SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the progress of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan highlighting the recent stage of public consultation. The next stages of the Plan’s preparation are included for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the report

That Members consider the next stages of the Local Plan preparation and make comments and representations through the Members on the Joint Committee Steering Group

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that Members are kept up to date with the Local Plan’s preparation and engage with officers and representative Members serving the Joint Committee.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

None
REPORT

1.1 Members will find attached Appendix A which is a report on the public consultation held 8\textsuperscript{th} January to 19\textsuperscript{th} February 2016. Appendix A also accompanied the South East Lincolnshire Joint Committee report considered on 22\textsuperscript{nd} April last. This scrutiny report will highlight specific issues of interest to Boston Borough Members but the whole Appendix serves to inform Members of the range of views and issues that were forthcoming.

1.2 As will be noted from the table on page 2 of the Appendix the public events held at Boston venues were comparatively well attended. A little less than half of all attendees (about 500) came to Boston venues. It would be fair to conclude that the level of interest generated in Boston Borough was much greater especially when it is considered that the number of events held were fewer. As a generality the vast majority of attendees were genuinely pleased to have the opportunity to come to the events and have some complex issue explained to them. As this consultation was about proposed development sites in “their” settlements the concern of most attendees was how particular sites would affect them.

1.3 It should be noted that in addition to the “Local Plan Events” listed on page 13 of the Appendix an exhibition was on display in the Atrium of these offices for the full six weeks, officers were on call throughout this period and extended opening hours (until 6.30 pm) on January 28\textsuperscript{th}.

1.4 The comments generated by the whole consultation exercise have been represented as bullet point summaries of the main issues raised and in accordance with the chapters and policies of the draft Local Plan. Whilst about 1666 comments were submitted the summaries often represent a number of submissions where these were broadly the same. A detailed database is available where the full comments as submitted can be seen.

1.5 A number of comments (excluding those made on particular settlements which will be covered later) have a particular Boston Borough bearing:

- The representation of Boston Woods in the Local Plan - to which a number of constructive meetings between the Trust’s representatives and officers have since taken place
- Support for the Boston Distributor Road and also comments on the affordability of bridges etc. – it should be noted that feasibility and options work on the Distributor Road is ongoing as part of a review of the Boston Transport Strategy.
- Flood Risk should continue to be an issue of significant importance and assessments need to be based upon the most up to date information – this is an ongoing necessity.
- Support for the approach towards protecting and enhancing the retail offer in the town centres.
- Need to ensure a strategic approach to addressing air quality management in Boston – this is being looked at as part of the Boston Transport Strategy.

1.6 Members will also note that on page 31 of the Appendix comments have been made through the public consultation on the draft policy on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO’s). The Local Plan Joint Committee will be considering amendments and your attention is drawn to this given the recent motion supported by Full Council.

1.7 The vast majority of comments made on Local Plans are always about proposed development sites; either promoting or opposing development.

As the Appendix shows (mainly under 2.7.2 Distribution of New Housing) the following settlements in the Borough raised comments of support and also comments of concern regarding housing development:

- Boston – comments of support but also concern that there was an over reliance on development in the urban area
- Kirton – promotion of additional sites and opposition to particular sites
- Swineshead – support for the level of development proposed and also opposition to the level of development and also to specific sites
- Sutterton – support for the level of development and also opposition to the level of development
- Bicker – support for development
- Old Leake – support for more development
- Wigtoft – support for specific sites
- Fosdyke – support for more development
- Freiston – support for more development
- Haltoft End – support for more development
- Leverton – support for more development
- Swineshead Bridge – support for more development

1.8 Comments both in support of development and opposing had similar reasoning largely concerning the level of supporting community infrastructure (e.g. schools, health facilities, shops etc.) or the availability of such services nearby (where development was supported). Specific issues with regard to where development should take place related to access, flood risk and also environmental impact particularly with regard to safeguarding features of historic value.

1.9 It is anticipated that Members will have had views expressed to them with regard to particular sites and specific settlements. Clearly the merits for all arguments will have to be weighed up and accounted for by the Local Plan Joint Committee as a matter of priority as the representations are considered.
Next Steps

1.10 The recent public consultation put forward site options for housing, employment, retail and suggested settlement boundaries for settlements. The next, main task will be to consider all the issues made through the public consultation with regard to development and sites (including newly submitted sites) and to select the preferred sites to meet the levels of growth the Local Plan proposes.

1.11 It is programmed that the draft findings on the preferred sites will be taken to the Members Steering Group at the end of May, a Joint Committee to endorse the selected preferred sites at the end of June followed by another round of public consultation, on the preferred sites, in July and August.

1.12 Following the July/August consultation the final (Publication draft) of the Local Plan will be considered by the Joint Committee at the end of September which will be followed by a final stage of public consultation before the Local Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public (expected to be submitted before Christmas).

CONCLUSION

2.1 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan is progressing towards its final stages later this year. The most recent round of public consultation was generally well received and supported but there are still issues of concern to the development industry and the public alike to consider. The elected Members of Boston Borough Council are encouraged to stay informed with regard to emerging issues as the next few months will see the Local Plan being readied for the crucial stages of Examination early in 2017.

2.2 The following Elected Members from Boston Borough serve on the Joint Committee and/or Steering Group; Cllrs: Peter Bedford, Colin Brotherton, David Brown, Brian Rush, Claire Rylott, Stephen Woodliffe. Councillor’s Alison Austin and Michael Brookes serve in their capacity as County Council Members.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None – existing work within budget provisions

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None
ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Plans have to be prepared within a framework that requires Environmental, Equality and Diversity Impacts to be assessed.

CONSULTATION

Local Plans have specific statutory public consultation regulations to fulfil (in accordance with the approved Statement of Community Involvement) and at Examination the Inspector has to assess whether the regulations have been met.

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

APPENDIX A  South East Lincolnshire Draft Local Plan – Summary of Consultation Responses

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document title</th>
<th>Where the document can be viewed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South East Lincolnshire Local Plan – Draft for Public Consultation (January 2016)</td>
<td>Member’s Lounge <a href="http://www.southeastlincslocalplan.org">www.southeastlincslocalplan.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

None