



A plan-making programme for Central Bedfordshire

2015

(Local Development Scheme for Central
Bedfordshire)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires each local planning authority to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which is essentially a work programme for the preparation of new planning policy documents. This plan-making Programme represents the LDS for Central Bedfordshire.
- 1.2. This document covers the whole administrative area of Central Bedfordshire. It is the starting point for the community and other stakeholders in order to find out which planning policy documents the Council intends to produce, and the timescale for their preparation.

2. About the area

- 2.1. Central Bedfordshire is a varied area containing a mixture of rural countryside, attractive villages, and small to medium sized towns. It is well connected, being traversed by the M1, A1, A5 and A6 as well as several railways. London Luton Airport is also in close proximity.
- 2.2. Much of the rural area is of high landscape and biodiversity value with extensive tracts of high-grade agricultural land. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers part of the area while much land in the south of Central Bedfordshire outside of the main towns and villages is designated as Green Belt.

3. Policy Framework and the requirement for a new Plan-making Programme

- 3.1. Following the formation of Central Bedfordshire Council as a unitary authority in April 2009, three separate Local Development Frameworks were progressed; one covering the area formerly administered by Mid Beds District Council and one covering Luton and the area formerly administered by South Beds District Council and one for minerals and waste development covering the whole of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton Borough.
- 3.2. The withdrawal of the joint Luton and South Bedfordshire Core Strategy in 2011 meant that the opportunity has arisen to consolidate two of the separate frameworks into one. In the interim, the Development Plan for the former Mid Beds area will consist of the existing adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and Site Allocations DPD. For the former South Beds area, it will consist of the saved Structure Plan and Local Plan policies. It will also consist of the Adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Jan 2014) and the remaining Saved Policies of the M&W Local Plan 2005.

- 3.3. The Localism Act 2011 has changed the nature and process of planning policy. It introduces a change in terminology from Local Development Framework to Local Plan and introduces the new system of Neighbourhood Planning.
- 3.4. In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which replaces almost all existing national planning policy and guidance. The principles of the Local Development Framework (LDF) system remain, but the emphasis in the NPPF is now on each local planning authority (LPA) producing an up to date Local Plan for its area. This can comprise existing adopted development plan documents under the LDF system, or can involve the production of new Local Plan documents, depending on the local context. Existing development plan documents can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances.
- 3.5. The NPPF requires Local Plan policies to be up to date to ensure that local planning authorities are well placed in relation to the new presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where policies are out of date or silent on an issue, it may be difficult for the council to use its planning powers to secure the best outcome from proposed development schemes. The Council's Development Strategy will provide such an up to date Local Plan for the area.
- 3.6. The procedure for preparation and review of Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

4. Project Management

- 4.1. In order to ensure that the preparation of policy documents is undertaken in a focussed and coherent manner, a project management approach is being taken to the coordination of the work.
- 4.2. The Gantt Chart at Figure 1 identifies how Local Plan documents will be prepared and when key milestones are expected to be met. Following the Planning Act 2008, it is no longer necessary to include details of proposed Supplementary Planning Documents and other planning documents within an LDS, so only Local Plans are shown in Figure 1.
- 4.3. The project management approach enables the undertaking of clear and accurate monitoring which will inform the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This process will feed into the regular review of the Plan-making Programme and ensure that it continues to be relevant and up-to-date.

5. Proposed Local Plan Documents

- 5.1. This Programme focuses solely on the preparation of three Local Plan documents: the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy Local Plan, the Allocations Local Plan and the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Table 1: Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy

Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy	
Role and content	To set out the vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for the area up to 2031 and the policies for achieving the strategic vision. This will entail an assessment of general development needs together with the consideration of any necessary Green Belt reviews. It will also incorporate a review of the remaining saved policies from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan as they relate to the Central Bedfordshire area. The identification of strategic-scale development sites will also be considered.
Status	Local Plan
Chain of conformity	General conformity with national planning guidance
Geographic coverage	The entire administrative area of Central Bedfordshire
Projected timetable and milestones	
Commencement (including SA Scoping Report)	September 2011
Evidence Gathering	October 2011 – April 2012
Formal consultation (Regulation 18)	May – June 2012
Consideration of consultation responses and produce revised Plan	July – November 2012
Publication stage (Regulation 19)	December 2012 – February 2013 June – August 2014
Submission to Secretary of State	October 2014
Examination Hearings	February/March 2015
Receipt of Draft Inspector's Report	May 2015*
Adoption	July 2015*
Arrangements for production	
Management arrangements	Decisions will be taken by Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive. Day to day management of process by Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy.
Resources required	Officers from the Development Planning team with input as necessary from other teams and departments. Consultants may be used for specific aspects of the work.
Stakeholder and Community Involvement	The SCI sets out the standard mechanisms for community involvement. This Local Plan will be prepared in light of the views of the community and other stakeholders
Monitoring and review mechanisms	Monitored on an annual basis as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

* If consultation on modifications is required, this may add 2-3 months to the timetable after the Examination hearings

Table 2: Central Bedfordshire Local Plan: Allocations Plan

Allocations Local Plan	
Role and content	To review boundaries such as Green Belt, Settlement Envelopes etc, allocate non-strategic sites for development across a range of uses for the period up to 2031 and to provide standards for development
Status	Local Plan
Chain of conformity	General conformity with national planning guidance
Geographic coverage	The entire administrative area of Central Bedfordshire
Projected timetable and milestones	
Commencement (including SA Scoping Report)	September 2014
Scoping and evidence gathering	September 2014 – September 2015
Formal consultation (Regulation 18)	October - November 2015
Consideration of consultation responses and produce revised Plan	December 2015 – April 2016
Publication stage (Regulation 19)	May – June 2016
Submission to Secretary of State	September 2016
Examination Hearings	January 2017
Receipt of Draft Inspector's Report	April 2017
Adoption	July 2017
Arrangements for production	
Management arrangements	Decisions will be taken by CBC Executive. Day to day management of process by Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy.
Resources required	Officers from the Development Planning team with input as necessary from other teams and departments. Consultants may be used some aspects of work.
Stakeholder and Community Involvement	The SCI sets out the standard mechanisms for community involvement. This Local Plan will be prepared in light of the views of the community and other stakeholders.
Monitoring and review mechanisms	Monitored on an annual basis as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

Table 3: Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan	
Role and content	To identify the Councils approach to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches and sites, including the allocation of new sites if required.
Status	Local Plan
Chain of conformity	General conformity national planning guidance
Geographic coverage	The entire administrative area of Central Bedfordshire

Projected timetable and milestones	
Commencement (including SA Scoping Report)	January 2012
Evidence Gathering	June-July 2015
Formal consultation (Regulation 18)	October - November 2015
Consideration of consultation responses and produce revised Plan	December 2015 – July 2016
Publication stage (Regulation 19)	September-October 2016
Submission to Secretary of State	June 2017
Examination Hearings	October 2017
Receipt of Draft Inspector's Report	December 2017
Adoption	February 2018
Arrangements for production	
Management arrangements	Decisions will be taken by CBC Executive. Day to day management of process by Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy.
Resources required	Officers from the Development Planning team with input as necessary from other teams and departments. Consultants may be used for some aspects of work.
Stakeholder and Community Involvement	The SCI sets out the standard mechanisms for community involvement. This Local Plan will be prepared in light of the views of the community and other stakeholders.
Monitoring and review mechanisms	Monitored on an annual basis as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

- 5.2. In preparing these policy documents, the Council will have regard to a number of different strategies. These include the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and others covering topic areas such as education, health, social inclusion, waste, biodiversity, recycling and environmental protection, local housing strategies and transport plans.
- 5.3. In order to inform the preparation of policy documents, the Council has undertaken a large number of background technical studies. These will be refreshed and updated periodically as necessary.
- 5.4. The Council will seek to work closely with neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Co-operate on the preparation of policy documents. Technical studies maybe undertaken jointly where this is deemed to be appropriate.

6. Other Documents

6.1. Other documents will be published to complement and add detail to the Local plan documents the table below sets out a range of documents, but is not exhaustive.

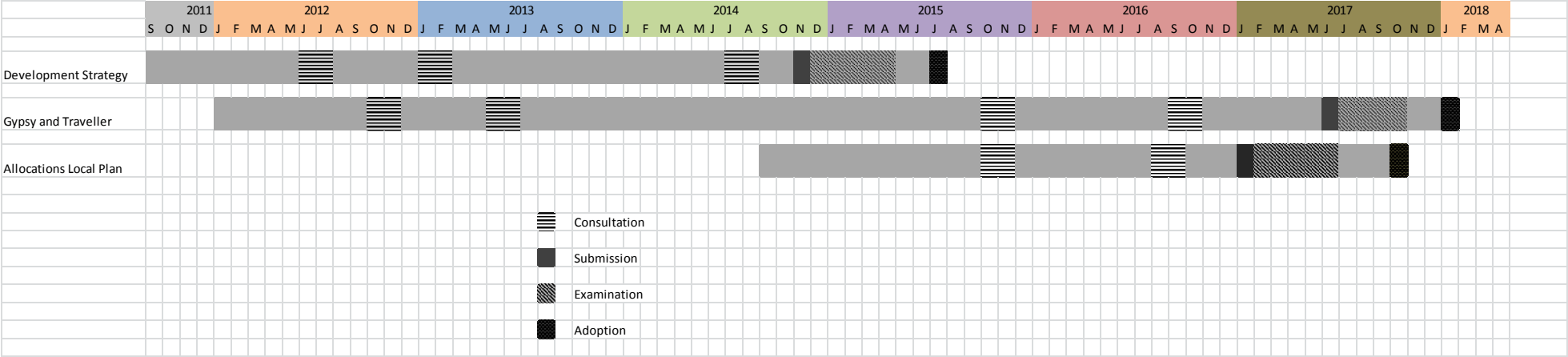
Table 4: Other documents

Document	Purpose	Status
Policies Map	To illustrate geographically the adopted policies and proposals within adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.	A new Policies Map will be published every time a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan is adopted.
Statement of Community Involvement	This document sets out the standards and approach to involving the community and stakeholders in the production of policy documents and in the Development Management process.	The current SCI was adopted in October 2012.
Annual Monitoring Report	To assess progress in preparing planning documents and monitor progress in planning policies, housing, employment and other development.	Each Monitoring Report covers the period from April to March and will be published each year.
Design for Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development	A document which gives detailed design principles to ensure that all development in the area is of high quality in the broadest sense.	An adopted SPD Guide is in place.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule	To set out the standard levy which the local authority will be applying to some developments and to define the infrastructure projects, which it is intended to fund.	

Planning Obligations Strategy	To set out the requirements and direct the allocation and spending of money raised through development.	A Supplementary Planning Document for each of the former districts, Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire has been adopted. A new SPD will be prepared in conjunction with CIL.
Neighbourhood Plans	Parish and Town Councils can opt to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order to provide for development in their parish.	If a Neighbourhood Plan is successful at Examination and passes a local referendum, CBC will adopt the document as part of the development plan.
Masterplans, Development Briefs and Framework Plans	To provide more details for the guidance of development on allocated sites.	To be produced, usually by the developer, as sites begin to come forward.
Housing Supplementary Planning Document	To set out the Council's position on type and tenure of housing.	SPD
Environmental Enhancement Strategy	To provide a cohesive guide to the approach the Council wishes to take on environmental matters through a compendium of existing and new documents and guidance. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance for Renewables, Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs) and any other guides relating to the environment. - Refreshed Landscape Character Assessment. - Studies linking environment to health and economic benefits. - Resource efficiency (energy and water) studies and toolkits. 	Will be produced as a series of documents. Some of the associated documents will hold status as being endorsed as guidance to inform planning decisions and some as SPD.

	- Renewables capacity study.	
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Figure 1: Timeline for plan preparation



7. Risk Assessment

7.1. An analysis has been completed of the principal tasks associated with undertaking the preparation of planning policy documents. These risks, listed in Table 5 below, have been taken into consideration in devising this Programme and will be closely monitored.

Table 5: Key risks and mitigation measures

Key Risks/Owner	Action to Mitigate Risk and Comments	Risk Level
Challenging time-scales for preparing policy documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Careful project management and regular review If necessary, adjustment of Programme through annual review. Prioritisation of other work <p>Uncertainty factors remain – e.g. the level of representations submitted on documents, time taken in public examination and reporting time, or if new issues arise requiring other documents to be prepared or the diversion of staff. Other factors identified in this assessment may also lead to delay to the timescales. There is no real slack in the timetable.</p>	Medium
Premature planning applications for sites resulting in staff being redeployed to deal with time-consuming appeals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring and review of progress with a view to delivery on schedule If necessary, allocate relevant officer(s) and/or appeals consultants 	High
Too few staff, staff turnover, level of experience of staff and strong reliance on consultants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scope for flexible use of staff from other teams is limited Recruit additional staff <p>Current difficulties in recruiting experienced staff</p>	Medium
Previously developed sites not being redeveloped because of lack of investment in essential infrastructure	<p>Continue to exert pressure on government, Highways Agency and other bodies to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place and other blockages to development are removed to facilitate delivery.</p> <p>Current market downturn affects all development in the short term.</p>	High
Financial resources	Regular budget monitoring.	Medium

Capacity of Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and other agencies to support the preparation of documents	Provide early warning to PINS and other agencies of timescales and requirements and develop good relationships with agencies through consultation.	Medium
Ensuring 'Soundness' of documents	Through preparing a good evidence base, good dialogue with the community/stakeholders in line with the SCI, regular liaison with Counsel and CLG.	Low
Legal Challenge	Through ensuring preparation of 'sound' documents.	Low

- 7.2. Plan-making bodies must prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to assess their implementation of the plan-making, and the extent to which plan policies are being achieved. Such review will assess progress against targets and milestones in the Programme, with appropriate action being taken in the light of findings.
- 7.3. Changes to the Plan-making Programme will be reported in the AMR with complete revisions to the Programme only made where necessary.

Glossary

Development Plan: the Local Plan Documents together with any adopted Neighbourhood Plans constitute the statutory development plan.

Local Development Framework (LDF): a portfolio of documents – it consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports.

Local Plan: The formal document the set out the planning policy in an area. May be more than one volume.

Development Plan Documents (DPD): a name given to a range of policy plans that are subject to independent examination, and are shown geographically on an adopted Proposals Map (discussed below).

Site Allocations: allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or developments to be contained in Local Plan documents. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

Development Management Policies: these constitute a suite of criteria-based policies which are required to ensure that all development within an area meets the spatial vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy. They may be included in any Local Plan or form a standalone document.

Policies Map: the adopted policies map illustrates on a base map at a registered scale all the policies contained in Local Plan documents, together with any saved policies. It must be revised as each new Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, and it should always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area. Proposals for changes to the adopted policies map accompany submitted local plan documents in the form of a submission policies map.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in Local Plan documents or a saved policy. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): A public report to be produced by local authorities to assess their progress on implementation of the LDS and the effectiveness of the Local Plans in terms of policy achievement.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Act to be undertaken for all Local Plans

This process incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

Examination: a local planning authority must submit a Local Plan for independent examination to the Secretary of State, publish a notice and invite representations, to be made within a specified period of at least six weeks.

Neighbourhood Planning: In CBC the bodies who can produce neighbourhood plans are Town and Parish Councils. There are two types of documents that can be produced. Neighbourhood Plans which may allocate land for development and/or include policies against which planning applications are judged and Neighbourhood Development Orders which can grant planning permission for a specific type of development.