



## Report

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Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

To: Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Report Title: Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035 Update

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Cllr Nigel Ball	All	No

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report and accompanying presentation (Appendix 1) provides an update to Members of the Panel on the Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035 which was adopted by Full Council in September 2021. As part of the approvals process for the draft Local Plan in 2019, it was recommended by Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee that future Annual Monitoring Reports, which amongst other things monitor the performance and implementation of the Local Plan, should be considered at future meetings of the Committee. This is the first such covering report and, alongside the presentation, provides members of the Regeneration & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel some of the key headlines in relation to these policy areas of the Local Plan. The paper and presentation also provides the Panel with an update on what is happening with national planning reforms, with a particular focus on those which, if taken forward in due course, will impact on the local plan-making process.

### EXEMPT REPORT

2. Not exempt

### RECOMMENDATIONS

3. It is recommended that Members of the Regeneration & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel (R&HO&SP) note the contents of this update paper and accompanying presentation.



## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

4. The Local Plan ensures we are planning for enough new homes and jobs for both the current and future citizens of Doncaster and provide certainty for where investment and development is being planned over the next 15 or so years. As well as the quantity of development, the Local Plan ensures it is the right sort of development in the most appropriate locations to meet the housing and economic growth needs of the City in a sustainable manner, including helping to provide a much needed supply of new affordable homes. Policies ensure that we not only see the development that is required, but that it is also of a sufficiently high quality and help raise the level of design across Doncaster to the benefit of everybody. The Local Plan helps bring forward much-needed physical, social and green infrastructure to help improve the quality of lives further for our communities through a better-connected City that helps foster healthier lifestyles. Protection is provided to our much-valued greenspaces, biodiversity and heritage assets, countryside and natural environment. Policies seek to help make the City more resilient in the future from the challenges presented by climate change, which has the potential to impact negatively on all of our citizens. The Plan also ensures there is a sufficient supply of minerals resources to support development growth and infrastructure projects.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **LOCAL PLAN RECAP**

5. The Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035 forms part of the Development Plan for the whole City of Doncaster administrative area and contains both strategic and detailed planning policies and proposals to guide the future of development over the plan period to 2035. It is used to determine all planning applications against, alongside national planning policy, and any Neighbourhood Plans that have been prepared in line with the Localism Act, plus any other material planning considerations. It was adopted via resolution of Full Council on 23 September 2021 and this replaced the two previous Development Plan documents, being the Unitary Development Plan (1998 saved policies and supporting Policies Maps) and Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2012). Any Neighbourhood Plans being prepared need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan.
6. The Local Plan deals with the full range of planning policy themes (climate change, housing, employment, retail, design, transport, community facilities, countryside, biodiversity, heritage, minerals etc.) with the exception of waste which is covered via the existing and separate Joint Waste Development Plan Document (2012). More specifically, the Local Plan includes:
  - a portrait of the City (then “Borough”) as it is now, its development needs and challenges, a vision of what it could be like in the future; and a set of objectives to achieve this;
  - a list of development sites (known as “allocations”) for new housing, employment, minerals and other development to meet the City’s needs; and,
  - a set of strategic and detailed policies that will guide development and

investment decisions across the City and be the starting point for decisions on future planning applications.

7. Although not strictly part of the development plan, a supporting interactive Policies Map is also available. This shows the location of the Local Plan's development site allocations and defines the boundaries of towns and villages, existing residential and employment areas, Town and District Centres, Green Belt and other Countryside, green spaces, conservation areas, wildlife sites, areas for mineral extraction, and so on. Some of these layers are shown for information purposes as opposed to the Local Plan actually making decisions on them.
8. As part of the Council's internal approvals process for approving the Publication version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) in July 2019, a session with the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) was held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to consider the draft Local Plan. A number of recommendations were made by the Chair in the subsequent letter to the Executive, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019, following that meeting including recommendation number 8 with respect to monitoring:

***“Recommendation 6: That the Annual Monitoring Report be presented to Overview and Scrutiny to provide an opportunity for Members to consider the performance and effectiveness of the Local Plan and the extent to which it continues to meet the Borough's needs and objectives.***

*OSMC received examples of how the Plan had taken account of some of the Borough's key challenges e.g. balancing physical growth against environmental impacts, the need for effective transport and accessibility across the Borough to deliver jobs for our communities, etc. It also recognised the Plan was flexible and responsive to significant changes and could be reviewed to take account of these.*

*To ensure elected Members remain engaged and have the opportunity to review how the Local Plan continues to meet the needs of the Borough, the Committee suggested the Annual Monitoring Report be considered at a future OSMC meeting.”*

9. This report and, the accompanying presentation at Appendix 1, provides this update based on 2 years' worth of monitoring the Local Plan through the Annual Monitoring Reports 2021 & 2022, and other monitoring that is undertaken with a specific focus on regeneration and housing given the focus of this Panel. Wider indicators are of course reported on for other policy areas of the Local Plan, such as the natural environment or health and well-being.

## **LOCAL PLAN POST ADOPTION & IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE**

10. Since the Local Plan was adopted in September 2021 a significant amount of work has been undertaken not just on monitoring the Local Plan, but putting in place the wider Planning guidance framework to support and help with the application of the policies in the Plan, such as Supplementary Planning Documents. Other areas that the Team have led on include Masterplanning and setting up the first Local Heritage List. The supporting presentation provides a summary and chronology of some of these main work streams and more information will be provided to the Panel

through the discussion.

## **KEY MONITORING INDICATORS FOR REGENERATION & HOUSING**

11. Key headlines from the indicators around the Panel's area of interest have been extracted from the Council's Annual Monitoring Reports and other sources of monitoring information and summarised in the supporting presentation for discussion at the Panel. As such, focus is on the Local Plan's 4 strategic objectives relating to:
- Supporting the Conditions for Attracting Jobs and Growth;
  - Regeneration and Community Pride;
  - Quality of Place; and,
  - Homes and Communities;

## **APPEALS PERFORMANCE**

12. Planning applicant's have the right to appeal a decision made by the Local Planning Authority on a planning application if they disagree with the decision, usually a refusal, or if the application has not been determined within the set timescales for the type of development. Such appeals are administered and undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate which is independent of ourselves as the Local Planning Authority. The appeal process has several formats, but essentially all have an Inspector who will take into account all the material considerations relevant to the application and views from all sides and ultimately make a decision as to whether to allow or dismiss the appeal (and sometimes part allowed and part dismissed).
13. This process provides a strong indication on how the policies in the Local Plan are performing and standing up to scrutiny where being used as a reason by ourselves as the Local Planning Authority to refuse applications that are contrary to our development plan policies.
14. As at February 2023, there has been 48 Appeal decisions issued using relevant Local Plan policies since it was adopted in September 2021. Of which, 83% have been dismissed by the Planning Inspector i.e. the Inspector agreed with the decision by the Council to refuse permission. Generally, the policies in the Local Plan are standing up at Appeal with the few exceptions being very detailed and niche matters (e.g. height of some acoustic fencing) and often detailed matters more suited to Supplementary Planning Documents/guidance than Local Plan policy.

## **LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION BILL: REFORMS TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PLAN-MAKING**

15. At the time the Local Plan was being examined and progressed through its latter stages, the Government was consulting on a Planning for the Future White Paper (summer 2020) with significant proposed reforms to the plan-making and wider Planning system in England. One of the most controversial being its ambition to

“simplify the role of Local Plans, to focus on identifying land under three categories – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, and where outline approval for development would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the Plan; Renewal areas suitable for some development, such as gentle densification; and Protected areas where – as the name suggests – development is restricted.” Other reforms sought to expedite the process for getting Local Plans in place, including more frontloaded and bottom up community involvement in their preparation alongside changes to how they should be examined (e.g. a single sustainable development test).

16. The Planning reforms are now being taken forward through the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) which had its first reading in the House of Commons in May 2022 and is currently at the Committee stages in the House of Lords. However, some of the proposals from the White Paper 2020 have fallen away, including the controversial ‘growth-renewal-protect’ zoning approach to plan-making.
17. In December 2022, the government published for consultation Reforms to National Planning Policy which consisted of a number of proposed shorter-term changes to the current National Planning Policy Framework (including a tracked changes version of the document) which they state will come into effect from spring 2023. Alongside this was a policy paper setting out a number of policy directions and questions around longer-term reforms linked to the LURB; much of which to be subject to its own/further consultation in due course. The presentation will provide a summary of the most pertinent parts relating to plan-making and local plans.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

18. Not applicable







## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**



19. Not applicable

## **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES**

20. This report is an update and for information purposes only. The impact the Local Plan has on the Council’s key outcomes were set out in the Full Council Adoption Report 23 September 2021.

<b>Great 8 Priority</b>	<b>Positive Overall</b>	<b>Mix of Positive &amp; Negative</b>	<b>Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall</b>	<b>Neutral or No implications</b>
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 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>	✓			
Comments:				

 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>	✓			
Comments:				
 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>	✓			
Comments:				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
Comments:				

## 21. Legal Implications

No Legal Implications have been sought for this report as it is just an update for information. Further specific advice can be provided in relation to any issues raised by the Committee.

## 22. Financial Implications

No Financial Implications have been sought for this report as it is just an update for information. Further specific advice can be provided in relation to any issues raised by the Committee.

## 23. Human Resources Implications

No Human Resource Implications have been sought for this report as it is just an update for information. Further specific advice can be provided in relation to any issues raised by the Committee.

## 24. Technology Implications

No Technology Implications have been sought for this report as it is just an update for information. Further specific advice can be provided in relation to any issues raised by the Committee.

## RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

25. There are no risks or assumptions with respect to the contents of this report as it is just an update for information.

## CONSULTATION

26. No direct consultation has been undertaken with respect to the contents of this report as it is just an update for information. The Local Plan itself was of course subject to significant rounds of full public consultation from inception to adoption in line with the statutory legislation and the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement. The Local Plan Inspector made reference in his Final Report to the Council's Regulation 22(1)(c) Statement of Consultation and that this report thoroughly demonstrated how the consultation carried out during the various stages of Plan preparation was in compliance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and that more stages of consultation were held than required by the regulations.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035 Update Presentation to R&HO&SP

[Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035](#)

[Supporting Policies Map](#)

[Local Plan Monitoring & Implementation](#) (including Annual Monitoring Reports)

[Planning for the Future White Paper \(2020\)](#)

[Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#) (2022)

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

LURB – Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

OSMC – Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

R&HO&SP – Regeneration & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel

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