



## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report presents the Draft Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) to the Panel for consideration, feedback and recommendation to Cabinet for approval to consult for eight weeks over February-April 2024. The report is accompanied by the draft Interim Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) advice note (published separately). It also provides the Panel with an update on the Local Plan process since it last considered the matter in November 2023 and the next steps in the process [including outstanding background / process material to be added to the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) prior to the document being consulted on]. The report also provides an outline of the proposed consultation arrangements.

### **Recommendations:**

The Panel is requested to:

- (A) note and comment on the report and Appendices.
- (B) recommend the draft new Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) to Cabinet.
- (C) note the intention to make minor amendments and insert outstanding background / process material to the draft new Local Plan prior to presentation to Cabinet and subsequently prior to commencement of consultation (under delegated authority) (paragraph 5.9 of the report).
- (D) note and comment on the proposed consultation arrangements (section 7 of the report).

### **Reason: (for recommendation)**

The Harrow Local Plan is one of the key documents in the Council's policy framework. Member input into the draft new Harrow Local Plan and the proposed consultation arrangements, through the Panel, is an essential part of the Local Plan process.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report relates to the new Harrow Local Plan and:

- (a) presents the Draft new Harrow Local Plan – Regulation 18 version (and accompanying documents) to the Panel for consideration, feedback and commendation to Cabinet for approval to consult for eight weeks over February-April 2024;
- (b) provides the Panel with an update on the Local Plan process since it last considered the matter in November 2023 and the next steps in the process [including outstanding background / process material to be added to the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) prior to document being consulted on]; and
- (c) provides an outline of the proposed consultation arrangements.

## **2.0 Options considered**

- 2.1 The option of not providing an update nor seeking feedback or comment was considered and dismissed as this would not give the Panel the opportunity to monitor and comment on something within their Terms of Reference. The Harrow Local Plan is one of the key documents in the Council's policy framework. Member input, through the Panel, is an essential part of the process.
- 2.2 In developing the draft Local Plan, various potential policy options were considered. These are documented in the draft Local Plan, with reasonable alternatives (options) included where appropriate. Where no alternatives are considered appropriate, the reasons for this have been identified (i.e. the need to be in general conformity with the London Plan).

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 The Council has committed to preparing a new Harrow Local Plan. This is in response to the time that has elapsed since the current Local Plan was adopted (2012 and 2013) and changes in national and regional planning policy since that time, as well as emerging issues and local priorities.
- 3.2 The Panel has formally considered the new Harrow Local Plan at five previous meetings:
  - (a) *9 January 2023*: the Panel considered a report in relation to the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS is a rolling three-year project plan setting out all the planning documents to be produced by the local authority and the timetable for their preparation. The draft LDS considered by the Panel committed the Council to prepare a new Local Plan, with adoption scheduled for December 2025. The LDS was subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 16 February 2023.
  - (b) *6 March 2023*: the Panel considered a report that introduced the Local Plan process in more detail and key issues that it will need to address. It sought comments and discussion from the Panel to assist in the scoping of the Local Plan, including its broad vision and objectives, to inform drafting of the new Local Plan.
  - (c) *13 July 2023*: the Panel considered the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how the Council will consult on planning matters, including the draft Local Plan. The revised SCI is anticipated to be adopted under delegated authority by the end of January 2024. The draft document was subject to a 21-day period of consultation in mid-2023.
  - (d) *18 September 2023*: the Panel considered the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Context Report, which sets the context for the full IDP, which is expected to be completed in the middle of next year (in time for the second round of consultation

on the draft Harrow Local Plan). The full Infrastructure Delivery Plan is required as part of the Evidence Base for Local Plans

(e) *2 November 2023*: the Panel considered the draft Borough Profile, Spatial Vision and Strategy and Strategic Objectives for the new Local Plan. The Borough Profile sets the context for the plan. Within the plan, the Spatial Vision and Strategy, and Strategic Objectives provide the overarching narrative for the document from which detailed provisions / policies follow. Members asked some questions regarding the draft material, but no changes / alternatives were suggested and therefore the draft Local Plan (attached at Appendix 1) has been drafted on the basis of the material presented and agreed at the 2 November 2023 meeting.

- 3.3 Each report also provided an update on the Local Plan process, including evidence base development and Local Plan drafting, where relevant. The previous reports are included as background papers to this report.
- 3.4 The plan will cover the period from 2021-2041. Under government guidance, plans should be reviewed (and updated if necessary) every five years.

## **4.0 Local Plan Progress**

- 4.1 Since the Panel's November 2023 meeting, considerable work has been undertaken, culminating in the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) presented at Appendix 1. This work can be broadly broken down into evidence base development, stakeholder engagement and plan drafting. Additionally, a new National Planning Policy Framework was published on 19 December 2023 and the implications of this (and other Government announcements) on the new Local Plan is also documented below and in Appendix 3. The new NPPF is included as a background paper.

### *Evidence base development*

- 4.2 All draft Local Plans are examined by the Planning Inspectorate for 'soundness'; plans must be found sound before they can be adopted by the Council. One of the 'tests of soundness' under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that a plan must be 'justified'. This means it must represent 'an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence' (NPPF, paragraph 35).
- 4.3 The report to the Panel in November 2023 provided details of the evidence base informing the new Local Plan and additional evidence base work commissioned. Below is an update on this:
- (a) *Update to the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) 2017* – the need to update this has become evident

from the Mayor of London's responses to recent local plan consultations in other boroughs, as well as significant changes in the economy since 2017 (i.e. increased levels of online shopping, increased rates of people working from home, impacts from Covid, and the impact of high inflation on personal budgets). This evidence base work will be finalised in January 2024, but the key findings are that only modest additional provision is required for town centre use floorspace (retail, food / beverage, leisure and entertainment) and that there is sufficient office floorspace and any release should be carefully monitored.

- (b) *Tall Buildings Study* – this is required to meet the requirements of London Plan Policy D9: Tall Buildings. Draft outcomes of this work have been incorporated into the draft Local Plan attached at Appendix 1 and the overall study will be finalised in January 2024.
- (c) *Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)* – this is an assessment of the draft Plan having regard to sustainability ('sustainability appraisal'), equalities ('equalities impact assessment') and health impacts ('health impact assessment'). It runs parallel with the Local Plan process and helps test alternatives and refine policies throughout the Local Plan process. The interim findings are attached at Appendix 2. An accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be prepared and published alongside the revised draft Plan at the second round of consultation ('Regulation 19 consultation').

4.4 As an outcome of the development of the Tall Buildings Study (referred to above) and in discussions with the Greater London Authority (GLA), it is considered prudent to update the Views Assessment (prepared 2012) that informed the identification of protected views within the current Local Plan. This update will review existing protected views having regard to changes / developments since the original study was undertaken, as well as to reflect contemporary guidance for such assessments and the London Plan 2021.

4.5 A formal 'call for sites' process will be conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version). This will invite landowners, developers and other stakeholders to put forward any large sites (over 0.25 ha) that could potentially be considered for allocation for development in the new Harrow Local Plan. Such allocations would be reflected in the next version ('Regulation 19' version) of the Local Plan. The process will be managed by specialist software (Urban Intelligence's 'Place Maker' software) which also allows the Council to proactively and efficiently identify potential development sites, having regard to existing land uses, ownership and planning / infrastructure constraints. The system also has a public facing element which enables developers / landowners / residents to identify sites potentially suitable for development.

- 4.6 As noted in the November 2023 Panel report, once the Local Plan has been drafted and refined (post first round of consultation), it will be subject to a Viability Assessment (to ensure the policies collectively don't make development unviable within the borough). Additionally, any site allocations (i.e. sites specifically identified in the draft Plan as being suitable for development) will be subject to a 'Level 2' Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Briefs for this work will be developed over January-February 2024. The Council's 'Authorities Monitoring Report' (AMR) that monitors the performance of the current Local Plan will be updated as it forms part of the evidence base that justifies policies in the draft plan.
- 4.7 As noted in the November 2023 report, the Council has appointed Kings Counsel (Saira Kabir Sheikh KC) to assist the Council during the Local Plan process. An initial conference focused on key parameters influencing the Local Plan process, such as the plan period (2021-2041), approach to setting housing targets (London Plan target versus need), and emerging issues from evidence base preparation and policy development. A second conference has subsequently been held that provided feedback on the emerging Local Plan policies. The version of the policies / Draft Local Plan attached at Appendix 1 has been updated to reflect feedback from Kings Counsel. Counsel will continue to be involved in reviewing the draft Local Plan / evidence base before key stages such as the revised version of the Local Plan (post first round of consultation), submission to Government and representing the Council at hearings as part of the independent examination of the draft Local Plan by the Planning Inspectorate.

#### *Stakeholder engagement*

- 4.8 The Local Plan is a key land use policy mechanism for most functions of the Council (i.e. housing, heritage, economic development, transport, education, social care, parks, biodiversity) and also impacts upon Council landholdings. Engagement has continued with all relevant areas of the Council, with more recent engagement focusing on the drafting of Local Plan policies and the review of these. The draft Local Plan (Appendix 1) reflects feedback from Service Areas (where received) and will be refined further prior to Cabinet / consultation to reflect any further feedback received.
- 4.9 Service areas have also been involved in the preparation of any evidence base documents relevant to their area.
- 4.10 An initial discussion has been held with the Greater London Authority (GLA) as the Harrow Local Plan must be in 'general' conformity with the London Plan. These discussions were general in nature, focusing on the sorts of issues that have caused issues with general conformity in other boroughs. A further discussion is scheduled after the publication of the agenda and feedback will be verbally reported to the Panel at the meeting.

- 4.11 Duty to Cooperate meetings have been held with a number of adjoining boroughs (i.e. Barnet, Ealing, Hertsmere), with others to be held shortly. The Duty to Cooperate is a requirement of the plan making process; it is largely intended to address cross-borough planning issues of a strategic nature (i.e. housing and employment need, infrastructure etc).

#### *Plan drafting*

- 4.12 Significant progress has been made on the drafting of the new Local Plan, culminating in the version of the Local Plan attached at Appendix 1. Section 5 below introduces the Draft Local Plan and provides a summary of its key issues / policy positions.
- 4.13 In developing the draft Local Plan, various potential policy options were considered. These are documented in the draft Local Plan, with reasonable alternatives (options) included where appropriate. Where no alternatives are considered appropriate, the reasons for this have been identified (i.e. the need to be in general conformity with the London Plan).

#### *New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other recent Government announcements.*

- 4.14 Since the last Local Plan report to the Panel in November 2023, there have been a number of Government announcements and the publication of policy documents. Of particular note is the publication of the revised version of the NPPF on 19 December 2023. These have implications for the Draft Local Plan, which are summarised in Appendix 3. Given the timing of the publication of the NPPF, the version of the Draft Local Plan attached at Appendix 1 does not fully reflect any necessary changes and these will be made as the draft Plan progresses towards consultation in February 2024.
- 4.15 Paragraph 230 of the new NPPF indicates that Local Plans that have not reached Regulation 19 stage consultation (i.e. consultation on the version of the plan proposed to be submitted for examination) by 19 March 2024) will be examined under the new NPPF. As Harrow's new Local Plan is expected to reach Regulation 19 consultation at the end of 2024, it will be examined under the new NPPF.

## **5.0 Draft New Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 version)**

- 5.1 The new Harrow Local Plan will replace the existing adopted Harrow Local Plan, which currently consists of a package of documents:
- a. Core Strategy – adopted February 2012
  - b. Development Management Policies – adopted July 2013
  - c. Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan (AAP) – adopted July 2013
  - d. Site Allocations – adopted July 2013

- 5.2 These form the Council's statutory development plan, alongside the London Plan [and any future neighbourhood plans prepared by community groups ('neighbourhood forums')]. Consistent with contemporary national policy, the existing 'framework' of Local Plan documents will be replaced by a single Local Plan document.
- 5.3 The current Local Plan is accompanied by an adopted Policies Map that illustrates particular land uses throughout the Borough including areas for protection such as open space and conservation areas, as well as employment and residential activities. It also identifies key sites for development ('site allocations').
- 5.4 As noted above, the new Local Plan will cover the period from 2021 to 2041.

#### *Structure of the Draft Local Plan*

- 5.5 For legibility the Local Plan is set out in a series of thematic chapters that cover a number of policy areas however it must be read as a whole, particularly for the purpose of planning and investment decisions.
- 5.6 The Local Plan is organised as follows:
- (a) *Introductory Chapter (Chapter 01)*: Context and the spatial strategy: provides background information on the Local Plan (including Borough Profile) before setting out the Vision for Harrow and the plan's strategic / spatial objectives. It also establishes the 'spatial strategy' for the Borough, the land-use priorities and overall pattern of development that the plan will seek to deliver.
  - (b) *Thematic policy chapters (Chapters 02-10)*: these cover the policy areas that seek to deliver the spatial vision, objectives and strategy of the Local Plan, and contribute to the overarching objective of sustainable development (consistent with the NPPF and the London Plan's 'Good Growth' objectives). Each chapter includes at least one overarching strategic policy and a series of detailed policies. These chapters represent the development management policies that all planning applications will need to comply with.
  - (c) *Appendices*: covering glossary, site allocations (to be included in the next version of the draft Local Plan for 'Regulation 19' consultation), delivery and monitoring framework (will include implementation framework for the Local Plan, as well as the arrangements for monitoring and outcomes over the plan period), housing trajectory (at this stage, presented as broad capacity figures, to be refined once site allocations are progressed) and proposed changes to the Policy Map.



## *Summary of draft Local Plan*

- 5.7 Outlined below is a summary of the draft Local Plan, including key policy positions and changes from the current Local Plan. However, the nature of the Local Plan is that it covers a wide range of policy areas, types of development and different areas / constraints within the borough. It is therefore an extensive document. The draft at Appendix 1 should therefore be reviewed for detailed provisions relating to any specific aspects of interest as the summary below cannot fully reflect the extent and detail of all the policies in the draft Plan:

### *Spatial Strategy*

- A. The Spatial Vision and Strategy, and Strategic Objectives (Chapter 1) provide the overarching narrative for the document from which detailed provisions / policies follow.
- B. In general terms, the overarching spatial strategy for the Local Plan remains to direct the majority of new development to the Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area, with other town centres accommodating more modest levels of growth commensurate to their character, role and function. The predominately suburban areas of the borough (outside sustainable locations) will retain their character as low-density, family housing. Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Open Space will be retained and enhanced. The borough's network of town and district centres will be retained and managed to promote vibrancy and vitality. Existing employment land will be retained. Existing infrastructure will be retained, and additional infrastructure required to support the level of development envisaged by the Local Plan. Social and environmental assets will be protected and enhanced, including a net gain in biodiversity. The location and design of new development will respond to climate change.

### *High Quality Growth*

- C. This chapter outlines the design policies that will apply to all development proposals where relevant. They largely reflect an evolution of current Local Plan policies, updated in the context of the increased emphasis nationally and regionally for 'design-led' development, 'good growth' and 'beauty and placemaking'.
- D. The new Local Plan introduces for the first time a specific policy on building heights, as required by the London Plan. It defines tall buildings as being 7 storeys or 21 metres (from the ground level to the highest point of the building) across the entire borough. (Note: the current Local Plan definition is 10 storeys / 30 metres within the Opportunity Area). The draft identifies the Opportunity Area as having areas suitable for tall buildings and identifies appropriate heights in specific areas within the

Opportunity Area (based on the evidence base supporting the Local Plan). The policy also specifically indicates that areas outside the Opportunity Area are not suitable for tall buildings; the current Local Plan is comparatively silent on this (with guidance being provided by way of the recently adopted Tall Buildings (Building Heights) SPD).

### *Heritage*

- E. The draft Heritage policies are largely an evolution of policies in the existing Local Plan, updated to reflect new designations (i.e. Local Areas of Special Character) and to address weaknesses with existing policies (i.e. securing the benefits sought through enabling development of heritage assets).

### *Meeting Harrow's Housing Needs*

- F. The housing policies in this chapter commit the Council to deliver a minimum 16,040 (net) homes over the Plan period (2021-2041), based on the annual London Plan target for Harrow of 802 homes per year. The Plan specifically commits to delivery of a minimum of 8,020 homes between 2019 and 2029, as required by the London Plan. It also identifies broad locations as follows:

- (i) Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area – minimum 7,500 homes
- (ii) Outside the Opportunity Area (existing permissions / allocations) – minimum 2,500 homes
- (iii) Small sites (unallocated sites below 0.25 ha and in accessible locations) – minimum 4,125 homes
- (iv) Windfall sites

At present there is a modest shortfall against the proposed housing target over the full plan period but the ten-year London Plan requirement can be met. Additional sites may come forward during the plan-making process to close the current shortfall.

- G. A key underlying element of the draft housing policies is the need to protect existing family sized housing stock (three or more bedrooms) within the borough and increase the rate of delivery of family sized housing in new development (including in flatted development). Such an approach reflects the housing need identified in Harrow's evidence base. The draft Plan therefore sets a target to ensure a minimum of 25% of new dwellings delivered are three bed (or more) family sized dwellings. Additionally, it seeks to ensure the size of any 2-bedroom dwellings is capable of accommodating 4 bed spaces, so that they can be used by families, if household circumstances change and avoid overcrowding.

- H. The draft Plan also proposes greater control over the conversion of existing family sized housing into flats by introducing a dwelling size threshold for conversions (i.e. internal floor area above 130 sqm) and a location criteria where they may be permitted (i.e. Public Transport Accessibility Levels 3-6). Additional requirements are also proposed to avoid the over concentration of flat conversions within a street. Where such a conversion is accepted, the Plan seeks re-provision of a three-bed family size home as part of any conversion.
- I. In terms of affordable housing, the draft Plan sets a strategic target of 50% affordable homes (consistent with the London Plan), with a 70% / 30% tenure split between low-cost rented tenure (with social rent as a priority) and intermediate tenure (share ownership / London Living Rent). This represents greater emphasis on low-cost rented tenure (currently Local Plan policy is for 60%) and a more genuinely affordable tenure (social rent) within the 70% (rather than 'affordable rent' tenures). The policy will apply to major development (i.e. 10 dwellings or more), which will be required to deliver affordable housing onsite to deliver mixed and inclusive communities, unless exceptional circumstances apply to make off site /or a financial contributions.
- J. Several new policies are included to reflect the requirements of the NPPF or London Plan [i.e. small sites (less than 0.25 ha), older persons' accommodation, self-build housing] or to reflect new development types since the current Local Plan was adopted (i.e. large scale purpose built shared accommodation) or where the current Plan is silent (i.e. housing estate renewal, purpose built student accommodation). The policy approach to matters such as Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO), supported and sheltered housing, is proposed to be strengthened in the Plan.

### *Local Economy*

- K. The policies in the Local Economy chapter respond to broader changes in society and the economy with respect to how town centres function since the current Local Plan was adopted. Only modest growth in town centre use (retail, food / beverage, leisure and entertainment) floorspace is envisaged (based on the Local Plan evidence base). With national policy and legislative changes, the scope to manage specific uses ('use classes') within town centres has been diminished, so the town centre policies seek to focus on the function of town centres in the town centre hierarchy (i.e. metropolitan, major, district, local) and promoting vibrancy and vitality of the borough's town centres.
- L. A strategic policy specifically for the Harrow and Wealdstone Opportunity Area is also proposed. This sets out the overarching principles for development within the Opportunity Area, given its

focus for new development and infrastructure within the borough. It will replace the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan. The policy provides the basis for any subsequent, detailed master plans within the Opportunity Area, such as that proposed to be prepared for Harrow.

- M. In terms of employment use (i.e. industrial, offices), the draft Local Plan seeks to protect existing industrial floorspace / yard space from any further loss as across Harrow / London, too much industrial land has been lost given recent changes to the economy (growth in data centres, warehouses for online retailing etc). A modest increase in industrial floorspace (6,000 sqm) will be sought within established industrial areas, based on the Local Plan evidence base.
- N. In terms of offices, the evidence base indicates there is sufficient office space within the borough for the plan period to 2041. However, the draft Local Plan policies will require that any loss of office space will continue to be monitored and managed in accordance with up-to-date evidence, given the current uncertainty around office space provision post-Covid. The policy identifies that when releasing office floorspace, this follows a sequential approach which seeks to ensure that office space within the Metropolitan Town Centre, and then other town centres is the least preferable to be released, compared to offices in out of centre locations.
- O. The draft plan also seeks to promote the night-time and evening economy, culture and creative industries, and tourism and visitor accommodation, reflecting the emerging importance of these elements of the economy and to support Council strategies and investment in these areas.

#### *Community Infrastructure*

- P. A new strategic policy has been included to set out the overarching approach to Social Infrastructure, and infrastructure more broadly. Policies in this chapter continue the current Local Plan approach of retaining existing community infrastructure and links the provision of new infrastructure to the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that will identify the infrastructure required to support the level of development and population growth envisaged during the plan period.

#### *Green Infrastructure*

- Q. This chapter includes a new strategic policy that sets the overarching policy direction for green infrastructure in the borough. Policy in relation to Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land continues to reflect the national and regional policy. Open space policy continues to seek to retain open space, but has been updated to provide potential scope for essential community

infrastructure uses on open space where there are no viable alternative sites; this reflects practice in reality in recent years.

- R. The policy position around biodiversity has been updated in line with new requirements of the Environment Act requiring at least 10% biodiversity net gain from new development. The draft Plan is proposing that 20% biodiversity net gain is achieved from new development, reflecting the significantly degraded biodiversity in the borough.
- S. Policies in this chapter also seek to strengthen (and consolidate) requirements around Urban Greening, Landscaping and Trees and a new policy relating to food growing proposes to require the retention of existing allotments/community gardens and encourage the incorporation of new food growing infrastructure in developments.

#### *Responding to the Climate and Nature Emergency*

- T. This chapter includes an overarching strategic policy that sets the direction for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the recovery of habitat. It has been informed by the recently adopted Climate and Nature Strategy.
- U. The chapter also includes a policy (Policy CN1 Sustainable Design and Retrofit) that sets the Council's definition of net zero buildings, detailing that all new development should be net zero carbon in operation considering both regulated (space heating, hot water, 'hard wired electrical equipment' i.e. lighting) and unregulated (appliances) carbon emissions, utilising on-site electricity generation and using offsetting of carbon emissions as a last resort. This is an evolution of existing London Plan policy that only addresses 'regulated' emissions. Retrofit standards for net zero have been updated in this policy.
- V. This chapter also contains policies in relation to reducing flood risk, sustainable drainage and waterway management, which have been updated from the existing Local Plan to reflect the West London Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

#### *Managing Waste and Supporting the Circular Economy*

- W. The policies in this chapter seek to continue to safeguard existing waste facilities in the borough (i.e. the Civic Amenity Site) and ensure adequate waste facilities in new development. Policies have also been updated to reflect emerging requirements from the Environment Act with respect to waste and recycling. The chapter also introduces the concept of the circular economy for building construction and adaptation, with a new policy that reinforces the London Plan standards for major applications and indicates that the circular economy principles

should be considered for all types of development, where possible.

### *Transport and Movement*

- X The policies in this chapter largely reflect the requirements set out in the London Plan. The overarching strategic policy reflects the Council's new Transport Strategy. Throughout the document, including in the policy relating to parking standards, provision of electric vehicle charging points is required, with the intention that these requirements exceed the minimum requirements of the London Plan; this will support the Council's recently adopted Electric Vehicle Strategy.

- 5.8 It is intended that a further summary focusing on the proposed changes from existing policies in the current Local Plan will be prepared to assist stakeholders familiar with the current Local Plan to understand these.

### *Ongoing refinement of the draft Local Plan*

- 5.9 Drafting of the Local Plan continues, as the evidence base and policies are finalised and the document compiled and prepared for consultation. The version of the draft Plan at Appendix 1 contains the policies as they currently stand and form the substantial content of the Plan which the Panel is requested to review and comment on so that comments can be reported to Cabinet and amendments can be made where necessary.
- 5.10 There are a number of outstanding elements of the Plan that will be added as the drafting process moves towards Cabinet consideration of the draft Plan and if agreed by Cabinet, formal consultation on the Plan. These include but are not limited to:
  - (a) Introductory text to the Plan. This will outline the rationale for preparing a new Plan and the process and policy (national and regional) context for this. It will also outline consultation arrangements (i.e. how to make representations and the timeframes for doing so).
  - (b) Inclusion of a draft policy relating to Build to Rent development, and a specific policy for Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points that draws together relevant elements of existing draft policies so as to more clearly articulate the requirements for EV Charging Points.
  - (c) Inclusion of graphics and maps within the document to assist in conveying key elements of the Plan and to make it more user friendly and appealing. This will include insertion of a map depicting the Spatial Vision.
  - (d) General formatting of the document for consistency and legibility.

- (e) Inclusion of the appendices (including an 'atlas of change' to identify proposed changes to the Policy Map that accompanies the current Local Plan).

5.11 The above will be developed ahead of consideration of the draft document by Cabinet and delegated authority (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration) sought to make minor amendments to the document and add any outstanding elements ahead of formal consultation (if agreed by Cabinet). Such an approach will enable the Plan to progress to consultation in a timely manner in the context of the challenging timeframes for the process and Government deadlines.

## **6.0 Next steps**

- 6.1 It is intended to present the 'first draft' (Regulation 18 version) of the new Harrow Local Plan to Cabinet in February 2024 for approval to consult for eight weeks (end of February to end-April 2024). The proposed consultation arrangements are summarised in section 7 below.
- 6.2 A summary of the consultation feedback on the version of the draft Plan attached at Appendix 1 will be presented to the Panel mid-2024, along with a revised version of the draft Local Plan.
- 6.3 A second round of consultation on a revised Local Plan (Regulation 19 consultation) is anticipated to occur by the end of 2024.
- 6.4 There has been approximately three months slippage in the Local Plan programme included in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) considered by the Panel at its meeting on 9 January 2023 (and subsequently Cabinet on 16 February 2023). This is largely due to difficulty in recruiting the additional resources for the Planning Policy Team that were included in the budget agreed by Full Council in February 2023. Such difficulty in recruitment is being experienced across London and the country generally.
- 6.5 The LDS will be updated in due course if necessary to reflect actual timeframes closer towards submission of the draft Local Plan to Government for examination.
- 6.6 As the draft Local Plan progresses through the formal process, greater weight can be given to the draft policies when determining planning applications [NPPF paragraph 48 (a)]. In this regard, the draft Plan is still in very early stages (i.e. yet to be consulted on), so limited weight can be given to the draft policies at this point in time. Additionally, the level of objection to the draft policies has not been established [para. 48(b)] (as there has been no formal consultation to-date) nor has the degree of consistency with the NPPF nor general

conformity with the London Plan been tested [para 48(c)]. These factors further diminish any weight that can be given to the draft Plan.

## **7.0 Consultation arrangements**

- 7.1 Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is proposed to undertake an eight-week consultation period on the draft Local Plan. It is intended that this occurs from the end of February 2024 to the end of April 2024.
- 7.2 There are minimum statutory requirements for this consultation, as set out in 'Regulation 18' of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the 2012 Regulations"). Such minimum requirements are also reflected in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):
- 7.3 As a minimum, the Regulations require the local planning authority to notify and invite representations on the content of the draft plan to:
- (i) such specific consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan;
  - (ii) such of the general consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider appropriate; and
  - (iii) such residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area as the local planning authority consider appropriate.
- 7.4 The above will be undertaken using the Council's Local Plan consultation database (email or letter). The draft Plan, supporting documents (i.e. Integrated Impact Assessment) and evidence base will be included on the Council's website. Hard copies of the draft Local Plan will be made available to view at Greenhill Library, and potentially other libraries in the borough. Documents will also be available to view at the Harrow Council Hub by appointment.
- 7.5 It is proposed to go beyond the minimum requirements set out in paragraph 7.3 above, with the intention to undertake a range of engagement tasks as follows:
- (a) Street events at several locations
  - (b) Drop-in sessions at the Conversation Café
  - (c) Online consultation hub
  - (d) E-newsletter/social media
  - (e) Webinar launch event
  - (f) Information displays/leaflets at key sites
  - (g) Email address
  - (h) Attendance at key stakeholder events
- 7.6 Representations received will be compiled, reviewed and response / actions identified, including any amendments required to the draft Local Plan. A consultation statement will be prepared documenting



the outcomes of this process and published online. It will also be reported back to the Panel mid-2024.

**Ward Councillors' comments:** None- as affects all wards. Members will be invited to make representations as part of the formal consultation process.

## Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **Yes**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.  
**Yes**

The following key risks should be considered when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Programme – slippage in the Local Plan programme and potential risk of missing the Government's July 2025 deadline for submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Weekly programme management meetings</li> <li>▪ Additional resources secured</li> </ul>	<b>Green</b>
Consultation arrangements – these do not comply with statutory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statement of Community Involvement updated</li> <li>▪ Detailed consultation arrangements scoped and documented.</li> <li>▪ Legal / Counsel review of process (prior to Cabinet)</li> </ul>	<b>Green</b>
Draft polices not in general conformity with the London Plan resulting in objections from the Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing discussions with Greater London Authority (GLA) officers</li> <li>▪ Counsel review of draft policies (prior to Cabinet)</li> </ul>	<b>Green</b>
Draft policies not consistent with national policy, including recent changes to the NPPF etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing monitoring of emerging / published Government policies</li> <li>▪ Assessment of implications of recent Government policy announcements / publications.</li> <li>▪ Counsel review of draft policies (prior to Cabinet)</li> </ul>	<b>Green</b>

## Procurement Implications

None – report for information and discussion only. Any procurement associated with the draft Local Plan has been undertaken in accordance with

the Council's Contract Management Rules and have been below the value threshold for consideration by Cabinet.

## Legal Implications

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 (as amended) ("the 2004 Act") and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the 2012 Regulations") set out the requirements and the statutory procedure for the preparation of a Local Plan.

Regulation 18 of the 2012 Regulations requires the local planning authority to notify and invite representations on the content of the draft plan to: (i) such specific consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan; (ii) such of the general consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider appropriate; and (iii) such residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area as the local planning authority consider appropriate. Section 7 above outlines the proposed consultation arrangements to meet these statutory requirements. Regulation 18 consultation provides an important opportunity for the gathering of critical information from landowners, developers, and site promoters to support the suitability, capacity and deliverability assessments of potential site allocations.

The next stage, after this 'Regulation 18' consultation, is for the local planning authority to prepare a submission draft of the local plan. All representations received during this consultation stage must be taken into account when preparing this submission draft. The submission draft will then return to the Planning Policy Advisory Panel (and Cabinet) for further consideration.

## Financial Implications

Preparation of a Local Plan is a significant undertaking, requiring resourcing for officers and revenue budget to undertake evidence base work, consultation, document production and independent examination. The resourcing is required to ensure the draft Plan is found sound as it is based on an evidence base of appropriate coverage and quality, all statutory requirements have been met (preparation of sustainability appraisals etc) and can be undertaken in a timely manner.

The estimated cost of the Local plan for 2023/24 is £399k and a growth budget of £206k is included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to fund this along with other sources of funding outlined in Table 1 below. Additional resources of £171k over 2024/25 and 2025/26 have been secured within the MTFS process to fund further extra costs required to produce the Harrow Local Plan.

**Table 1**

<b>Additional costs</b>	<b>23/24 (£)</b>	<b>24/25 (£)</b>	<b>25/26 (£)</b>	<b>Total (23/24-25/26) (£)</b>
Evidence base / consultancy	212,500	177,500	30,000	420,000
Production / consultation / examination	50,000	40,000	295,000	385,000

<b>Additional costs</b>	<b>23/24 (£)</b>	<b>24/25 (£)</b>	<b>25/26 (£)</b>	<b>Total (23/24-25/26) (£)</b>
Additional officer resource	137,000	278,000	105,000	520,000
Total	399,500	495,500	430,000	1,325,000
<b>Funding sources</b>	<b>23/24 (£)</b>	<b>24/25 (£)</b>	<b>25/26 (£)</b>	<b>Total (23/24-25/26) (£)</b>
MTFS growth funding bids (22/23 and 23/24)	206,000	303,000	377,000	886,000
Grant funding received	105,000	98,739	0	203,739
Existing revenue budget (consultancy)	25,000	25,000	25,000	75,000
Internal planning resource	63,500	68,761	28,000	160,261
Total	399,500	495,500	430,000	1,325,000

Costs and funding continue to be monitored as part of ongoing budget monitoring process for the Planning Service and any significant variances identified along with mitigation measures to ensure a balanced budget position.

## **Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None – report for information and discussion only. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process will be fully covered in the report to Cabinet.

The Equality Act 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design policies and the delivery of services.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The preparation of the Local Plan is being informed by an Integrated Impact Assessment which includes an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Publishing the draft Local Plan at this stage will allow stakeholder/resident views on the content of the document and any likely adverse impacts of policies and proposals on equality groups to be identified and carefully considered prior to the preparation of the final plan document. The proposed submission version of the plan (at Regulation 19 stage) will be supported by

an updated IIA / EqIA. Consultation arrangements will consider how to best engage with stakeholders having regard to the protected characteristics.

### **Council Priorities.**

1. **Putting residents first.**
2. **A Borough that is Clean and Safe**
3. **A Place where those in need are supported.**

The wide-ranging nature of the spatial plan means that the new Local Plan will contribute to all the delivery of these priorities as well as the objective of Restoring Pride in Harrow.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

**Statutory Officer:** Comie Campbell  
Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

**Date:** 9 January 2024 by email

**Statutory Officer:** Chileme Hayes  
Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 9 January 2024 – by email

**Chief Officer:** Viv Evans  
Signed by Chief Planning Officer  
Viv Evans

**Date:** 10 January 2024

**Divisional Director:** Emma Talbot  
Signed by Director for Regeneration and Sustainable Development  
Emma Talbot  
**Date:** 10 January 2024

## **Mandatory Checks**

**Ward Councillors notified:** NO, as it impacts on all Wards

**EqIA carried out:** NO – for information only. See equalities section above.

If 'NO' state why an EqIA is not required for Cabinet to take a decision

**EqlA cleared by: N/A**

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** David Hughes, Head of Planning Policy,  
david.hughes@harrow.gov.uk

### **Background Papers:**

Adoption of revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) – Cabinet – 16 February 2023 (item 109) - [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday 16 February 2023, 6.30 pm – London Borough of Harrow](#)

New Harrow Local Plan – Way Forward and Strategic Objective – Planning Policy Advisory Panel – 6 March 2023 (item 33) - [Agenda for Planning Policy Advisory Panel on Monday 6 March 2023, 6.30 pm – London Borough of Harrow](#)

Statement of Community Involvement – Planning Policy Advisory Panel – 13 July 2023 (item 50) - [Agenda for Planning Policy Advisory Panel on Thursday 13 July 2023, 6.30 pm – London Borough of Harrow](#)

Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Context Report – Planning Policy Advisory Panel – 18 September 2023 (item 58) - [Agenda for Planning Policy Advisory Panel on Monday 18 September 2023, 6.30 pm – London Borough of Harrow](#)

New Harrow Local Plan – draft Spatial Vision and Objectives – Planning Policy Advisory Panel – 2 November 2023 (item 66) - [Agenda for Planning Policy Advisory Panel on Thursday 2 November 2023, 6.30 pm – London Borough of Harrow](#)

Current Harrow Local Plan: [https://www.harrow.gov.uk/planning-developments#id-local\\_plan](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/planning-developments#id-local_plan)

London Plan (regional spatial strategy) 2021:  
[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the\\_london\\_plan\\_2021.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) -  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65829e99fc07f3000d8d4529/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65829e99fc07f3000d8d4529/NPPF_December_2023.pdf)

Planning policy for traveller sites (19 December 2023):  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/658198bb23b70a000d234c03/Final\\_planning\\_and\\_travellers\\_policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/658198bb23b70a000d234c03/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf)

Written Ministerial Statement – ‘Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update’ (13 December 2023): [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

**Appendix 1 – Draft New Harrow Local Plan (Regulation 18 version)**

## **Appendix 2 - Draft Interim Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) advice note**

To be published separately

## Appendix 3 – Recent Government Policy Announcements and Implications for Draft Local Plan

### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – 19 December 2023*

1. The Government published a revised version of the NPPF on 19 December 2023. The implications of the substantial amendments to the revised NPPF on the process of preparing the new Harrow Local Plan can be summarised as follows:

- (a) the revised NPPF (paragraph 1) includes additional text emphasising that ‘preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority’ in meeting the Framework objectives to ensure locally prepared plans provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner.

*Implications:* the Council is already working to meet Government deadlines for plan-making under the current process and is pursuing an ambitious programme to do this. ‘Sufficient’ housing in the London context is determined by the housing targets set for boroughs in the London Plan.

- (b) specific reference has inserted (paragraph 6) in relation to the preparation of Local Plans having to have regard to a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on Affordable Homes (May 2021), which contains policy on First Homes.

*Implications:* First Homes are not seen as being genuinely affordable in the London / London Plan context and the draft Local Plan does not identify it as a preferred affordable housing tenure. This position may need to be reviewed, noting however the NPPF only indicates WMSs ‘may be material’.

- (c) the emphasis on housing needs has been changed in the plan-making context (paragraph 15), where plans should set out a framework for ‘meeting housing needs’ (previously it was ‘addressing housing needs’). Other issues such as economic, social and environmental priorities remain as ‘addressing’.

*Implications:* Whilst ‘meeting’ is a stronger expectation / outcome (than ‘addressing’), the housing requirement (target) for Harrow is set out in the London Plan and there should be limited implications of the change on the Local Plan process.

- (d) a requirement that strategic policies / strategies ‘ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking’ has been added (paragraph 20).

*Implications:* The draft Plan has been drafted to emphasise a design-led process. Further consideration may need to be given as to whether the policies sufficiently articulate how they will support ‘beauty and placemaking’ in the Harrow context.



- (e) Additional guidance with respect to housing need (paragraph 60) indicating 'The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community'.

*Implications:* The housing requirement (target) for Harrow is set out in the London Plan and there should be limited implications of the change on the Local Plan process. Consideration will be given to the NPPF linking of 'need' with 'an appropriate mix of housing types' given Harrow's need for housing is for a greater proportion of family size housing compared to that assumed in the London Plan / London Plan housing targets.

- (f) Additional guidance in relation to the Government's standard method of identifying local housing need (paragraph 61). The guidance indicates the standard method is 'an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement' and that there may be exceptional circumstances 'including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area which justify an alternative approach'.

*Implications:* The housing requirement (target) for Harrow is set out in the London Plan and there should be limited implications of the change on the Local Plan process. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of specific reference to 'demographic characteristics' given Harrow's need for housing is for a greater proportion of family size housing compared to that assumed in the London Plan / London Plan housing targets.

- (g) Formal inclusion of reference to the urban 'uplift' of 35% in the standard methodology, which applies to London [it basically increases the calculated housing need of an area by 35%] (paragraph 63)].

*Implications:* In the short-term, the housing requirement (target) for Harrow are set out in the London Plan and there should be limited implications of the change on the Local Plan process. The uplift will however be a consideration during the preparation of any new London Plan.

- (h) Clarification that a housing requirement (target) in a Local Plan can be higher than housing need (for example, it includes provision for neighbouring areas, or reflects growth ambitions) (paragraph 67).

*Implications:* No direct implications for the draft Local Plan as the Plan seeks to meet (not exceed) the London Plan housing target / requirement for Harrow (and that target is expressed as a minimum anyway).

- (i) Specific reference / promotion of mansard roofs as a source of new housing and an 'effective use of land' (paragraph 124).

*Implications:* The draft plan will be reviewed to ensure it meets this requirement, where appropriate in the Harrow context.

- (j) Further reference to 'beautiful' in the context of supporting 'development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account: ... the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places' (paragraph 128).

*Implications:* The draft plan will be reviewed to ensure it meets this requirement, where appropriate in the Harrow context.

- (k) Inclusion of a caveat (paragraph 130) relating to existing provisions that seek an 'significant uplift in the average density of residential development' and 'minimum density standards' (paragraphs 129(a) and (b) respectively). The caveat indicates such uplifts maybe 'inappropriate if the resulting built form would be wholly out of character with the existing area. Such circumstances should be evidenced through an authority-wide design code which is adopted or will be adopted as part of the development plan'.

*Implications:* This caveat is unlikely to be applicable in Harrow given the London Plan emphasises design-led approach to development and has moved away from the use of minimum densities.

- (l) Specific reference to the preparation and use of local design codes being the 'primary' means of improving the design of development (paragraph 138).

*Implications:* The draft Local Plan has been prepared in the knowledge that a local design code/s would need to be subsequently prepared. The draft will however be reviewed to ensure this is adequately reflected in the document.

- (m) Revised guidance with respect to the preparation of Local Plans and Green Belt boundaries, clearly stating 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated' (although they may choose to do so) (paragraph 145).

*Implications:* No implications for the draft Plan as no changes to Green Belt boundaries are proposed.

- 2 Paragraph 230 of the new NPPF indicates that Local Plans that have not reached Regulation 19 stage consultation (i.e. consultation on the version of the plan proposed to be submitted for examination) by 19 March 2024 will be examined under the new NPPF. As Harrow's new Local Plan is expected to reach Regulation 19 consultation at the

end of 2024, it will be examined under the new NPPF (hence this initial review of the amendments).

*Updated Planning policy for traveller sites – 19 December 2023*

3. The Government also updated the Planning policy for traveller sites on 19 December 2023. The key change was an amendment to the glossary to broaden the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in response to a Court of Appeal ruling in October 2022 that the 2015 version of the policy discriminated unlawfully against those who had been forced to give up their nomadic lifestyles due to disability or old age. The draft Local Plan was prepared in the context of the Court of Appeal decision / potentially wider definition and with clarity from Government, will be reviewed and amended accordingly prior to Regulation 18 consultation.

*Written Ministerial Statement – ‘Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update’ – 13 December 2023*

4. Finally, a written ministerial statement (WMS) was issued on 13 December 2023 in relation to ‘Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update’. This statement seeks to limit local planning authorities proposing local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations unless they can demonstrate that development remains viable and any additional requirement is expressed using the approach / assessment set out in the Building Regulations. This WMS may therefore have implications for the proposed approach to energy efficiency / carbon emissions in the draft Local Plan as it proposes to use a wider definition of zero carbon than the Building Regulations. The evidence base for the proposed approach was developed with 17 other London boroughs and the implications of the WMS will be discussed on a pan-London basis and with the GLA.