Capita's Members newsletter	Communications/ Capita	Advance notification / key messages - wording already supplied to Comms team	COMPLETE
Week commencing 23 Nov	Member/ LPWG requested early notification - Email to all Members and Parish Councils advising them of progress on the Local Plan	Capita	Advising of intention to seek permission to consult. Needs agreement of portfolio holder prior to sending out and only following Strategy Board on 20 th November.	COMPLETE 26/11/15
1 December	Press release following Cabinet endorsement of document for consultation	Communications	Action: 1 st press release sent out 1 st December following Cabinet endorsement. Put press release on website as news item and tweet link.	COMPLETE 1/12/15
Week following Cabinet	Provisional booking of rooms for public consultations in Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton	Capita	Provisional bookings have been made – Confirmation and additional events will be subject to views of OSC	In progress
3 December	Shopping List of printing and art work requirements	Capita	Needs to include print sizes, paper types, number of pages	
2 December	Town and Parish Forum	Capita	NC to provide a presentation on the Local Plan. Powerpoint presentation drafted will be circulated 27/11/15	COMPLETE 2/12/15
Week following Cabinet	Community Newsletters to go out week commencing 7 December	Capita and Communications	Capita to provide wording for article to be included within community newsletters. Communications to send out. Will include dates of consultation events.	
Week following Cabinet	Website Updates	Capita	Local Plan page to be updated with new information	

Ongoing December	Art work for events web site text and notices written and agreed	Communications and Capita	Communications team to design display boards for consultation events. Capita to provide all words and images to be included on display. Banner for Council website homepage – designed by communications Web text / letters/ notices drafted	
Ongoing December	Email Signatures	Capita and ICT (Discuss format with Comms)	Logo and Consultation dates for staff signatures. Agree wording with TM/PM and communications. Needs to be in place by beginning of January	
Ongoing December	Document printed	Council (Print Room) / Capita	330 Copies of Local Plan required for printing (parts 1 and 2) These are for Members, PC's and Presence Offices 20 Copies of each Sustainability Appraisal, Sent to presence offices only.	
17 th December	OSC consider communication strategy	Capita/Council		
Week Commencing 21 December	Drafting Statutory notification letters, Press Notice for Council sign off	Capita / Council	Formal statutory letters drafted. Funding will need to be agreed Council.	
Week Commencing 21 December	Finalise posters advertising consultation events. Printing	Capita/ Communications	Liaise with communications regarding format	

Week commencing 4 January	Article for school newsletters	Capita/ Communications	Send out articles to be included within school newsletters.	
Week commencing 4 January	Documents distributed	Capita and Print Room	Sent to all Breckland presence offices and libraries and parish councils, and other community venues listed in strategy. SA's only to presence offices.	
Week commencing 4 January	Distribute posters	Capita	Posters should be distributed to schools, leisure centres, mobile libraries, and community venues	
Week Commencing 4 January	Statutory Press Notice EDP for the w/c 4 th	Capita	Statutory notice to be placed in EDP. PM to review and agree	
Week commencing 4 January	Notification letters	Capita	Formal notification letters sent to all specific and general consultees and interested people listed on the consultation database. Letter will advise of consultation events and where the document can be viewed.	
Week commencing 4 January	Arrange Press Release to be available for the 11 th January	Communications	2 nd press release sent out 11th Jan + social media support Newsflash on website linking to consultation Twitter + Facebook Draft to be agreed by PM	

Week commencing 4 January	Website Updates – Consultation Portal	Capita	Planning Policy pages on the Breckland website will be updated to advise of consultation. On-line consultation portal will be updated and documents will be placed here for viewing and comments once consultation opens.(11 th)	
Week commencing 4 January	Contact Centre briefing	Capita and Dylan Powles Contact Centre	Prepare and distribute briefing note to the contact centre staff, advising them of the consultation, what it is about, set dates, where it can be viewed, how people can comment and who they should contact if there are further queries.	
Week commencing 4 January	Member briefing event	Capita	Member briefing on Local Plan. Date needs agreement. To be run as a double session at request of Michael Wassell – one session in the afternoon – second session early evening Member's copies of the Local Plan should be provided at this event. Need to check preferred date with Leader and Exec Member	
Week commencing 4 January onwards	Social Media programme commences and continues throughout six weeks of consultation	Communications with Capita support	Twitter and Facebook programme of information on events. Monitoring and as appropriate response to social media posts	
11 January	Banner on Council website	Communications and Jon Collison ICT	Banner on homepage should link directly to planning policy pages	
18 January 2-7pm	Parish Council event Anglia Room for First Session Norfolk and Dereham Room for display boards	Capita	Parish council event. Proposed to run as a double session. The first half of the session will be just for those PC's who are preparing a neighbourhood plan. It will go through the strategic priorities of the Local Plan and consider how neighbourhood plans	

			can add value to this. The second half of the session will be for all PC's advising them of the key implications of the Local Plan.	
Ongoing January	Press reminders	Communications	Communications to send reminders to press a week before each consultation event in the market towns.	
TBC – intended that these week occur in weeks 2 and 3 of the consultation	Market town consultation events – Drop in sessions in Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton Rural Drop-in events	Capita	Following each consultation event capita will make a note of how many people attended and the sorts of issues / questions / comments raised and send to comms as material for future press releases	
12 February	Press Release	Communications	Final press release sent week before consultation closes.	

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan for Breckland should set out a vision for growth and identify the quantity and broad location and key sites for new housing, community facilities, shops and employment.

Part of the Plan includes making sure we have identified a five-year land supply. The policies that make up the Plan will be used as the basis for making future planning decisions.

Why do we need a Local Plan?

We want Breckland to develop and thrive, so we need a Local Plan that will help us plan development across the district properly and enable growth where we need it most.

If we don't have a Local Plan, development will still happen, but decisions will be taken with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework without local people having a say on setting local policies.

Having a Local Plan gives us (Breckland Council) greater control over where new developments are built and reduces the likelihood of ad-hoc developments that might not be as beneficial to the area.

What stage are we at now?

Cabinet recommended on 1 December that the draft Local Plan documents be published, with a six-week public consultation to be launched on 11 January 2016.

The Preferred Directions Local Plan documents are available on our website [here](#)

This will be the second public consultation on the Local Plan following the Issues and Options consultation in December 2014/January 2015

The Local Plan Preferred Directions is made up of the following documents:

- **The Preferred Directions Part 1** - outlines the Council's preferred directions on strategic policies and development management policies.
- **Emerging Site Options Part 2** - identifies all the land which has been promoted by landowners and developers within the market towns and local service centre villages. Initial assessments of these sites has taken place but no preferred options have yet been chosen – this will be part of the next stage in the preparation of the Local Plan.
- **The Sustainability Appraisal Part 1** - shows how we have considered the potential **social, environmental and economic effects** of the Preferred Directions' policies on the draft plan.
- **Interim Sustainability Appraisal Part 2** - for emerging sites. Shows how we have considered the potential **social, environmental and economic effects** of the **Emerging Site Options** on the draft plan.

What are the timescales for consulting on and agreeing the Local Plan?

Following the preferred directions consultation, which begins on 11 January 2016, there will be further opportunities for the public to comments, through the:

- **Pre-submission publication** – Before we submit our draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for their approval, we will publish this document for six weeks, giving the public and other stakeholders a final chance to let us know if they think our plan is technically and legally sound.

- **Public examination** of the document – When we submit our plan to the Planning Inspectorate, there is a chance for individuals or organisations to have their views heard at the examination.

These stages are planned to take place in 2016. The pre-submission publication is planned to take place in the summer with submission to the Planning Inspectorate during the autumn. It is intended that the document will be formally adopted at the end of the year subject to the Planning Inspectorate's timing of the Public Examination.

Why do we want people to have their say on the Local Plan?

The Local Plan is still draft, which means nothing has yet been decided and all the sites put forward remain options – so this is the time for residents, businesses and community groups to have their say on plans that will shape the future growth of their community and the district.

By taking part in our consultation, residents, businesses and organisations can give feedback on proposals which – combined with other sources of evidence like studies on local need for housing, employment, retail and infrastructure studies – will help shape the final document.

How can I find out more about the Local Plan

The Preferred Directions Local Plan documents are available on our website [here](#)
Hard copies of the Preferred Directions Local Plan documents are available to view at:

- Libraries
- Presence Offices
- Mobile Libraries

How can you have your say?

Comments need to be submitted to the Council between 11 January and 22 February 2016.

You can submit comments:

- **Online** – via our consultation portal: <http://consult.breckland.gov.uk/portal>
- **By email** – with the subject heading 'Local Plan Consultation' to planningpolicyteam@breckland.gov.uk
- **By post** – marked 'Local Plan Consultation', to Planning Policy Team, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE

We are also holding a series of public drop-in sessions where you can find out more about the Local Plan. Details to be confirmed.

How does the Local Plan fit with neighbourhood plans?

Neighbourhood Plans can add value to – and need to conform with – the strategic priorities of the district's Local Plan, by providing additional local detail to guide development in their areas.

So this is a good time for communities to identify areas where they wish to develop suitable neighbourhood plan policies and review how best to align these to the overarching Local Plan.

Until the Local Plan is agreed, how are planning decisions being made?

Until the new Local Plan is adopted in 2016, the current suite of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents remain as adopted policy. Planning applications are determined in accordance with the LDF, National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.