



Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board
12 January 2017

Review of the Surrey Waste Plan: Results of Consultation

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

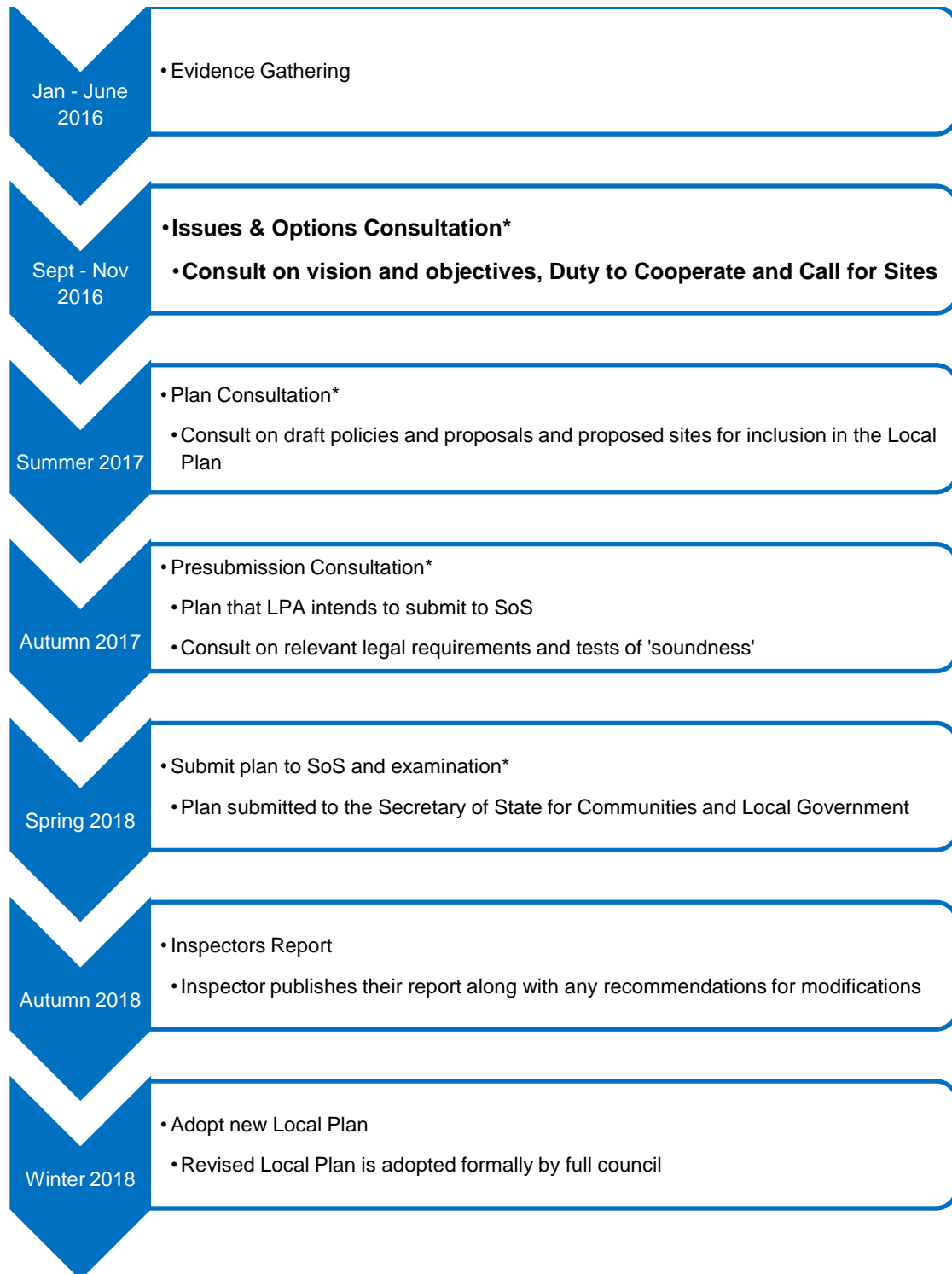
Surrey County Council in its role as the Waste Planning Authority is preparing a new Surrey Waste Local Plan. The first stage of consultation, the Issues & Options stage, ran from 2 September to 25 November 2016.

This paper is provided to update the Board on the results of the consultation and outline the next stages of preparation for the new Surrey Waste Local Plan.

Introduction:

1. Surrey County Council is the Waste Planning Authority (WPA). The WPA needs to make sure that enough facilities can be built to manage all types of waste Surrey produces in the most sustainable way.
2. The current Surrey Waste Plan was adopted in 2008 and is reaching the end of its plan period. Surrey County Council is taking steps to review the Surrey Waste Plan 2008 over the next few years (Figure 1). It is proposed that the new Surrey Waste Local Plan (SWLP) will cover the period from 2018 to 2033.
3. The first stage of public consultation in the preparation of the new SWLP was the 'Issues and Options' stage which set out the context for the preparation of the SWLP, the vision, objectives and included a 'Search for Suitable Land'. This is highlighted in Figure 1 below.
4. The SWLP is prepared by the county council in its role as WPA. This is different from its role as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) which includes the management of community recycling centres (CRCs). Hence, for example, introducing charging to cover costs at CRCs falls outside the remit of the SWLP.

Figure 1 Key stages of plan preparation and broad types of engagement that will occur



*Opportunities for comments

Summary of Consultation undertaken

5. Between 2 September and 25 November 2016 Surrey County Council consulted on an Issues and Options Paper and a number of supporting evidence documents as part of the preparation of the SWLP.
6. A wide range of media (newsletters, website, twitter), correspondence and meetings was used to inform individuals and organisations about the new SWLP and seek their comments.
7. The council's website supported the consultation through a dedicated webpage, including links to PDF copies of documents and a link to the online survey.
8. A wide range of individuals and organisations were notified at the start of the consultation by either email or letter. Printed copies of the documents, along with flyers, were provided in the district and borough council offices and libraries.
9. Self-sealing summary and question forms were also available at district and borough council offices and local libraries. Articles were published in Surrey Matters (print and e-newsletter) and Surrey Economic Prospects in September and October 2016.

Response rate

Duty to Cooperate Bodies and Statutory Consultees

10. Twenty four responses were received from Duty to Cooperate (DtC) bodies and other agencies including; The Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, TfL and Network Rail, two AONB Management Boards, nine Waste Planning Authorities (WPAs) and six Surrey district and borough councils.

Operators and Landowners

11. Ten responses were received from site operators and/or landowners on the Issues and Options Consultation. A further 18 waste operators provided information on the capacity of their current site to support the evidence base for the new SWLP. This represented a 33% response rate from operators, although a number of operators provided information for multiple sites.
12. Outstanding capacity information is being pursued to help improve the evidence base.

Residents

13. Over 600 responses were from Surrey residents. Only three parish councils and/or residents associations responded. Only one action group responded. This low level response rate from these organisations may be due to the 'high level' nature of the consultation with proposed sites not being included until the next stage (Draft Plan Consultation Summer 2017).
14. The responses received were a mix of on-line responses, paper questionnaires, letters and emails. The majority of responses (84%) were submitted via the online consultation portal with only 16% of responses submitted in paper form. There was a relatively even split between respondents in the age categories 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 and 65+. There were fewer responses from younger age categories (<35 years).

Businesses

15. Only one business responded to the business survey which was circulated via Surrey Business Forum. Further work will be required to engage with the businesses community. Businesses are a major producer of waste and their views regarding waste production and management are important.

Results

Overview

16. The majority of respondents were happy with the process proposed to develop the plan. Those that were unhappy about the process were mainly residents concerned with previous processes lacking clarity and transparency.

Issues

17. A number of consultees wanted to see a stronger focus on environmental protection and other policy designations e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt. Some consultees helpfully provided updated or improved information that will be considered as part of the context for the preparation of the plan.
18. A number of respondents noted the difficulties in locating waste facilities in the county. Including:
 - The need to avoid areas of high biodiversity and landscape value and historic significance;
 - The need to consider residential amenity and highways issues; and
 - Waste facilities potentially being unable to compete with other more profitable land uses e.g. housing

19. Industry consultees also reported that recent changes in the resource management sector have largely been driven by European Union (EU) legislation and policy. There is considerable uncertainty about the future direction of UK policy following the referendum and this reinforces the requirement for flexibility in a new SWLP.
20. The majority of comments were related to detailed aspects of the report such as specific waste movements, forecasts and potential sites. Many of these concerns will be covered by evidence based documents for arisings and capacity on specific waste streams, including:
 - Municipal/household
 - Commercial/industrial
 - Construction/demolition
 - Low Level Radioactive
 - Agricultural
 - Hazardous
 - Waste water
21. The council will be informally consulting on these documents with districts and boroughs and other relevant stakeholders in early 2017, this will be followed by a formal consultation on these documents as part of the draft plan.

Vision

22. Generally respondents welcomed the wording of the draft vision and the principles set out in the objectives, particularly the aspiration to minimise landfill waste through prevention, re-use, recycling, and recovery.
23. Some comments reflected that the vision was too long and contained jargon. Most comments on the vision related to whether 'zero waste to landfill' was achievable.
24. Overall, the vision was well received and the council will continue to strive towards managing waste in the most sustainable way and this includes promoting the management of waste up the waste hierarchy.

Proposed plan period

25. Few comments were received on the proposed plan period. Of those, two suggested that it might be more suitable to match the plan periods to borough and district local plans, for example the Local Plans for Elmbridge and Runnymede cover a period up to 2035.
26. However, responses from operators highlighted the high degree of uncertainty and the large amount of change occurring in waste markets therefore they would prefer to see a shorter plan period.
27. The proposed plan period is 15 years from 2018 up to 2033 in accordance with paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), however the council will review the need to amend this in the light of the above responses.

Objectives

28. Some respondents identified a need to consider an objective on the restoration of waste management sites. In particular, restored sites can be effective in providing net gains for biodiversity and opportunities for enhancement and improving connectivity. This was linked to other comments which suggested a greater emphasis was needed on environmental protection e.g. protection of habitats for wildlife and high value landscapes.
29. Many respondents supported Surrey County Council in working with partners including districts and boroughs and other authorities. The council will continue to work with its partners in particular through the Duty to Cooperate as policies and proposals are developed.

Conclusions:

30. The Issues and Options Consultation ran for a 12 week period from 2 September to 25 November 2016 and sought stakeholder's views on the strategic context, the vision and the objectives for sustainable waste management in Surrey.
31. A total of 671 responses were received across the different groups of stakeholders which covered a wide range of topics. The council has reviewed these comments and produced a summary report of those responses which will be published on the Minerals and Waste Planning Policy pages of the council's website.
32. These comments will be considered the new SWLP is prepared. There may be minor amendments to the context and issues papers, the draft vision and the draft objectives. The final reports will published on the Minerals and Waste Planning Policy webpages.

Recommendations:

33. It is recommended that the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board:
 - a. Note the results of the Issues and Options Consultation related to the preparation of the new SWLP
 - b. Note the summary report that sets out the responses to the Issues and Options Consultation (**Annexe 1**).

Next steps:

A summary of the responses (**Annexe 1**) received will be published following the meeting of the EPEH Board.

The comments made will be reviewed and taken into account as the draft plan is prepared. The draft plan will be presented to the EPEH Board and Cabinet before the next stage of consultation commences.

This further round of consultation will be undertaken in July 2017 on the content of the draft plan. The attached report will be updated and republished alongside the draft version of the new SWLP to include detail as to how the council has responded to the issues raised.

Report contact: Katelyn Symington, Principal Planning Policy Officer, Minerals and Waste

Contact details: Tel: 020 8541 7933,
Email: Katelyn.Symington@Surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

Annexe 1 Issues and Options Consultation Summary of Responses Report

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