

Report to: Confident Places Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting(s): Wednesday 20 November 2013
Thursday 21 November 2013

Subject: Standish and Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure
Assessments

Report of: Director Economy and Skills

Contact Officer: Mike Worden 01942 489104

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder
and area:** Councillor DD T Molyneux, Portfolio Holder for
Regeneration

Summary: The purpose of this report is to set out why we need the infrastructure assessments for Standish and Golborne and Lowton and to secure approval for them. They are needed to help inform the council's decisions on existing and anticipated planning applications in those localities, in the absence of detailed planning policies.

Link to Corporate Priorities: Confident Places

- Improving economic and social opportunities;
- An attractive, accessible and lively borough, with a prosperous economy as the location of choice for investment.

Confident People

- Protecting vulnerable groups, improving life opportunities and independence, making sure people feel safe and supported in their communities;
- Helping people to stay healthy longer.

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation(s): For Confident Places Scrutiny Committee:
To comment on this report and the infrastructure assessments
For Cabinet:

To endorse the infrastructure assessments for Standish and Golborne and Lowton

Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

There are no financial implications.

*What are the **staffing** implications?*

There are no staffing implications.

Customer Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)

Not required, the assessments are evidence documents that will help inform the council's decisions on planning applications.

*What are the **property** implications in terms of reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?*

There are no property implications.

Risks:

The risks of not approving the infrastructure assessments are that the council will not have its own assessments to inform the decisions it needs to take on existing and anticipated planning applications in Standish and Golborne and Lowton.

Has the Assistant Director - Legal (Monitoring Officer) (John Mitchell) confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the Director Resources and Contracts (Deputy Chief Executive)(Paul McKeivitt) confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

The alternative options are to not produce the infrastructure assessments and thereby determine the existing and anticipated planning applications in Standish and Golborne and Lowton in their absence against national planning policy and the Core Strategy only. However, there is an absence of detailed planning policy and the assessments of infrastructure capacity and requirements will help inform the council's decisions.

Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?

Yes, this is a key decision for the following reason:

- (2) It is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area

comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

The key decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before Tuesday 3 December 2013, unless exempt from call-in.

This item is included on the Forward Plan.

List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title	Available from
Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2013	From the Planning and Transport Service or at: http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Local-plan/CoreStrategy.aspx

Directorate Sign-off:	Steve Normington
Date:	8 November 2013

Please list any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description
A	Standish Infrastructure Assessment, November 2013
B	Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment, November 2013

1. Background:

- 1.1 The need for infrastructure assessments for Standish and Golborne and Lowton arises from the adoption of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy. Policy SP4 of the Core Strategy identifies Standish and Golborne and Lowton as broad locations for new housing development, each with approximately 1,000 new homes on safeguarded land to 2026. However there is capacity for double that amount of housing on safeguarded land in both Standish and Golborne and Lowton and there are developers and housebuilders interested in bringing forward schemes. In both areas planning applications for more than 1000 homes already have either been submitted or are at a significant pre application stage.
- 1.2 It had been intended, by the government and the council, that this situation would be resolved through the preparation of the Allocations Plan. However, national planning policy has changed and the Core Strategy now allows such land to come forward for development in advance of the Allocations Plan being adopted. The requirement is to have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land and Standish, and Golborne and Lowton, have been identified as broad locations for new housing to contribute towards this supply. There is therefore a policy presumption that planning permission will be forthcoming for approximately 1,000 new homes on safeguarded land in each of Standish and Golborne and Lowton, and the council has to determine, through the planning application process, where this should be achieved. The capacity of infrastructure to serve the site and the provision of the necessary infrastructure needed to deliver the developments must be taken into account in determining those proposals, in accordance with the Core Strategy policy.
- 1.3 The infrastructure assessments have been prepared to inform these. They are not part of the Local Plan, neither are they supplementary planning documents. They are evidence documents that will be supplemented by other evidence available to the council at the time that decisions are taken, including from applicants, consultees and other third parties. However, they are prepared by the council on the basis of having significant weight in the planning application process. The draft Infrastructure Assessments for both Standish and for Golborne and Lowton are appended to this report.
- 1.4 A number of different scenarios for development have been assessed across the safeguarded land in both Standish and Golborne and Lowton.

2. Proposals:

- 2.1 The following categories of infrastructure have been assessed:
- **Transport infrastructure**, including public transport, walking and cycling and the highway network.
 - **Education infrastructure**, both primary and secondary school place provision.
 - **Health infrastructure**, including GP and dental services.
 - **Open space and recreation**
 - **Community infrastructure**, including community facilities
 - **Utilities infrastructure**, including gas, electricity, water and sewerage.

Bus services

- 2.2 The assessments have concluded that in Standish the best opportunities to connect to existing bus services are at Almond Brook, with less opportunity at Rectory Lane,

and in Golborne and Lowton the best opportunities are at Rothwell's Farm, then Stone Cross, with less opportunity at Pocket Nook.

Rail services

- 2.3 The assessments have concluded that in Standish the best opportunities to connect to existing rail services are at Almond Brook, with less opportunity at Rectory Lane, and in Golborne and Lowton the best opportunities are at Rothwell's Farm, then Stone Cross, with less opportunity at Pocket Nook. The assessments include the potential for developments at Golborne and Lowton to make a contribution towards the development of a new railway station at Golborne. However there will be further work to do on viability of this contribution.

Walking and cycling

- 2.4 The assessments have concluded that in Standish the best opportunities to minimise the transport impact by promoting walking / cycling are at Almond Brook followed by Rectory Lane South and then Rectory Lane North, and in Golborne and Lowton the best opportunities are at Rothwell's Farm and Stone Cross with less opportunity at Pocket Nook.

Highway infrastructure

- 2.5 The Council commissioned Transport for Greater Manchester to undertake traffic surveys specifically for these assessments. The survey work involved looking at the current situation at key junctions within the Standish and Golborne and Lowton areas. Traffic models were run to look at the impact of different levels of development in different parts of the broad locations.
- 2.6 The assessments have concluded that provided that certain highway infrastructure improvements are put into place alongside a package of sustainable transport measures, and the development is directed to certain areas of the broad location, then the 1000 homes could be accommodated in transport terms.
- 2.7 In Standish, with the additional sustainable transport benefits associated with Almond Brook, the most acceptable scenario for 1,000 new homes on safeguarded land would be 500 homes at Almond Brook and 500 homes at Rectory Lane, with around 250 accessed from Rectory Lane and the remainder accessed from Chorley Road.
- 2.8 The Golborne and Lowton assessment has concluded that, with the additional sustainable transport benefits associated with Rothwell's Farm and Stone Cross, the most acceptable scenario for 1,000 new homes on safeguarded land at Golborne and Lowton would be 400 homes at Rothwell's Farm, 400 homes at Stone Cross and 200 homes at Pocket Nook.

Primary schools

- 2.9 1,000 additional homes would yield around 210 new primary pupils in Standish and in Golborne and Lowton. This is derived from a standard assumption that 100 homes will yield 3 additional pupils per school year group, therefore 21 in total. Set against the projected surplus in Standish of 87 places in 2016/17, there would be a shortfall of 123 places. Set against the projected surplus in Golborne and Lowton of 132 places in 2016/17, there would be a shortfall of 105 places. To address these shortfalls an additional 1-form entry primary school or equivalent would be needed at each.

Secondary schools

- 2.10 Applying the equivalent standard formula for secondary schools, it is estimated that 1,000 new homes will yield around 150 secondary pupils in Standish and in Golborne and Lowton. Standish is served by both Standish and Shevington High Schools. There is sufficient secondary school capacity, notably at Shevington High School, to accommodate the additional secondary pupils envisaged. At Almond Brook there is an opportunity to improve accessibility to both schools.
- 2.11 Golborne and Lowton is served by both Golborne and Lowton High Schools. There is sufficient secondary school capacity, notably at Lowton High School, to accommodate the additional secondary pupils envisaged.

Health Provision

- 2.12 The assessments have focussed on the impact of the new housing development on GP service provision as this was considered to be the most relevant element of health infrastructure provision following consultation with the Clinical Commissioning Group. Current GP provision in Standish is at the new Standish Medical Centre. This has 7 GPs (5.98 working time equivalent (WTE)) and 11,778 registered patients. This equates to 1,969 patients per WTE GP. A ratio of 1 to 1,800-2,000 patients is regarded as good practice. The medical centre was designed to serve up to 20,000 patients. An additional GP at the medical centre would be sufficient to address the level of new patients generated from the 1,000 homes.
- 2.13 There are 8.86 working time equivalent (WTE) GPs in Golborne and Lowton, with an average of 2,185 patients each. This is above the good practice ratio of 1 to 1,800-2,000 patients. Provision is particularly overstretched in Lowton East. As such, substantial development (over 400 homes) at Pocket Nook would require a new replacement GP surgery, with 2 GPs. If less than 400 homes it is anticipated that the increased demand would be absorbed by existing practices in Leigh and Golborne.

Open space, sport and recreation

- 2.14 In addition to the standard planning policy requirements for on-site open space and play space at developments of more than 99 homes, there are numerous opportunities in Standish and in Golborne and Lowton, within and alongside the safeguarded land and elsewhere within the towns, at which improvements can be made, either directly or in terms of improving access to them. How the housing numbers are divided up in Standish and in Golborne and Lowton will determine which opportunities should be advanced.

Community facilities

- 2.15 Quantitatively, community provision in Standish and Golborne and Lowton is well provided for with a wide range of facilities. However, many would benefit from modernisation and refurbishment to continue to meet community requirements. Given that the new developments will increase the demand for these facilities, it is proposed that developers will be required to make a financial contribution of £100 per home to support the improvement and maintenance of community provision in Standish and Golborne and Lowton.

Gas

- 2.16 It is unlikely that the development of around 1,000 homes in Standish and in Golborne and Lowton will create capacity issues for the National Grid. The existing transmission networks should be able to cope with additional demands.

Electricity

- 2.17 In Standish, approved schemes in Electricity North West's investment programme will increase capacity to adequate levels by 2015. In Golborne and Lowton there is spare capacity available.

Water

- 2.18 In Standish there is sufficient water infrastructure to support the development, but there will be a requirement for minimal intervention depending on the points of connection. It is the same position in Golborne and Lowton for Rothwell's Farm and Pocket Nook. However, the security of the water supply in the Stone Cross area is currently at risk until there is investment at a key point in the network.

Sewerage

- 2.19 In Standish there are known sewerage issues at Cranleigh and Rectory Lane. Development at Rectory Lane North and South (including Chorley Road) would have to feed into Chorley Road pumping station which is already a high risk site. Almond Brook is served by two pumping stations at Arbour Lane and Chorley Road but there are overloading issues.
- 2.20 At Golborne and Lowton there is sufficient capacity to serve Stone Cross but checks would be needed for substantial development at Pocket Nook and some additional infrastructure would be needed for Rothwell's Farm.

3. Conclusions:

- 3.1 The preparation of the two Infrastructure Assessments has involved a considerable amount of work and analysis, particularly in relation to transport modelling. Transport is a key determinant as to where development would be best located on the safeguarded land at each of Standish and Golborne and Lowton. Effectively it is the transport considerations which tend to direct development towards certain locations and in certain patterns, whereas the other elements of infrastructure impact and mitigation are much less geographically focussed. They don't influence the pattern of development in the same way as transport matters will do.
- 3.2 The Infrastructure Assessments show that subject to the certain infrastructure improvements being secured and the pattern of development being directed towards certain areas of the broad locations, the Core Strategy policy provision for 1000 homes in each broad can be achieved.
- 3.3 The Infrastructure Assessments set out the costs of mitigating the impact on the two areas through the provision of new or improved infrastructure. These costs will have to be met through provision in the Section 106 agreements which will be completed before planning permission is granted. These costs have not been subject to any viability testing as that work goes beyond the scope of the assessments. However, on the basis that these sites are largely unconstrained, sit within good housing market areas and that developers did not raise any concerns over viability at the Core Strategy examination, the indicative costs for example scenarios are reasonable. They include financial requirements that are already set out in policy and practice such as contributions for open space and education. The cost of improving junctions on to the A580 at Golborne and Lowton and potentially contributions to a new railway station at Golborne, result in the overall contributions being sought for that area being higher than in Standish. It is expected that the cost of meeting infrastructure provision will largely be apportioned pro rata by dwelling and the S106 agreements will reflect this.

- 3.4 The Infrastructure Assessments, once approved, will be material considerations in the determination of the planning applications for housing development in the Standish and Golborne and Lowton broad locations