

Copeland Local Plan Preferred Options Draft 2017-2035

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the production of the new *Local Plan 2017-2035 Preferred Options Draft* and to request the Panel support the report to Full Council on 8th September, which seeks agreement to commence an 8-week public consultation on the Draft.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider the Preferred Options Draft report and approve it to be presented at Full Council on 8th September 2020 with the recommendation for the commencement of an 8-week public consultation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following approval on 19th November 2019, the Council consulted on the Issues and Options for the new *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035* between November 2019 and January 2020.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to show how feedback from that consultation, together with updated evidence base reports and assessments have informed the next stage of the Local Plan: The Preferred Options.
- 1.3 The Issues and Options consultation was based around a number of topics that promoted development or protection. The consultation generated 43 responses, and these have all been assessed and compiled into a consultation report that identifies preferences and themes to consider.
- 1.4 A number of evidence base reports have been completed since November, which has helped the development of the Preferred Options, and the policies and proposals have been refined following engagement with other relevant teams in the Council.
- 1.5 Finally, the Preferred Options have been tested for the sustainability and their potential impacts on the environment through the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 1.6 The Preferred Options draft is then attached at Appendix 1 for approval.

2 THE PREFERRED OPTIONS

2.1 As the Preferred Options were being developed it became clear that there were many inter-relationships between the topics from the Issues and Options and it made sense to group a number of them together.

2.2 The structure of the document is set out as follows:

- **Vision and Objectives:** which set out what the Local Plan is trying to achieve
- **Strategy and Standards:** which sets the overarching framework for development in the Plan, and contains strategic policies that would be applied to most developments
- **Copeland's Economy:** which brings together all of the sectors in the local economy (town centre businesses, tourism, nuclear and clean energy, and general employment) to form a positive series of policies and proposals that will support Copeland's economy and help it to flourish in the long term
- **Copeland's Communities:** which focuses on housing development and improving the quality of housing in Copeland, community facilities, health, sport and leisure to enable Copeland to flourish in the 'new normal'
- **Copeland's Places:** which focuses on protecting and enhancing the high quality environment and places that exist in Copeland, and will make people want to live and stay in the borough
- **Connectivity:** which identifies the digital and physical connections and improvements that can help deliver the policies and proposals in the previous chapters

2.3 A number of key changes from the current adopted Core Strategy include:

- An expanded settlement hierarchy, which has five tiers and includes more villages, to help enable some development in a wider range of sustainable locations to support rural communities
- Strategic regeneration priorities and sites, both within our town centres and strategic sites, which will support growth and help 'reboot' the borough. This framework can then strengthen future funding bids to deliver the change
- Supporting the development of a Digital Grid in Whitehaven to provide a safe, secure and free Wi-Fi network to make it the place to live and do business
- Identification of the Whitehaven Relief Road and the long term opportunities and growth corridor it could support, including further development of Westlakes Science and Technology Park, a new Strategic Employment Site, a sports and leisure quarter, and longer term housing opportunities
- The opportunities that can result from the Cumbria Clean Energy Park, ensuring that Copeland remains at the heart of the Energy Coast

- The opportunities to build on exiting projects and attractions to grow the tourism offer in Copeland, making the most of the stunning environment and coastline and developing the Lake District Coast brand
- A housing requirement of 140 homes per year, but with the Plan ensuring enough land is available and allocated to support the potential growth that could arise from the opportunities in the Copeland Vision
- Requiring a biodiversity net gain from developments to ensure they make a positive contribution to local communities
- Identifying Green Wedges to protect the character and identity of settlements, and Local Green Spaces, which will have additional protection from development
- A strong emphasis on sustainable and active travel

2.4 The *Copeland Local Plan 2017-35: Preferred Options* will also include the site allocations that will be needed to deliver the strategy.

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 If approved, the Preferred Options will be subject to an 8-week public consultation between Monday 21st September and Sunday 15th November 2020 to gather views on the proposals, policies and sites in the Preferred Options.

3.2 The methods of consultation are outlined in the accompanying agenda item: *Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2020*.

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

3.4 The feedback from the consultation, together with any updates to the evidence base will inform the Council's final draft of the local Plan: the Publication Draft.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035: Preferred Options Draft