

Copeland Local Plan Preferred Options Draft 2021-2038

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Andy Pratt

LEAD OFFICER: Chris Hoban

REPORT AUTHOR: Chris Hoban

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the production of the final draft of the Local Plan: *the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038 Publication Draft* for final review.

Also, to request the Panel support the report to Full Council on 7th December, which will seek approval of the Publication Draft and agreement to commence a 6-week public consultation on the document in January and February 2022 in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Following the public consultation, it is intended that the Publication Draft is submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination at the end of April 2022, together with the supporting evidence base, assessments and all responses to this consultation.

The Examination will run for the remainder of 2022, and it is hoped the Planning Inspector will produce their report in January 2023 to allow the Local Plan to be adopted in March 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider the Publication Draft report and approve it to be presented at Full Council on 7th December 2021 with the following recommendations:

- The commencement of a 6-week public consultation from Monday 10th January to Monday 21st February 2022
- The submission of the Local Plan, with any proposed minor modifications as necessary, to the Secretary of State for Public Examination at the end of April 2022

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council officers have now produced the Publication Draft of the *Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038* for consideration and approval. The Publication Draft represents the Council's final draft of the Plan which it wishes to submit to the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 Prior to submission the Publication Draft of the Local Plan must be consulted upon for 6 weeks. Once the consultation has been completed the Publication Draft, together with all of the evidence base and assessments produced to inform it, and all responses received during that consultation will be submitted for Public Examination by a Planning Inspector.
- 1.3 This report outlines the process and stages that have informed the Publication Draft, together with the structure of the document.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the Publication Draft is still being reviewed to ensure that all necessary changes have been made, and so there may be some slight updates that will need to be discussed at the meeting.
- 1.5 The Publication Draft is attached at Appendix 1, while the settlement maps, which show the settlement boundaries and all of the sites for allocation and protection can be found in Appendix 2.

2 PRODUCING THE PUBLICATION DRAFT

- 2.1 The Local Plan has gone through a number of key stages during its production, informed by an increasing evidence base, tested by a number of different assessments and been subject to three main public consultation stages. These are as follows:
 - **Issues and Options Draft**, which sought to set the scope for the Local Plan and identify the different options available to deliver local aspirations and needs. This was subject to an 8-week public consultation between November 2019 and January 2020.
 - **Preferred Options Draft**, which pulled all of the information and responses from the Issues and Options stage, the developing evidence base, and started to identify the best and most sustainable options for the Local Plan. The Preferred Options represented the first draft of the Local Plan.

- Often, the next stage is to produce the final draft of the Local Plan: the Publication Draft. However, as there were a number of potentially significant changes that were being considered, the Council undertook a short **Focussed Consultation** on these potential changes to gather feedback before finalising the Publication Draft. This consultation took place during September and October 2021 and the details were presented to LDF panel in August.

2.2 The Publication Draft has taken the Preferred Options as its starting point, and updated it to reflect the comments received from Preferred Options and Focussed consultations, the final and updated pieces of the evidence base and updates to national policy and local initiatives etc.

2.3 The Publication Draft represents the Council's final draft of the Local Plan which it intends to submit to the Secretary of State for Public Examination by a Planning Inspector.

3 STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PUBLICATION DRAFT

3.1 Whilst using the Preferred Options as the starting point and following the same broad structure, the Publication Draft of the Local Plan has been broken into a larger number of topic based chapters as follows:

- Vision & Objectives
- Spatial Portrait
- Development Strategy
- Development Standards
- Copeland's Economy
- Rural Economy
- Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
- Nuclear Development
- Retail and Leisure
- Tourism
- Housing
- Health, Sport & Culture
- Natural Environment
- Built and Historic Environment
- Connectivity

- Monitoring

3.2 This will hopefully make it easier for the reader to find the policy(s) they are looking for. Most of the significant changes from the Preferred Options were consulted upon in September, although not all proposals from that consultation are being taken forward.

3.3 As there has been so little time since the Focussed Consultation ended there may need to be some further small amendments and updates to the Plan, which will be discussed at the meeting. The main reasons for this are to allow for the Publication Draft to be tested fully in terms of Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment.

3.4 In addition to this there will be some updates to the maps, to include playing fields, Green Wedges, tourism hubs and gateways, as well as the Wind Energy map, housing sites with planning permission, and the completion of the Monitoring chapter.

3.5 It is intended that these minor updates will enhance the final version of the Publication Draft that will be presented to Full Council, and will not change any of the policies or proposed allocations within it, which are the key things that Members need to consider. There will also be some minor formatting changes, as the document is proof read and checked again by officers.

4 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATION

4.1 It should however be noted that one policy is currently incomplete. The Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been delayed following issues in effectively contacting the gypsy and traveller communities due to Covid-19 and associated lock downs.

4.2 As a result the number of pitches the Local Plan needs to provide for in Copeland is not yet known, and the range discussed is quite large (between 1 and 12 pitches). This work is almost complete and if a need for Copeland is identified the Council will identify suitable land to be allocated in the Local Plan.

4.3 This means that Policy H9PU, which would allocate a Gypsy and Traveller site, is currently incomplete.

4.4 Once the need is known, and if a site is identified, a further report will be brought to LDF Panel and Full Council proposing land to be allocated as a

Gypsy and Traveller Site. This would then be subject to a separate six week Addendum public consultation in February and March 2022, immediately following the consultation on the Publication Draft.

4.5 The outcome of that consultation will then be factored into the final draft of the Local Plan that is submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 If approved, the Publication Draft will be subject to a 6-week public consultation between Monday 10th January to Monday 21st February 2022.

5.2 The methods of consultation are outlined in the *Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2020*, and it is hoped that more physical and face to face forms of engagement will be possible alongside the online methods that were successfully deployed at the Preferred Options Stage.

5.3 The report, together with all of the evidence base and supporting assessments, will be published on the Council's website.

5.4 Following the consultation the responses will be considered to ensure that no major changes would be required to the Local Plan. Then, the draft Local Plan, evidence base, assessments and all comments received will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038: Publication Draft

Appendix 2 – Draft Settlement Maps