

**REPORT TO THE LOCAL PLAN EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL MEETING OF  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

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**Meeting:** Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel  
**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
**Subject:** Selected Options Assessment Methodology  
**Report of:** Local Plan Project Manager  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Jo Brodrick  
**Status:** For information and comment  
**Relevant Ward(s):** All

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**1** Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek the Panel's comments on the proposed methodology for the assessment and refinement of the four Selected Options for housing and employment development, in order to enable a choice of the preferred option to be included in the pre-submission Draft Local Plan.

**2** Recommendation:

- 2.1 **To note and comment on the proposed methodology for the assessment of the Selected Options as set out in paragraphs 4.4. to 4.11 and Appendices A and B of this report.**

**3** Summary of Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the Local Plan meets national and local planning objectives, and is based on a robust analysis in order to meet the tests of soundness at Examination.
- 3.3 To enable a choice to be made of the preferred option to be included in the pre-submission Draft Local Plan.

**4** Key Facts

- 4.1 The Executive at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 agreed for further assessment of the following Selected Options for accommodating future development needs in Harborough District to 2031:

- Option 2: Core Strategy Distribution;
- Option 5: Kibworth SDA (North East proposal only);
- Option 6: Lutterworth SDA; and
- a variation of Option 4: Scraftoft / Thurnby, but based on a minimum of 1,200 dwellings in the vicinity of Scraftoft North.

4.2 It also agreed that these Selected Options be subject to further tests of land availability, infrastructure requirements, transport impact, flood risk, viability, landscape impact, environmental sensitivity / mitigation and sustainability before being reported back with a recommendation for a single preferred option. It further agreed that this can be one of the options, or a combination of options, or some other hybrid solution based on them.

4.3 This preferred option will provide the strategy for distributing housing and general employment development through the Local Plan across the District during the plan period. This preferred distribution strategy will underpin the Local Plan and form the basis for a number of other policies. It will also inform and underpin preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), an important element of the Local Plan. Work on assessing these options is already under way, and this report outlines how it is proposed to bring this work together in order to reach a robust, evidence-based decision on the preferred option.

4.4 The selected options being assessed are:

**OPTION 2: CORE STRATEGY DISTRIBUTION** - Continue to use the current (Core Strategy) distribution strategy.

**OPTION 5: KIBWORTH SDA** – the Kibworth Strategic Development Area proposal for North East Kibworth which proposes a by-pass around the village, plus reduced growth in other parts of the District.

**OPTION 6: LUTTERWORTH SDA** - Lutterworth Strategic Development Area and reduced growth in other parts of the District.

a variation of **OPTION 4: Scraftoft / Thurnby**, but based on a minimum of 1,200 dwellings in the vicinity of **SCRAFTOFT NORTH**.

### **Proposed Methodology for Selected Options Assessment**

4.5 The methodology proposed builds on that which was used to reduce the original 9 Options for development down to 4, but it goes into more depth in several aspects and gives additional weight to site-specific matters which would have been difficult to consider for the original 9 options.

4.6 The methodology for assessing the Selected Options takes into account the following evidence which has been obtained since May or which is currently being obtained:

- **Developability assessment** – ‘developer surgeries’ with each of the potential Strategic Development Area (SDA) promoters to explore potential constraints to development, including land ownership, availability of utilities, transport infrastructure, education and social infrastructure and the cost of new infrastructure provision.
- **Landscape assessment** – two studies: one looking at the landscape sensitivity and capacity for development in landscape terms of the Scruptoft North area and other fields in Scruptoft not previously assessed; and the other enabling a comparison between the 3 potential SDAs of the landscape impacts on a robust and consistent basis.
- **Sustainability appraisal** – assessing each of the 4 selected options against the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) objectives and taking into account the need for the residential ‘flexibility allowance’ of 550 dwellings per annum. This builds on the detailed settlement by settlement analysis included in the interim SA produced in September 2015, updating this to take account of the potential distribution of housing development in each of the four Selected Options.
- **Viability assessment** of the potential Scruptoft North scheme, taking into account residential values in this area, especially in new build developments nearby, together with the likely infrastructure costs of the scheme. In addition consultants will undertake a review of the relative viability of the potential SDAs at Kibworth and Lutterworth and of Option 2 (Core Strategy), based on updated development costs information for each SDA.
- **Land availability**- detailed assessment of the ability of each option to meet housing requirements, not just overall, but also on a settlement by settlement basis while maintaining a 5 year land supply over the whole plan period across the district. This includes:
  - The results of final the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA),
  - undertaking an assessment of housing trajectories over the plan period,
  - identification of potential strategic sites below SDA level for each selected option (based on a site by site assessment against the draft settlement development policy in the Options Consultation Paper), and
  - a residential windfall sites analysis.
- **Transport studies** as follows:
  - Selected Options Transport Assessment by Jacobs (on behalf of HDC and in partnership with Leicestershire County Council);
  - South East Leicester Transport Study by Edwards and Edwards (on behalf of HDC and Oadby and Wigston BC, in partnership with Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council);
  - The Market Harborough Transportation Strategy (which will also feed into the Jacobs study).

These studies are in addition to the county-wide transport assessment (also done by Jacobs), undertaken in 2014 and the Strategic Transport Assessment considered by this Panel at its meetings in December 2015 and February 2016.

- 4.7 In addition use will be made of the analysis undertaken for the 9 options assessment in relation to
- *NPPF Core Principles*– using an assessment of each Option against each core principle
  - *Local Plan Objectives*– using an assessment of each Option against each Objective.

More detail on what these are is set out for ease of reference in Appendix A to this report.

- 4.8 These various factors are combined and set out in the table at Appendix B and it is this that will form the framework for assessment.

- 4.9 Each Option will be assessed against each of the 12 combined factors listed in Appendix B (1<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup> column), namely:

- Transport impacts and benefits
- Housing land availability
- Infrastructure constraints and costs
- Viability
- Flood risk
- Landscape capacity
- Natural environment
- Climate change
- Housing and economy
- Health and Well-being
- Local Plan Objectives
- NPPF Principles

- 4.10 The outcome for each factor will be a ‘traffic light’ score against each option, based on an assessment of the results of the various evidence items listed in the third column of the table in Appendix B. However in this case, in order to arrive at a clear and robust preferred option, it is proposed that the colours will indicate comparative performance as follows:

**Red:** the option performs worst in relation to this factor.

**Amber:** the option performs second worst in relation to this factor.

**Light green:** the option performs second best in relation to this factor.

**Dark green:** the option performs best in relation to this factor.

- 4.11 The preferred spatial option derived from this process would be based on that (or those) that have the highest number of green or light green scores. In addition a numerical score could be given, but this would need to be done by ‘category’ (i.e. transport, develop-ability, environmental, socio-economic and planning principles) in order to give each of these equal weight. In the event of

two or more options scoring equally, or nearly so, then consideration could be given to a hybrid solution, providing this would not lead to problems of housing delivery soon after plan adoption. Where a preferred option also had one or more red scores, then the Council would have to be satisfied that, in relation to that factor, there are clear and sufficient proposals for mitigation that would need to be incorporated into the policy for the site or sites concerned.

## 5 Legal Issues

- 5.1 It is necessary to pursue an objective and robust approach to option assessment as set out in this report to ensure the Local Plan is capable of being found sound at Examination.

## 6 Resource Issues

- 6.1 The costs of the additional evidence required for the assessment can be met from within the overall budget available to the Strategic Planning Team for spatial planning.

## 7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

- 7.1 The Local Plan will support the sustainable provision of new homes and jobs and assist the Council in meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Housing Act 2004.

## 8. Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 A timely decision on a preferred option for housing and employment development will help avoid delay to the Local Plan preparation/adoption process with consequent beneficial effect on the following Corporate Risks:
- 8.2 CR 08 Risk of challengeable planning decisions being taken relating to planning applications for residential development / Risk of planning appeals being upheld relating to residential planning applications.
- 8.3 CR 10 Local Plan Risks: lack of a sound Local Plan may lead to sporadic development and the inability to defend appeals.

## 9 Consultation

- 9.1 Consultation has taken place with the Planning and Regeneration Portfolio holder.

## 10. Options

### 10.1 Not to inform Members of the Methodology for Assessing the Selected Options

- 10.2 In the interests of transparency and ownership of the assessment process, this is not considered to be the most appropriate option.

### 10.5 Not to assess the 4 Options

- 10.6 The 4 Options need to be narrowed down into a preferred option, which will form the basis of the Local Plan. This selection process must stand up to

scrutiny by the future Local Plan Planning Inspector, all stakeholders and objectors during the Examination process. As such, the process needs to be robust, evidence-based, and objective and lead to the most sustainable and appropriate spatial option for the District.

11 Background Papers

[A New Local Plan for Harborough: Options Consultation Paper- September 2015](#)

[Harborough Local Plan: Options Consultation Sustainability Appraisal: Interim Report – September 2015](#)

**Previous report(s):** [Report to Executive 9th May 2016: Local Plan Options Assessment and Selection](#)

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N**  
**Ward Members Notified: N**

**Appendices:**

- A. Summary of NPPF Core Principles and Local Plan Objectives**
- B. Framework for Assessment of Selected Options**

## APPENDIX A: Summary of NPPF Core Principles and Local Plan Objectives

### ***NPPF Core Principles***

This factor will assess the options against the 12 Core Planning Principles in the NPPF. The principles can be summarised as:

- Plan-led, allowing predictable and efficient planning decisions.
- A creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places.
- Proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development, meeting housing, business and infrastructure needs, and responding positively to growth opportunities.
- High quality design and good amenity for current and future occupiers.
- Use of renewable resources and energy, supporting transition to low carbon future and taking account of flood risk and climate change.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, reducing pollution and allocating land of lesser environmental value for development.
- Encouraging use of previously developed land.
- Promoting mixed use developments.
- Conserving heritage assets.
- Focussing significant developments to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- Supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing and delivering community and cultural services.

### **3) *Local Plan Objectives***

This will assess the options against the Objectives in the Local Plan, as amended in response to the consultation responses. They can be summarised as:

- Housing – a range of types, tenures and sizes to meet needs
- Employment – promoting sustainable growth and reducing commuting
- Sustainable location of development
- Delivering necessary infrastructure
- Protection of local services
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Safeguarding and enhancing the built environment and heritage assets
- Supporting and enhancing town and village centres
- Ensuring high quality and sustainable design
- Sustainable transport, reducing car use and traffic impacts
- Reducing flood risk and building resilience
- Reducing the environmental impact of development
- Promoting tourism, cultural activities and countryside access
- Encouraging and supporting neighbourhood planning.

## APPENDIX B: Framework for Assessment of Selected Options

Assessment Factors		Evidence Base	Option 2: Core Strategy	Option 4 (variant): Scraptoft N	Option 5: Kibworth NE	Option 6: Lutter- worth E
Transport impacts and benefits		Transport Assessment of Selected Options (Jacobs) SE Leicester Transport Study Market Harborough Transport Study Scraptoft North access- LCC & City comments Lutterworth East LLITM (Kibworth NE LLITM if available) IDP information on transport provision				
Deliver- ability Factors	Housing land availability	SHLAA Housing trajectories Potential allocation sites assessment Housing windfall analysis				
	Infrastructure constraints and costs	SDA delivery surgeries – Peter Brett Associates’ feedback IDP information on utilities provision				
	Viability	Interim Viability Assessment Interim Viability Addendum for Scraptoft North				
Environ- mental Factors	Flood risk	Lutterworth Flood Zone 2 & 3 mitigation SA assessment of effects on resilience to climate change				
	Landscape capacity	Landscape Capacity Assessment Addendum for Scraptoft/ Thurnby Comparative landscape assessment for SDAs Sustainability Assessment (SA) assessment of effects on built and natural heritage				
	Natural environment	Misterton Marshes SSSI mitigation plan Scraptoft Local Nature Reserve biodiversity assessment				



		SA assessment of effects on natural environment				
	Climate change	SA assessment of effects on resource use				
Socio-Economic Factors	Housing and economy	SA assessment of effects on housing and economy				
	Health and Well-being	SA assessment of effects on health and well being IDP information on social infrastructure provision Open space strategy Air quality forecasts from transport assessments				
Planning Principles	Local Plan Objectives	Assessment against factors in Appendix A above				
	NPPF Principles	Assessment against factors in Appendix A above				

