

PROPOSED ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Southampton City Vision, the Local Plan for our City.

Looking forward

Southampton is a city of opportunity where we can build on our great heritage and maritime history. It is a city with over 250,000 residents which is continuing to grow, so we need spaces for people to live, work and enjoy a vibrant, diverse and modern city.

By 2040 the population will have grown to around 285,000 this will mean that we will need more homes and more jobs along with all of the other important facilities that people need to help them live a healthy and fulfilling life.

The challenge is making sure we plan to put the right things in the right places so we have a city that works for its residents and businesses, together with creating a welcoming city to those who come to study in and visit the city.

This challenge grows as space becomes limited. We are looking at the city in detail in order to establish how we can maximise the potential of the space we have available and deliver what the city needs.

Southampton City Vision is a plan that will set out the key principles about how and where future development will take place across the city. This plan will make sure that growth is managed and sets out some rules about what can be built and where. Importantly it also makes sure that it doesn't just deliver homes or work spaces but all the things people need to live and work such as school places; health services; transport networks and open spaces. This sort of plan is also known as a Local Plan.

All Local Authorities must have a local plan which sets out how it is going to deliver space for businesses, new homes and all the facilities that are needed to support this whilst also protecting and enhancing the local environment. The plan will ensure that development happens in a coordinated way, and is collectively delivering all that is required for the City. The National Planning Policy Framework states:

"... plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings".

Across the country it has been recognised that there is huge demand for more housing and for that reason the Government set targets for all local authorities about the number of new homes it must build and states that this should be the starting place for any new local plan. In Southampton we need to deliver around 1000 new homes each year.

Creating the Plan

The Southampton City Vision needs to set out how the city will develop over the coming decades. We need to make sure we get this right and for that reason creating the plan takes time and needs to involve a wide range of people. Once prepared the plan will be assessed by an independent inspector to ensure that it is sound; providing what is needed in the city, in the most appropriate locations and can be delivered within the timeframe of the plan. We must therefore demonstrate how we have developed the plan, the evidence we have used and people and organisations we have involved.

Whilst Southampton City Council is responsible for preparing the plan, it does not have all the answers, which is why we have periods of consultation throughout the development of the plan.

Issues and Options Consultation: Proposal

The first step in the process is understanding the needs and priorities of residents and businesses in the city and how these might change over the coming years. The only way to do this is through consultation and engagement across the city, not only to identify the needs of the city as a whole but if these differ between neighbourhoods.

Why do we consult?

The National Planning Guidance states the following:

“Plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”.

The council recognises that residents, businesses and other organisations have a valuable role to play in helping shape plans and provide new ideas. If you live in the city you know your community; what works well and what needs to be improved.

What are we going to ask?

There will be a few key questions, which will all have a similar format. Under each of these questions will be a range of options for people to choose from along with an opportunity to add their own suggestions.

- What do you value most in your local area and the city centre?
- What do you feel is most important to you and your family? (In your local area and the city centre)
- What do you think most needs improving in your local area and the city centre?

We also want to ask more specific questions to different residents, to help us better understand their housing needs and what facilities they want us to prioritise.

Businesses will have different questions specifically targeted at understanding their needs whether they be a start-up, small, medium or large business. We want to understand what types and size of spaces they need, if there are barriers to growth and what they are; and if these are different between sectors.

We will also give respondents a chance to say what is important to them if it is not covered in the questions.

How are we going to ask it?

We want to encourage wide participation by applying the following two key principles:

Tell the story: ensure people understand why we want their views and why it is important to have their say about the future of the city, tailoring to different audiences to maximise relevance.

Simple and accessible: making it quick and easy for people to participate with a few key questions which can be accessed in a wide range of ways in order to meet the needs and preferences of our diverse population.

Who are we going to ask?

Planning affects us all; the homes we live in, the facilities we use, the different ways we travel, and the places we go to work and to school. We therefore have a responsibility to ensure we engage as widely as possible across the city. We also have a statutory duty to consult with a specific range of stakeholders and a duty to cooperate with our neighbouring authorities. Specific details are set out in 'Involving You in Planning- A Statement of Community Involvement'.

What will we do with the information?

The plan must be based on clear evidence which supports the policies and approach to development that we want to promote. This evidence can be divided into two key types:

Technical: such as studies about housing needs, economic growth, environmental impact, sustainability, habitats assessments and transport impacts.

Engagement and consultation: Information and feedback provided by residents, businesses, stakeholders and key agencies.

In the process of developing the plan there is a need to balance each of the above in order to ensure that we deliver what the city needs in the most appropriate locations.

Following each stage of consultation, feedback will be provided which summarises what we've been told, how we can incorporate this into the plan and if we can't incorporate things, we will explain why.

At this early stage in the Local Plan process the questions we propose to ask are aimed at providing us with an understanding of the key priorities of residents and businesses across the city. The benefits of the consultation can be maximised as this information could help to inform other key areas of work across the council such as City of Culture, Green City Charter etc.