

Proposed Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Local Plan programme Appendix 2: Key Stages of the Joint Local plan

Stage One – Developing a proportionate evidence base

In accordance with paragraph 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework the preparation of the joint Local Plan will involve gathering relevant up-to-date evidence about the social, environmental and economic characteristics and prospects of the plan area. The amount of evidence will be kept in proportion, and where possible the evidence, which the adopted Core Spatial Strategy is based on, will be updated, but a number of new commissions involving expert consultants will be required. It is estimated that the evidence gathering will take over two years to complete.

The timing of stage 3 - Issues and Strategic Options, reflects the need to have key pieces of evidence in place before a draft Issues and Options paper can be prepared and approved for consultation purposes. Key priorities in the first 12 months involve commissioning: a new strategic housing market assessment; a new employment land review; and a refreshed retail and leisure study. A gypsy and travellers needs assessment will also be commissioned in the first 12 months although this will not be complete until 2015.

This evidence is important to ensure that the strategies for housing and employment and other uses are integrated and take full account of relevant market and economic signals.

Stage Two – Statement of Community involvement

See section 5.0 of the Cabinet report

Stage Three - Issues and Strategic Options

This stage serves a vital role in communicating the critical strategic issues and challenges facing both local planning authority areas in terms of accommodating the level of growth required to meet local needs for housing, employment and retailing. The key issues and needs to be addressed will be identified through the evidence base.

The evidence is then used to set the context for various strategic choices to address the identified issues and needs. All proposals need to be aspirational but realistic.

Representations on a range of growth scenarios together with the implications of each scenario will be invited to help identify a set of agreed strategic priorities e.g. in relation to housing, jobs, retail, leisure and infrastructure.

The timescale, to start the public consultation on the Issues and Strategic Options reflects the fact that the evidence required to begin the process will evolve over a twelve month period.

The Statement of Community Involvement will identify who will be invited to participate at this stage, but it will necessarily involve key stakeholders so that the process of aligning public and private investment can begin at an early stage.

Stage Four – Draft Local Plan

At this stage representations are invited on draft site allocations and broad locations for development, as well as, a set of criteria based policies relating to specific site allocations and suite of generic development management policies. The policies will be used in the day-to-day decision making on planning applications, giving clear

guidance on what will or will not be permitted and where. Full Council approval will be required to enable the Plan to be published for consultation purposes.

This stage is important to provide an early opportunity for the business community, local residents and local organisations to shape the content of the Plan.

The feedback from the consultation will be used to prepare the Final Draft Local Plan for Full Council approval (by each Council) unless further public consultation is considered necessary.

Stage Five – Final Draft Plan

The fourth stage of the process is the publication of the Final Draft Plan. This is the first statutory stage and it is at this point in the process and all the subsequent stages that the consultation focuses on four statutory tests i.e. has the Plan been positively prepared, is it justified, will it be effective and is it consistent with national policy, as well as 'legal' and procedural matters.

The draft Local Plan programme assumes it will be possible to proceed to the next stage 'Submission' unless substantive amendments are required, necessitating the approval of each respective Councils' Full Council and potentially a further stage of public consultation.

Stage Six - Submission

The Final Draft Plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination together with any representations made at stage five on matters of soundness and legal compliance.

Stage Seven - Examination

A Planning Inspector appointed by the Government will carry out a public examination of the Plan. This can provide further opportunities for those who have made representations at stage five to participate in the public hearing sessions that will be arranged

Stage Eight - Adoption

It is not until stage eight that the process will be finally concluded. This is when the report on the Planning Inspector's findings and recommendations will be submitted to each respective authority's Full Council and decisions are made on whether to adopt the Final Plan. The length of time allowed for adoption on the attached programme reflects the possible need to make major modifications to the Local Plan following the direction of the Planning Inspector and the need to then subject any such modifications to a period of consultation. If no such modifications are required the Local Plan could potentially be in place 3- 4 months earlier.