
Report to: Planning Committee Cabinet	Date of Meeting: 5 December 2012 13 December 2012
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Subject: Local Plan for Sefton - Outcome of Studies

Report of: Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?**
Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To inform members of the outcome of key studies which will help in preparing the Local Plan, to agree a brief for a Consequences Study, and to approve an updated timetable for preparing the Local Plan.

Recommendations

That Planning Committee

- (1) Note the findings of the various studies referred to in this report and recommend that Cabinet accept these findings for the purposes of carrying out a Consequences Study
- (2) Recommend that Cabinet approve the updated housing figures [as set out in paragraph 3.5 of this report] for use in the Consequences Study
- (3) Recommend that Cabinet agree the brief for the Consequences Study, attached as Annex 1 to this report, subject to any minor alterations that may be necessary, to be delegated to the Head of Planning Services
- (4) Recommend that Cabinet agree to updated timetable for the Local Plan, as set out in the revised Local Development Scheme [section 5 of this report]
- (5) Endorse the use of the Planning Advisory Service to provide critical advice at key stages of Sefton's Local Plan

That Cabinet

- (1) Accept the findings of the studies referred to in the report for the purposes of carrying out a Consequences Study
- (2) Approve the updated housing figures, as set out in paragraph 3.5 of this report for use in the Consequences Study
- (3) Agree the brief for the Consequences Study, attached as Annex 1 to this report subject to any minor alterations that may be necessary, to be delegated to the Head of Planning Services

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- (4) Agree the revised Local Development Scheme setting out the updated timetable for preparing the Local Plan, as set out in section 5 of this report
- (5) Endorse the use of the Planning Advisory Service to provide critical advice at key stages of Sefton's Local Plan

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People		✓	
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	✓		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To inform Members of the results of the studies and to agree next steps.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The estimated cost of the Consequences Study is up to £40,000 [this is less than previously anticipated as the scope of the study has been simplified]. This sum has been identified from within the Planning Department's (Planning Policy) Revenue budget.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal	Incorporated into report
Human Resources	None

Equality

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | No Equality Implication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Equality Implications identified and mitigated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Equality Implication identified and risk remains | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Impact on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD1957/12) has been consulted and her comments have been incorporated into the report.

The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1274/12) has been consulted and her comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the call-in period after the Cabinet meeting.

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Background Papers:

Review of Sefton Housing Requirement [NLP, 2011]

[Updated] Review of Sefton's Housing Requirement [NLP, 2012]

Employment Land and Premises Study [BE Group, 2010]

[Updated] Employment Land and Premises Study [BE Group, 2012]

Agricultural Land Study [ADAS, 2012]

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [Capita Symonds, 2012]

Ecological Surveys [Gail Portly-Bishop, 2012]

These documents can be accessed via this link: www.sefton.gov.uk/planningstudies

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In February/March 2012, Members received a report of the consultation on Options which had taken place in summer 2011. Members agreed to a programme of further key studies which would provide essential information in preparing the next stage of the Core Strategy.
- 1.2 Since then the Government has published the National Planning Policy Framework to simplify the planning system and to promote sustainable development and economic growth. Following a change in the law in early 2012, development plan documents are now to be collectively known as 'local plans'. This means that we will now take forward our work on the Core Strategy under the name of the Sefton Local Plan.
- 1.3 The key areas of further work which have been undertaken in recent months include the following:
 - An update of the number of homes we require in the Borough to take account of the latest information e.g. from the 2011 Census and latest official population and household projections.
 - An update of the employment land and premises study: the previous study dates from a 2008 base date and only looked forward until 2026; however, the Local Plan must look ahead to 2030 and so the update looks forward a further for a further 5 years, to 2031.
 - Agricultural land study – the quality of the agricultural land which was being identified as potentially suitable for development was a major issue during the 2011 consultation on Options
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment –this is an update of the previous SFRA study and its main purpose is to inform decisions on where development is appropriate.
 - Ecological study was undertaken to add to existing data on the ecological value of sites in a number of sites in Sefton.

2. Findings of the studies

- 2.1 This section presents summaries of the key findings from the various studies. The studies themselves will be published in full on the Local Plans website.

None of the studies allocate development sites, nor make any recommendation for a preferred option of the Local Plan. This will be done next summer at the Preferred Option stage [see section five]

Review of Sefton's housing requirement and housing supply.

- 2.2 Independent consultants Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) were appointed to update their previous work to derive a housing target for Sefton to replace the current Regional Spatial Strategy Housing figure for the borough.
The original NLP Study, published in early 2011, provided the housing target that underpinned Core Strategy Option 2 which was consulted on in summer 2011. This has now been updated to reflect the most recent demographic information.
- 2.3 The NLP Study has taken account of a range of demographic and other information including official population and household projections, the latest 2011

Census information, natural change, migration, affordable housing need, and modelled a future housing requirement to 2031.

The most recent NLP work has considered a number of alternative approaches for modelling Sefton's housing requirement. In particular, NLP have undertaken a **baseline assessment** which models the implications of the latest 2010-based population projections from the Office for National Statistics [ONS] which were published in 2012. They have applied those projections to the most recent (2008-based, and published in November 2010) household projections from Communities and Local Government to derive a best estimate for likely household growth for Sefton.

- 2.4 This results in a requirement of 750 dwellings a year over the period to 2031, assuming a baseline vacancy rate in the housing stock of 4.7% for Sefton. This is the figure which they applied in previous work but the vacancy rate for Sefton has now actually reduced to 4.1%. This reduction was due to a number of 'one off' factors, including the demolition of vacant properties in the HMR area, and the re-occupation of a large number of One Vision Housing properties that had previously been vacant whilst undergoing refurbishment. Officers consider there is opportunity to introduce a policy objective of reducing the vacancy rate in the Borough into the Local Plan. This was a priority issue in last summer's consultation. When NLP apply a stock vacancy rate of 4%, this figure reduces to 700 dwellings a year.
- 2.5 The latest ONS 2010-based population projections are informed by assumptions of significant net inward domestic migration of 5,900 migrants over the period to 2031, and 8,760 net inward migrants over the same period from abroad. This is based on ONS' updated means of recording where people move to, mainly from abroad, providing local information at a greater level of detail than before. It shows a much higher figure of inward migration for Sefton than had been recorded previously. However, NLP question the robustness of these projected future migration assumptions and they query whether it is reasonable to assume that the recent higher rate of net inward migration is likely to be sustained in the future.
- 2.6 NLP have therefore recommended a more precautionary approach and, as an **alternative and preferred assessment**, have adjusted downwards the assumptions about the number of people moving into Sefton both from abroad and also from this country. This results in a requirement of 560 dwellings a year over the period to 2031, assuming a stock vacancy rate of 4.7%. However, when they apply a stock vacancy rate of 4%, this figure reduces to 510 dwellings a year over the period to 2031. This latter figure is the basis for a revised Local Plan option 2 which will be assessed as part of a Consequences Study. This figure is very close to the current Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] housing figure for Sefton of 500 homes a year. [The RSS is due to be abolished in 2013].
- 2.7 This updated figure of 510 is contingent on maintaining this vacancy rate at 4% over the plan period and whilst this is only marginally lower than the current figure of 4.1% it will be a challenge, especially in the context that much is beyond the control of the Council. A 4% vacancy rate is therefore considered to be an achievable target for Sefton that would be just below the current North West average of 4.2%.

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Housing supply

- 2.8 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) makes an assessment of how much land in the urban area is suitable and available for housing development. It provides an assessment of the capacity of the existing settlements to accommodate new housing development.
- 2.9 This study is updated annually to ensure that new sites that emerge are taken into account. We are currently updating the Study from 2011 to a 2012 base-date, and the findings will be available before the end of the year. This work is to ensure that we identify maximum opportunity for new development in the urban areas.

Employment land and premises study

- 2.10 Independent consultants BE Group were commissioned to produce an Employment Land & Premises Study refresh for Sefton. This updates the previous 2008-based Employment Land & Premises Study (also by BE Group) that was jointly produced with Halton, Knowsley and West Lancashire Councils.
- 2.11 The Study has assessed Sefton's future employment land needs to 2031. It has also assessed the quality of our existing development sites and the ability of these sites to meet future business requirements. It has found that Sefton has a comparatively small pool of employment sites relative to other Merseyside districts, and that these sites are of varying quality. A key challenge will be to ensure the delivery of identified development sites, and the remodelling of currently under-used land.
- 2.12 Some of the key findings are as follows:
- There is a total need for 77.28 hectares (ha) of employment land in Sefton to 2031. Only 53.78 ha of this can be developed on brownfield sites in the urban area. This leaves an outstanding requirement for 31 ha of land.
 - The Study recommends that two new business parks are identified in Sefton to meet this requirement (as well as longer term needs) – one in North Sefton, and one in South Sefton.
 - Also, the study recommends that Green Belt land to the rear of Crowland Street, although not suitable for a Business Park, could comprise an industrial estate as an extension to the existing area.
 - Sefton has significantly fewer business development sites than any other Merseyside authority. Sefton's 53.78 ha of development land compares to 157.97 ha in Knowsley, 273.17 in Wirral, 157.97 in Liverpool, and 87.41 in St Helens. There are 49.66 ha of land in neighbouring West Lancashire. Importantly, with the exception of Liverpool and Wirral, each of these authorities has a significantly smaller population than Sefton.
 - Due to the limited supply of employment land, identified 'Primarily Industrial Areas' should be protected from non-employment uses (such as housing) unless wholly exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.
 - The Study identifies four sites that should be identified as 'key employment sites' to deliver high quality office / industrial development. These sites are:

Southport Business Park, Atlantic Industrial Complex, Senate Business Park, and the former Peerless Refinery site.

- Two sites are identified as being unsuitable for employment uses, and are recommended to be allocated to housing. These sites are the 'People's' and 'Aintree Curve' sites in Bootle, which should be developed for housing.
- Regeneration / remodelling opportunities within existing employment areas (such as at Heysham Road, Netherton) should continue to be explored.

Agricultural land study

2.13 Independent consultants ADAS were appointed to:

- (i) Provide an updated policy context which sets out the issues to be taken into account when decisions about the future of Sefton's agricultural land are made;
- (ii) Update the 1990 analysis of the Sefton rural economy;
- (iii) Detail the benefits arising from Sefton's soil resource, including food production as well as benefits relating to ecosystem services, recreation, amenity, biodiversity, and managing flood risk;
- (iv) Review the extent and coverage of agricultural land quality across Sefton and validate agricultural land classification surveys submitted in connection with the Options consultation in 2011, and make an updated assessment of agricultural land quality of potential development sites in the Green Belt; and
- (v) Assess the impact development would have on agricultural land, the rural economy and jobs.

2.14 This study was commissioned directly as a consequence of the issues raised regarding Sefton's agricultural land in the options consultation last year. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework states that "LPAs should take into account the economic and other benefits of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Where the significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, LPAs should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to higher quality agricultural land".

2.15 The study tells us that there in 2010 there were 60 farm holdings in Sefton occupying an area of about 3,700 hectares. The Study found that agriculture comprises about 82% of Sefton's Green Belt. Within the areas surveyed as part of the Agricultural Land Study, approximately 70% of the agricultural area is farmed as 'general cropping', and 30% as 'lowland grazing livestock' units. Cereals occupy about 40% of the agricultural area. However, the most valuable crop is potatoes due to the much higher than average yields compared to the North West and England, although potatoes only occupies about 5% of the area.

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- 2.16 The following table shows the area of crop proportion in Sefton compared with the North West and England.

Crop production in Sefton, North West and England in 2010

Crop	Area (ha), 2010			Percentage of land used for each crop, 2010		
	Sefton	NW	England	% Sefton	% NW	% England
Cereals	1,440	76,457	2,496,798	57%	68%	64%
Oilseeds	271	5,224	599,675	11%	5%	15%
Potatoes	201	7,722	99,939	8%	7%	3%
Horticulture	172	5,403	104,529	7%	5%	3%
Fallow land	409	4,302	149,316	16%	4%	4%
Other crops	14	14,077	471,810	1%	12%	12%
Total	2,507	113,185	3,922,067	100%	100%	100%

N.B. figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

- 2.17 However, this only represents a very small amount of the total crop production in England as the following table shows:

Crop	Area (ha), 2010			As a proportion of crops in England (%) 2010	
	Sefton	NW	England	% Sefton	% NW
Cereals	1,440	76,457	2,496,798	0.1%	3.1%
Oilseeds	271	5,224	599,675	0.0%	0.9%
Potatoes	201	7,722	99,939	0.2%	7.7%
Horticulture	172	5,403	104,529	0.2%	5.2%
Fallow land	409	4,302	149,316	0.3%	2.9%
Other crops	14	14,077	471,810	0.0%	3.0%
Total	2,507	113,185	3,922,067	0.1%	2.9%

- 2.18 The Study confirms that agricultural land quality in Sefton is higher than the regional and national average. As a result, yields for all crops on Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land is expected to be generally higher than regional and national yields.

Typical yields for key crops in Sefton by agricultural land classification grading (tonnes per hectare)

Agricultural Land Classification	Winter Wheat	Winter Barley	Winter Oilseed Rape	Potatoes
Grade 1	9.3	7.4	4.9	74
Grade 2	8.6	7.4	4.3	62
Grade 3a	7.4	6.2	3.7	49
Grade 3b	6.8	6.2	3.1	49
Grade 4	6.2	5.6	2.5	37
Grade 5	5.6	4.9	2.5	30
<i>England average*</i>	7.8	5.8	3.3	42
<i>NW Average*</i>	5.7	4.8	3.5	<i>Not available</i>

** Figures for wheat, barley and oilseed rape yields are five-year averages (2006-2010; for potatoes, yield data is the five-year average (2005-2009).*

- 2.19 Surveys undertaken as part of the Agricultural Land Study confirm that some sites have a lower agricultural land classification grading than previously documented in the provisional maps produced by DEFRA / Natural England (which confirms what many of the detailed studies carried out previously have found), but in some cases, the Provisional maps (produced by DEFRA) under-estimated the grading of agricultural land. Generally, it is land around Ainsdale, Formby and Hightown which have been under-graded on the Provisional maps, and land east of Southport and around Thornton and in Sefton East Parishes that is over-graded. However, the majority of the areas surveyed still contain predominantly best and most versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grades 1, 2 and sub-grade 3a).
- 2.20 If Option 2 or 3 were to be progressed in the Local Plan, a small amount of Sefton's agricultural land would be lost to development. This equates to about 144 hectares or 2.1% of the Green Belt under Option 2, or 226 hectares or 3.4% of the Green Belt under Option 3. The loss of food production in Sefton, even under option 3, would be very small when compared with the North West (0.02 - 0.03% of the agricultural area in the NW) or England (0.003 - 0.006% of the agricultural area in England).
- 2.21 The impact of potential development on individual crops could be between 20% – 50% greater than the regional and national averages because of the higher yields in Sefton. However the overall impact on food production regionally and nationally would still be minute.
- 2.22 The Study concluded the impact of development [on Green Belt land as described here] on economic output and jobs would also be very small. This is shown in the following table:

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Gross margin and employment per ha by farm type in the North West

Farm Type	Associated GVA* £ per ha 2009	Associated Employment per ha*, 2010	Impact on GVA		Impact on employment	
			Option2 (144ha)	Option3 (226ha)	Option2 (144ha)	Option3 (226ha)
General cropping	£829/ha	0.02 jobs/ha	£82k (99 ha)	£129k (156ha)	2.0 jobs	3.0 jobs
Lowland grazing livestock	£550/ha	0.01 jobs/ha	£25k (45 ha)	£39k (70ha)	0.5 jobs	0.7 jobs
All farms**	-	-	£107k	£168k	2.5 FTE	3.7 FTE

* Using Gross Margin as a proxy

**Assumes no specialist horticulture units.

Source: Farm Business Survey (FBS) 2009/10 for the North West Region¹

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- 2.23 The main purposes of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, are to provide the evidence to:
- direct development away from areas at greatest risk of flooding, and manage residual risk, taking into account the impacts of climate change (using the so called 'sequential' and 'exceptions' tests);
 - make sure that any development is safe, does not increase flood risk (from any source) elsewhere, and if possible reduces flood risk overall; and
 - develop appropriate policies for the management of flood risk from all sources within Sefton.

Government advice is that only river and tidal flood risk should affect the location of development sites, but that all flood risk from all sources should be taken into account when looking at the design of development or where exactly it is built within the site.

- 2.24 The 2012 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) [undertaken by Capita Symonds] updates the previous (2009) SFRA, and is nearing completion. The SFRA assesses the risk of flooding from all sources, drawing on the Environment Agency's most up to date information on river and tidal flooding, recent information from the Sefton Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) on surface water flood risk, and other information on sewer, groundwater, canal and reservoir flood risk (no reservoirs in Sefton, some in Knowsley could affect Sefton). All of these sources of flood risk affect some parts of Sefton. The SFRA also provides further guidance and recommendations for development management and the preparation of the Sefton Local Plan.

- 2.25 River flood risk is important in a number of areas, notably in the areas to the north and east of Formby, and around the River Alt from north of Ince Blundell, through the rural area to the western fringes of Maghull and the northern fringes of Netherton and Aintree. Tidal flood risk is largely managed by the existing defences.

- 2.26 The principal source of flood risk within the borough of Sefton is from surface water flooding, and this is a risk across Sefton. The SWMP identified that approximately 38,000 properties could be at risk in the event of a 1 in 100 year storm with an allowance for climate change. Sewer flooding is considered to be a significant issue across the borough, largely as a result of sewer systems that generally have insufficient capacity to cope with severe rainfall.
- 2.27 Government advice is that it is acceptable to develop sites at risk of surface water flooding, as surface water can and should be managed within the site through use of sustainable drainage systems. It is considered important in Sefton for Local Plan policies to limit surface water run-off rates for both greenfield and brownfield sites; and to make sure both that the development on the site is safe from surface water (as well as other) flood risk and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Where possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk overall - for example through provision of additional flood water storage areas.
- 2.28 Although extensive, the direct risk of groundwater flooding to people and property is considered to be relatively low. The risks of canal and reservoir flooding are localised, and also considered to be relatively low. None of these three risks alone would affect the choice of development sites, but as for flood risk from any sources, they may affect the design of development or where exactly it is built within the site.

Ecological study

- 2.29 Specialist consultants carried out ecological surveys for some of Sefton's Local Wildlife Sites (Sites of Local Biological Interest, or SLBIs) in summer 2012.
- 2.30 These provide up to date snapshots of the current habitat value of the sites, and showed that all of the surveyed Local Wildlife Sites retain their habitat importance.
- 2.31 Like international and national wildlife site designations, and priority habitats, the Local Wildlife Sites form part of the core biodiversity area in Liverpool City Region's Ecological Framework.

3. Consequences Study

- 3.1 The results of the aforementioned studies will be critical in formulating the Preferred Options, which is the next stage in preparing Sefton's Local Plan. Counsel has advised that it is important to assess the impact and risks of various options, from an economic, social and environmental perspective on both Sefton and its adjoining authorities. This assessment will effectively be the Consequences Study. Planning Committee were previously informed [25 July 2012] on the need and scope of a Consequences Study. This report updates this and seeks approval of the brief for the study [draft brief provided at Annex 1].
- 3.2 In order to assess an appropriate range of impacts, it is proposed to identify three different levels of housing requirements as the main basis for this work. While providing new homes is only one aspect of the Local Plan, it will have implications for many other parts of the Plan, mainly because of the issues raised by finding suitable land. None of these options currently has specific Council support, but the scope of these levels of housing requirement should demonstrate a wide

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range of effects and help the Council to decide which approach best suits Sefton's needs and aspirations.

- 3.3 In order to take full account of the updated evidence set out above, and to take account of updated Government planning requirements, it will be necessary to formally update the three options that were previously consulted upon. As a reminder, those options were:
Option One: 270 homes a year– 'urban containment' [i.e. meet all development needs within the built-up area without any green belt encroachment]
Option Two: 480 homes a year + a new business park in the north of the Borough – 'meeting identified needs'
Option Three: 650 homes a year + new business park – 'stabilising the Borough's population'.
- 3.4 As stated earlier, the most recent published government demographic and household and Census information now shows that, instead of an overall outward move of population from Sefton, there is now an overall increase in the population moving into the borough. This trend is projected to continue. The 2010 based population projections [published in 2012] suggest Sefton will now experience population growth from 275,000 in 2011 to 286,300 in 2031, a growth of 4.1%.
- 3.5 The revised options are as follows:
Option One: 270 homes a year– 'urban containment' [i.e. meet all development needs within the built-up area]
Option Two: 510 homes a year + a new business park *in both the north and the south of the Borough* – 'meeting identified needs'
Option Three: 700 homes a year + new employment areas both north and south – 'optimistic household growth'
The number of homes for options two and three above are dependent on achieving and maintaining a vacancy rate of 4%.
- 3.6 The brief for the Consequences Study is attached as Annex 1. This would draw on the findings of the studies which have just been completed, together with other Sefton studies, and similar studies for adjoining authorities. The consequences study would have regard to the (updated) three rates of development set out above and will identify the key effects on, and risks to, Sefton of pursuing any of these options.
- 3.7 It is intended that the Consequences Study will be commissioned in January and will be completed by May. The conclusions of this study will help determine the choice of 'preferred option'. Agreeing a 'preferred option' is the next key stage in preparing the Local Plan and will be the subject of a further 12-week consultation in summer 2013.
- 3.8 For completeness, Members are advised that a number of other studies will be commissioned shortly to inform the Local Plan. A refresh of our Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be undertaken to update the evidence we have on the range of housing needs [including affordable housing] that exist in Sefton. We will also be part of a Liverpool City Region group that will commission a sub-regional study of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

4. External review

- 4.1 In addition to the need for up-to-date evidence, a Local Plan must take account of the latest Government guidance and best practice. The Local Planning team is working closely with the national Planning Advisory Service [PAS] to secure advice on key aspects of preparing the Plan.
- 4.2 PAS is offering guidance and comment on the process of preparing the Plan, on key requirements like sustainability appraisal and viability assessment, and of how to develop appropriate approach to consultation which makes sure as many people as possible can contribute to the preparation of the Plan.
- 4.3 The contribution of PAS draws on the experience of authorities elsewhere, advice from CLG, and how Inspectors are assessing other Local Plans. This will ensure that the process of preparing Sefton's Local Plan can benefit from critical external appraisal at key points in preparing the Plan.

5. Local Development Scheme – update

- 5.1 Each Local Authority must maintain a Local Development Scheme which sets out the timetable for the production of its Local Plan. Sefton's current Local Development Scheme has become out-of-date due to the need to update evidence in a number of key areas.
- 5.2 Given the recent completion of many of these studies, and with agreement sought to bring the findings of these studies together in a Consequences Study [see section 3 above], it is now possible to set out the dates of the key stages for the Local Plan to its completion.
- 5.3 These stages are set out below:

Preferred Options Consultation [12 weeks]	July – September 2013
Publication	March 2014
Publication period [6-8 weeks]	March - May 2014
Submission to SoS	June 2014
Pre-hearing meeting	August 2014
Examination	October 2014
Adoption	February 2015

- 5.4 If agreed, this timetable will be used to update the Local Development Scheme and be placed online and made available on request. This will enable local residents and other interested groups to identify periods when they can expect to

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be consulted and make representations. It will also give the Council more certainty in allocating its resources.

BRIEF FOR CONSEQUENCES STUDY

Tender Invitation

Brief for the Appointment of Consultants to Undertake a 'Consequences Study of Sefton's Local Plan Options' for Sefton Council to Inform the Emerging Local Plan Process

1. Background

- 1.1 Sefton Council is seeking to appoint suitably qualified and experienced consultants to undertake a '**Consequences Study of Sefton's Local Plan Options**' for the local authority area of Sefton and for surrounding local authority areas. The purpose of the Study is to advise upon the likely effects in social, demographic and economic terms as to the consequences of the Council adopting the range of options presently under consideration as part of its local plan preparation work. The study will henceforth be known as the '**Consequences Study**'.
- 1.2 The 'Consequences Study' is required to inform the preparation of Sefton's Local Plan in terms of assessing the consequences of pursuing different development options both for Sefton Council and for neighbouring local authorities. In this regard, in part it fulfils the Duty to Co-operate requirement, as set out in the 2011 Localism Act.
- 1.3 The 'Consequences Study' will review and analyse the wide range of background evidence that has been assembled by Sefton Council and neighbouring local authorities (see section 5 and Appendix A for full details of all relevant studies by topic and date).
- 1.4 It is not anticipated that any further original research will need to be undertaken as part of this commission and any findings should be derived from existing studies and evidence and the consultants' best professional judgement. However, if tenderers consider that further research is absolutely necessary because of essential evidence or data gaps etc, they should set out in their tender submission what is required, and why, and what the cost of such work would be.
- 1.5 Given the wide range of topics to be risk assessed and evaluated, it is essential that tenderers consider how they intend to approach the complexity of the work and how they would intend to resource the Study, as well as providing a structure for the final report.

2. Purpose of the Study

- 2.1 The purpose of this study is to comprehensively assess the **key social, economic and environmental consequences** for Sefton Council and for neighbouring authorities of choosing to pursue one of a number of specified Local Plan options [see section 4].
- 2.2 The study should be consistent with current government guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework and best practice advice where available.
- 2.3 The study findings are required to be robust, transparent and capable of defence at subsequent public examinations or other public inquiries.

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3. The Study Area

3.1 In addition to assessing the consequences for Sefton Council the study should also thoroughly assess the implications for Sefton's neighbouring local authorities:

- The Borough of Knowsley
- Liverpool City
- West Lancashire Borough; and
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough
- and any other local authority area which the consultants consider may be affected by the decision Sefton Council might make on any of the proposed options for its Local Plan.

3.2 A plan [to be added] showing the boundary of the borough of Sefton (outlined in red) and how it relates to other authorities in the Liverpool City Region is below.

4. Local Plan Options to be considered

4.1 **[Explanation of the Local Plan Options will be included here. These will include two of the three options consulted on during 2011, and a third based on updated housing and employment requirements and capacities]**

4.2 In addition to the three options which consider the **level** of development in Sefton, the Consequences Study should also assess the potential options for the **location** of development in Sefton. If development is proposed in the Green Belt we will need to determine the most suitable locations. The draft Green Belt Study identified land in the Green Belt which has potential for development. Further work is required to enable us to decide whether some of those sites should be ruled out because of various constraints. This will not form part of the Consequences Study.

4.3 As the draft Green Belt Study identified only a relatively small number of potential sites for development, the choice is limited. Our view is that the only realistic **locational options** are either:

- Sites are chosen by how suitable they are regardless of where they may be. It is likely that this will mean that development will be clustered in the central area of Sefton, concentrated around the Maghull/ Lydiate area; or
- Sites are distributed as much as possible across Sefton to meet local needs, even if this means choosing some sites with more constraints; or
- Or a combination of both

5. Key Components of the 'Consequences Study'

5.1 As indicated above the 'Consequences Study', in undertaking an assessment of the social, economic, and environmental consequences, must at the very least include an appraisal of all the implications set out in this section.

5.2 For the avoidance of doubt it must specifically identify, assess the risks and evaluate the key consequences of each Local Plan option set out in section 4 above i.e. the three options for the level of development, and the two options for the location of development. The tenderers' proposed methodology for undertaking the risk assessment should be outlined in the Expression of Interest.

Social

- (i) Implications for future housing provision (including choice and price) and the related implications for whether meeting housing demand and need across tenures is achievable, including (but not exclusively), for single people, families and the elderly, together with meeting needs for affordable housing and for specialist households.
- (ii) Population and demographic implications for the borough and beyond, including possible future change and the impact on migration
- (iii) Implications for viability and access to local services. This should include an assessment of the impact a changing population would have on local schools, health services, local shopping facilities, public transport, leisure and other Council and local services.

Relevant Background Studies/Evidence

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 [Fordham Research, June 2009]
Housing Needs in Sefton – Further details on the Sefton Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 [Fordham Research, August 2010]
Housing Search and Expectations Study [August 2010]
Liverpool City Region Movers Survey [Fordham Research, 2010]
Sefton Movers Additional Analysis [Mott McDonald, February 2010]
The Scope for Affordable Rent in Sefton [Richard Fordham and Company and Fordham Research, November 2011]
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment [Sefton, 2010] and Annual Updates
Sefton Older People's Housing Strategy [Peter Fletcher Associates, 2005]
Review of RSS Housing Requirement for Sefton [NLP, March 2011]
Review of RSS Housing Requirement for Sefton [NLP, October 2012]
Housing and Economic Development Evidence – Overview Study [GVA, March 2011]
Housing Technical Paper [Sefton Council, June 2011]
Draft Sefton Infrastructure Plan [Sefton Council, 2011]
Retail Strategy Review and Sefton District, Local Centres and Shopping Parades Study [WYG, 2012]
School Admission Data [Sefton Council, 2012]

Economic

- (i) Impact on the local economy - including the ability to attract new businesses and the retention and growth of existing businesses
- (ii) Implications for jobs created and quality and nature of the labour force, including travel to work implications
- (iii) Council tax/New Homes Bonus consequences
- (iv) Implications for physical infrastructure including opportunities to provide new and enhance existing infrastructure.

Relevant Background Studies/Evidence

Joint Employment Land and Premises Study [BE Group, 2010]
Employment Land and Premises Refresh [BE Group, 2012]
Housing and Economic Development Base – Overview Study [GVA, March 2011]
Sefton Economic Strategy [Sefton Council, 2012]

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Liverpool City Region Transport Plan – LTP3 and Supporting Evidence [Merseytravel, date?]
Draft Sefton Infrastructure Plan [Sefton Council, 2011]
Port Masterplan, 2011

Environmental

- (i) Implications for agricultural land quality, food production and security, and the rural economy.
- (ii) Implications in terms of the potential for loss, enhancement or creation of ecological sites and networks (biodiversity, habitats and species).
- (iii) Traffic and highway congestion implications [linked to travel to work implications – see above]
- (iv) The flood risk implications, in terms of the likely amount of development in Flood Zone 3a or Flood Zone 2, and the magnitude of infrastructure and other costs required to allow this.
- (v) Implications for other environmental assets, including heritage, water resources, landscape, open space.

5.4 For each of the environmental consequences, an assessment of how climate change will impact further on these issues should be provided.

Agricultural Land Study [ADAS, 2011]
Draft Green Belt Study [Sefton, 2011]
Merseyside Ecological Framework [MEAS, 2012]
Sefton East Traffic Modelling Study [Atkins/Mott McDonald, 2012]
Liverpool City Region Transport Plan – LTP3 and Supporting Evidence [Merseytravel, date?]
Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [2012]
Flood Risk Maps [XXX]
Surface Water Management Plan [XXX]
Draft Urban Greenspace Study [Sefton Council, date]
Green Space Strategy for Sefton [Sefton Council, 2009]

Sub-regional Implications

5.5 In addition to assessing the consequences for Sefton, consultants should also assess the key consequences for our neighbours who make-up the Liverpool City Region. This part of the assessment should concentrate on those issues that are truly sub-regional in nature and where the choice of option will have a demonstrable impact on one or more of our neighbouring authorities. The strategic issues set out in paragraph 156 of the Framework should provide a starting point of the issues that would have cross-boundary implications.

[emerging] Local Plans/Core Strategies of neighbouring authorities
Liverpool City Region Movers Survey [Fordham Research, date]
Housing and Economic Development Evidence – Overview Study [GVA, March 2011]
Latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Employment Land and Premises Studies of neighbouring authorities

- 5.6 In assessing the sub-regional consequences of Sefton's proposed Local Plan options, consideration should be given to the need for Sefton to comply with the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.7 To assist in scoring tender submissions, consultants should in their tender document (a) provide a broad indication of the consequences that they perceive as likely to be relevant to neighbouring local authorities and, in general terms, how they would propose to assess them; and (b) provide an outline of how best they would engage neighbouring local authorities in the study.
- 5.8 Consultants should identify which issues, both in respect of Sefton and the sub-region, in their professional opinion are the most critical.

6. Study Output

- 6.1 The outputs of the study will comprise a report (in MS Word format) setting out the study methods, analysis, interpretation and findings, including an executive summary/ key findings at the front of the report.
- 6.2 The final study needs to be both concise and easy to read as it will be read thoroughly by many people with different levels of understanding of the issues. The Study is also likely to be scrutinised by a wide range of stakeholders. The report should therefore be in plain English and technical terms should either be explained as they occur in the report or by using a glossary.
- 6.3 Ten bound paper copies of the final study are also required.
- 6.4 Electronic versions of the final study should be accessible using the Microsoft Office suite of programmes.
- 6.5 Sefton Council uses MapInfo Professional as its principal desktop mapping application. Any geographical information should be provided in MapInfo (.tab) or ESRI Shapefile (.shp) formats.
- 6.6 It is anticipated that a structure of the final report will be provided at an early stage in the consultant's work, to enable feedback upon the proposed format.

7. Information to be provided to the Consultants to Inform the Expressions of Interest Submission

- 7.1 Sefton Council has assembled a wide range of baseline information to inform the study. This list of relevant studies is included in section 5 above; web-links are set out in Appendix A1.
- 7.2 Similarly, neighbouring authorities have also assembled a wide range of baseline evidence. The list of relevant studies is set out in Appendix A2).

8. Timetable for Study Outputs

- 8.1 The appointed consultants will be required to conclude the study in a maximum of 14 weeks following the Inception Meeting, which will define the commencement of the study.
- 8.2 The study has considerable importance and urgency, and there is little scope to vary the overall programme. However, if consultants are of the opinion that this timetable is unrealistic they should

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state why and propose an alternative timetable. The study timetable (i.e. Day 1, Week 1) will commence with the date of the formal Inception Meeting.

8.3 The key study deadlines will be as follows:

- Provision of an initial draft report to be submitted by consultants no later than the end of **Week 7**
- Comments on the initial draft report to be submitted to the consultants no later than the end of **Week 9**.
- Provisional final draft report to be submitted by consultants no later than the end of **Week 11**.
- Comments on the final draft report to be submitted to the consultants no later than the end of **Week 13**
- Report to be finalised and submitted by end of **Week 14**.

9. Essential Requirements

9.1 It is essential that the appointed consultancy is able to demonstrate as far as is practicable:

- (i) a proven track record of undertaking complex risk assessments, similar or related work for local authorities;
- ii) it has adequate specialist staff resources (including sub-contracted work) with relevant experience to undertake this work;
- iii) it has applied a rigorous and considered approach to addressing the requirements of the tender brief;
- iv) that there will be no conflict of interest with other clients who may be advised by the consultancy; and
- iv) that it has an equal opportunities policy in place and a commitment to its implementation, including providing a copy of the consultancy's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement.

Once the appointed consultants have been instructed by the Council, a Contractor Licence must be signed. Under the terms of the Contractor's Licence, the Council will then pass Ordnance Survey and Mapping Services Agreement data to the consultants. The draft agreement will be made available at the Inception Meeting.

10. Expressions of Interest Submissions

10.1 In addition to the requirements set out above, expressions of interest submissions should include the following (with the figures in bracket reflecting the scores to be attributed to each element):

- a) Full details of the consultancy's relevant experience in advising local authorities on similar planning matters. (mark = 25)

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- b) Full details of how the consultancy would propose to address the requirements of this Expressions of Interest invitation (mark= 50)
- c) The names and CVs of the lead consultant and all other staff who will be responsible for undertaking the work, together with a statement of their seniority, skills and experience. (mark= 20)
- d) Full details of any work which is proposed to be sub contracted and to whom (mark will be scored as part of c)
- e) A detailed breakdown of who will actually carry out the work, what time they will attribute to it and when (mark = 25)
- f) Whether you can meet the proposed timetable (see out in paragraphs 8.1 - 8.3 above) or, if not, explain why and set out an alternative timetable
- g) Confirm that there will be no conflict of interest with other clients who may be advised by the consultancy (essential requirement but not scored = pass/fail)
- h) Set out what further information the consultancy would expect the Council to provide at the Inception Meeting (noted but not scored)
- i) The full postal address of the offices from which the consultancy will operate. (noted but not scored)
- j) The anticipated all inclusive fee basis for undertaking this work including all disbursements, and setting out the anticipated time contribution of key staff who will be involved in the study and a scale of day/hourly rates for all those involved. (mark= 80)
- k) The names, addresses and contact details of three local authorities willing to supply references. (essential requirement but not scored = pass/fail)
- l) Full details of professional indemnity insurance. (essential requirement but not scored= pass/fail)

NB All prices quoted should be stated as the price plus VAT at the prevailing rate.

All scoring provisional at this time. 200 points qualitative score = 60% of total score;
80 points price score = 40% of total score

- 10.2 Tenders will be scored on the basis set out in 10.1 above.
- 10.3 Ten paper copies and one electronic copy of the expression of interest tender submission should be submitted.

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11. Informal Discussion

11.1 For an informal discussion about the commission, please contact:

Alan Young
Strategic Planning and Information Manager
Sefton Council
Magdalen House
Trinity Road
Bootle L20 3NJ
0151 934 3551
alan.young@sefton.gov.uk

12. Indicative Study Budget

12.1 The indicative study budget has been set at a maximum of £40,000. If any consultants proposing to tender for this work feel that such an amount is inadequate, they should indicate, as part of their submission, not only how much extra it would cost to complete the commission in full, but also what elements of the commission could not be carried out if the indicative budget of £40,000 is not increased. For comparative purposes, the quotation should be broken down into the cost of carrying out each part of the commission.

13. Application Procedure and Selection Process

13.1 Consultancies wishing to pursue their interest should apply in writing to

Mrs Jane Gowing
Head of Planning Services
Sefton MBC
Ground Floor
Magdalen House
30 Trinity Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L20 3NJ

13.2 Tenders should be submitted in an unmarked envelope except for the title:

'Tender Submission for a Consequences Study'

13.3 Consultancies short-listed will be interviewed during the week commencing XX Month 2013. It is anticipated that the successful consultancy will be notified during early in XX, Month 2013 and will commence their appointment with an Inception Meeting will be arranged soon thereafter (may specify date at a later time).

13.4 In selecting a successful consultancy Sefton Council will take into account all the factors set out in the brief. All tender submissions will be assessed on the basis of both price and quality with 60% of the total score (120 points) being attributed to quality and 40% to price. The Council will not necessarily appoint the lowest cost of any tender submitted. Furthermore, any appointment will be subject to the Council’s standing orders regarding the appointment of consultants, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A

APPENDIX A

LIST OF RELEVANT STUDIES

[to be added]

APPENDIX B

**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SEFTON
STANDARD CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT**

[to be added]

