

**REPORT TO:** Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

**SUBJECT:** Unitary Development Plan Draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

**WARDS:** Borough wide

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. The Council currently has a number of draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that were not progressed, and are now unlikely to be progressed in their current form due to the expiration of the Unitary Development Plan. Changes to statutory planning documents require a resolution from Executive Board for formal implementation.

**2. RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) the Board endorses a recommendation to Executive Board to remove the draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) from the Halton Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with the relevant legislation.**

**3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1. Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) expand on the Council's policies contained in the adopted Development Plan to provide more detailed information and guidance than can be contained in the policies themselves. They give guidance to the public, applicants and developers when making planning applications. Adopted SPDs are a material consideration in determining planning applications. However SPDs are not part of the Development Plan itself, and they do not carry as much weight as a Development Plan policy.
- 3.2. The Delivery and Allocations Local Plan is now at an advanced stage, and upon its adoption, the Unitary Development Plan will expire. The draft SPDs associated with the UDP will therefore expire alongside their parent UDP policies.

- 3.3. The introduction of a new automated legal land search process undertaken to support land transfer and conveyancing has provided impetus to formalise the status of these draft SPDs. In particular, land searches have to report on development proposals contained within adopted and draft Plans. Including old SPDs on property searches may cause unnecessary concern and confusion amongst property purchasers and generate unnecessary follow-up enquires to the Council from solicitors and conveyancers.
- 3.4. The Council has the power to revoke SPD's, in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It is recommended that four draft SPDs be formally removed from the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Removing the SPDs from the Local Development Scheme (LDS) will have no policy implications. The objectives of the draft SPDs have been achieved by other means, or superseded by more recent strategies / policies. Currently, as these SPDs remain only in a draft form, they have not been used for Development Management purposes. Any material weight that may have been attributed to the SPD in planning decisions would be negligible due to more recently adopted policy positions. The relevant draft SPDs are as follows:
  - 4.2. **Draft Runcorn Old Town SPD** (Last consultation - February 2007)
  - 4.3. The purpose of this SPD was to encourage those who have an interest in the vitality and viability of this town centre to follow the practical guidance it contains wherever opportunities arise.
  - 4.4. This SPD was not progressed for the following reasons:
    - a) Production of the SPD was initially paused due to the commissioning of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy to avoid any potential mismatch between the two documents.
    - b) The policies the SPD was intended to supplement have largely been revoked (Regional Spatial Strategy policies SD2 and EC8 - revoked in 2013) or will shortly be replaced by the DALP (existing Unitary Development Plan policies TC1-6).
    - c) The SPD covers the UDP 'town centre boundary' that has subsequently been amended in the Core Strategy.
    - d) Many significant changes have affected the background to the proposals within the SPD, including opening of the Mersey Gateway, subsequent SJB delinking, Runcorn Station Quarter development and a much tougher retail business climate.
    - e) More recent plans exist to support the regeneration of the Old Town, for example the Runcorn Station Quarter Masterplan.

4.5. **Halton Lea SPD** (Last consultation - February 2007)

4.6. The purpose of this SPD was to encourage all of those who have, or will have, an interest in the vitality and viability of Halton Lea to follow the practical guidance it contains wherever opportunities arise.

4.7. This SPD was not progressed for the following reasons:

- a) Production of the SPD was initially paused due to the commissioning of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy to avoid any potential mismatch between the two documents.
- b) The policies the SPD was intended to supplement have largely been revoked (Regional Spatial Strategy policies SD2 and EC8 - revoked in 2013) or will shortly be replaced by the DALP (existing Unitary Development Plan policies TC1-6).
- c) The SPD covers the 'town centre boundary' that has subsequently been amended in the Core Strategy.
- d) Many of the proposals within the SPD have been implemented and many other significant changes have affected the background to the SPD, including redevelopment of Vestric House site (Lidl/Polar Ford), increase in office vacancies, office to residential conversion (permitted development), closure of the Courts and a much tougher retail business climate.

4.8. **West Bank SPD** (Last consultation - November 2009)

4.9. The purpose of this SPD was to establish and identify potential development or improvement opportunities within West Bank to help sustain the existing community and deliver regeneration benefits to the area. The SPD also sought to ensure a suitable standard of development was achieved to improve the visual and environmental quality of the area.

4.10. This SPD was not progressed for the following reasons:

- a) The SPD supported targeted regeneration within the West Bank area. Following investment in the area, active intervention in the market is no longer necessary.
- b) The parent policy for this SPD in the Core Strategy Local Plan (Policy CS9 South Widnes) is to be deleted, with no equivalent parent policy in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.
- c) The SPD has now been superseded by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy.

- 4.11. Halebank Regeneration Area SPD (Last consultation - September 2005)
- 4.12. The purpose of this SPD was to establish what development or improvement opportunities there are within Halebank to help sustain the existing community and improve the economy of this local area. The SPD is also concerned with ensuring a suitable standard of development is achieved that will improve the visual and environmental quality of the area. This SPD will specifically address the following opportunities:
- The reinforcement of the new neighbourhood shopping area and local community facilities.
  - Additional housing development including redevelopment of land currently or previously used for business, where ground conditions and location are favourable.
  - Improved road and public transport access using the railway and possible new road links to the wider strategic road network.
  - Provide mechanisms and guidance to achieve improvements in the quality of existing business operations.
  - New woodland planting on the urban fringe and improved public open space provision.
- 4.13. This SPD was not progressed for the following reasons:
- a) The Core Strategy (including Key Area of Change policy) was progressed negating the need for much of the SPD.
  - b) The main proposals of the SPD have been delivered.
  - c) The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policy the SPD supports will be deleted.
  - d) The SPD had regard to the then current Planning Policy Statements (PPS1 and PPS6), now replaced by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The draft SPD may not fully accord with the latest national policy and guidance.
  - e) The SPD has now been superseded by the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1. As described above, the objectives of the draft SPDs have been achieved by other means or superseded by more recent strategies / policies.
- 6.2. **Healthy Halton**  
None
- 6.3. **Halton's Urban Renewal**  
None

6.4. **Children and Young People in Halton**

None .

6.5. **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

6.6. **Safer Halton**

None

**7. RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1. There are no risks arising from this report or the recommendation. The objectives of the draft SPDs either have been delivered or are taken account of by other more recent strategies and policies.

**8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1. There are no equality or diversity issues raised by the issues discussed in this report.

**9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
(Draft) Halebank Regeneration Area SPD	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross
<a href="https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Halebank_Regeneration_Area_SPD.pdf">https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Halebank_Regeneration_Area_SPD.pdf</a>		
(Draft) Runcorn Old Town SPD	Municipal Building, Widnes	
<a href="https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Runcorn_Old_Town_SPD.pdf">https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Runcorn_Old_Town_SPD.pdf</a>		
(Draft) Halton Lea Town Centre SPD	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross
<a href="https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Halton_Lea_Town_Centre_Strategy_SPD.pdf">https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_Halton_Lea_Town_Centre_Strategy_SPD.pdf</a>		
(Draft) West Bank SPD	Municipal Building, Widnes	Alasdair Cross
<a href="https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_West_Bank_SPD.pdf">https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/spd/Draft/Draft_West_Bank_SPD.pdf</a>		

