

## **EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE**

### **DELEGATED EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

A record of delegated decisions made by individual Portfolio holders or officers on Thursday, 26 September 2019.

The reports (unless exempt under Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated and, in all the circumstances of the case, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it) are available for inspection from the Solicitor to the Council, South Lakeland House, Kendal.

#### **DEX/7**

### **LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - EVIDENCE BASE STUDIES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE**

**(Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources)**

#### **Summary**

South Lakeland District Council was the Planning Authority for South Lakeland outside the National Parks and responsible for preparing the South Lakeland Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework stated that Local Plan policies should be reviewed at least every five years from the date of their adoption, and a review of the Local Plan documents was underway. The Local Plan review would update local planning policies, where necessary, to take account of the latest National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. It would also review and supplement the allocation of land for housing and employment to meet latest evidence of need. The review also provided an opportunity to ensure local planning policy reflected the needs of communities and priorities and objectives in the Council Plan where these could be advanced through the planning of new development.

Robust and up-to-date evidence was essential to ensuring that the Local Plan was justified and found sound at independent examination. Studies were undertaken where possible by the Council's planning policy officers, but in some areas it was necessary to obtain external professional expertise. Approval was, therefore, being sought for the addition to the procurement schedule of the further evidence studies and professional advice set out below, to be undertaken during (or commence within) year 2019/20. These could be undertaken within existing budgets and were each estimated to fall below £60,000.

- An Employment Land and Premises Review - this study would provide information on the estimated need for employment land and premises over the plan period and also assess whether the currently allocated employment sites comprised the right amount, type and locations to meet that need.
- Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Sport/Recreation study and strategy - this would assess current green infrastructure provision, and its various roles, for example for biodiversity, recreation, access and Green Gap review, to inform the needs and opportunities to improve green infrastructure through new planned development to 2040.

**Decision**

***Approval be given for the addition to the 2019/20 Procurement Schedule of the studies set out in paragraph 3.4 to the report, as required to contribute to a robust evidence base for the Local Plan Review.***

**Reasons for Decision**

The decision is in relation to the procurement of additional evidence base studies to inform the preparation of the review of the South Lakeland Local Plan. A robust evidence base is an important element in plan making, as the soundness of the reviewed Local Plan will be the subject of independent examination by an Inspector, whose assessment will include considering if the submitted Plan is justified and based on proportionate and well-founded evidence.

In addition, the Local Plan Review, supported by robust evidence and professional advice, has a fundamentally-important role in delivering the priorities set out in the Council Plan (2019-2024) including in relation to the overarching themes of Health and Environment, Economy and Culture and Housing and Communities. Specific elements of the Local Plan Review relevant to delivering on Council Plan priorities include:-

- Working Across boundaries
  - preparing a new Local Plan
- Creating balanced communities
  - delivering affordable homes
- Reducing Inequalities
  - Improving air quality and reducing pollution
- Sustainable environment and inclusive economy
  - Ensuring new development is sustainable, energy efficient and flood resilient
  - Developing town centres which are attractive, and accessible for living, working, culture and leisure
  - Encouraging walking and cycling

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

The additional evidence and professional advice required, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report, is considered essential to informing and justifying recommendations within the Local Plan Review. The additional professional advice sought cannot be obtained within the Council but options will be explored as to whether this may be procured jointly with neighbouring authorities. Studies are undertaken in-house where possible. This option has been considered for the Employment Land and Green Infrastructure studies, but it is considered that both require professional expertise not available within the Council.