

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Response to the Re-Deposit Draft Replacement of the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan</b>
<b>TO/ON:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> April Executive – 2006</b>
<b>BY:</b>	<b>Director of Environmental Services</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>STATUS:</b>	<b>Report</b>

## **STRATEGIC FACTOR CHECKLIST**

The Council's Corporate Management Team has confirmed that the Strategic Factor Checklist has been applied to the development of this report and there are no key issues, over and above those set out in the body of the report, that need to be brought to Members' attention.

## **1 SUBJECT MATTER & PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report sets out Derwentside District Council's recommended response to Gateshead Council's invitation to comment on the Re-Deposit Draft Replacement of their Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The closing date for consultation was 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Due to the tight timescales for consultation, the representations at the end of this report have been forwarded to Gateshead Council to meet the deadline. It has been made clear that these are officer comments only, ahead of any consideration of Executive. Any other comments will be forwarded immediately following this meeting.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Gateshead Council adopted its first UDP in November 1998. The first update to this came in July 2004 when the Deposit Draft Replacement UDP was published. The Re-Deposit Draft Replacement Plan of January 2006 is the latest revision to this document, and when adopted it will replace the existing adopted UDP, and be saved for three years to enable the Council to move to the production of its Local Development Framework. As a neighbouring local authority Derwentside District Council has been invited to provide comments as part of the statutory consultation development plan process.
- 2.2 The Re-Deposit Draft UDP aims to provide continuity with the current adopted UDP, while aiming to be consistent with the regional strategic guidance from the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy and the Housing Market Renewal (Pathfinder) initiative. The replacement UDP has a plan period that will cover the thirteen-year period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

### 3 RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Re-Deposit Draft UDP sets out that the main aim of the Plan is to promote development where it is needed and in the most sustainable manner possible. To assist in achieving this aim the Plan is accompanied by a joint statutory Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the UDP, which has been prepared for Gateshead Council by external consultants.
- 3.2 The policies and proposals in the Re-Deposit Draft UDP have been evaluated with respect to their likely impact on Derwentside. Many of the objections Derwentside Council made to the previous Deposit Draft UDP of 2004 (see Appendix I) have been amended in the Re-Deposit document, while those which continue to raise concerns to Derwentside are summarised below:

POLICY	COMMENT
H1	<p>The Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) establishes a net housing figure of 505 new dwellings per annum for the Gateshead Strategic Planning Area; up from 450 in RPG1. The Re-Deposit Draft Gateshead UDP maintains that an annual average net allocation of 560 units is needed, which is well above the allocation set out in the RSS.</p> <p>Gateshead Council suggests that the Borough is in a more sustainable location for growth, along with the need to protect the Pathfinder housing market renewal initiative, as reasons for reducing the RSS housing allocation for surrounding local authorities, including Derwentside, and for increasing the allocation for Gateshead.</p> <p>This reasoning is undermined by the policy of promoting growth in the outlying settlements of the Gateshead local authority area such as Kibblesworth, Chopwell and High Spenn, which have been allocated approximately 607 greenfield units during the plan period. As the majority of this development would be built on greenfield land, Gateshead's case for an increased allocation in the emerging RSS is unreasonable.</p> <p>The RSS is still in preparation (the Examination in Public closed on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006) and therefore the regional housing figures will not be finalised by the ODPM until the Autumn. It is therefore of concern that the provision for housing stated in Policy H1 is premature and may have a negative effect on future housing provision for County Durham. An objection should therefore be made to this Policy on the grounds stated above.</p>

<p><b>H3</b></p>	<p>Since the original Gateshead UDP was adopted, Government Guidance in PPG3 now promotes the use of previously developed sites for housing over the preference for greenfield sites. The focus of new housing developments should therefore be in urban areas, with greenfield sites only being considered where brownfield sites perform badly against the criteria set out in PPG3.</p> <p>This Council has previously objected to the lack of a phasing policy in the UDP. Whilst a Policy to this effect has been added to the Re-Deposit UDP, it is felt that it is not a phasing policy in that it fails to control, manage or phase future development.</p> <p>Although paragraph 8.6 refers to a phasing policy, when this is read in detail all this does is identify how many units are likely to be built on the identified housing sites during each of the Plan's time periods. There are no controls on when sites come forward and there is nothing to prevent all greenfield sites being developed before those on previously developed land, contrary to PPG3. The guidance in PPG3 states that "<i>In determining the order in which sites [are] identified ....the presumption will be that previously developed sites (or buildings for re-use or conversion) should be developed before greenfield sites.</i>"</p>
<p><b>Housing Sites H3.2, H3.3, H3.28</b></p>	<p>There is concern over the following housing allocations proposed within Policy H3 on greenfield sites, that have merely repeated many of the sites in the adopted plan and the 2004 deposit draft replacement of the UDP. Housing allocation <b>H3.28</b> would result in an unsustainable greenfield extension to Kibblesworth and allocations <b>H3.2</b> and <b>H3.3</b> in Chopwell are also on greenfield land. It is felt that these sites are unsustainable and that housing allocations should primarily be located in urban brownfield locations as defined in PPG3.</p>
<p><b>ENV51</b></p>	<p>While it is appreciated that the Wildlife corridor notation used on the proposals map is indicative of the specific wildlife corridors, the notation suggests that there is a solid boundary to the extents of the corridor. Wildlife Corridors by their nature do not conform to exact boundaries. On this basis, perhaps the accompanying text should make reference to this and the rationale behind the notation used.</p>

## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Executive is recommended to:

- i) Agree that the representations on the issues outlined above be forwarded to Gateshead Council in response to the invitation to comment on the Re-Deposit Draft UDP.

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## APPENDIX I

The following comments, which were raised for the previous Deposit Draft UDP of 2004, have now been amended in the Re-Deposit Draft UDP.

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Response</u>
<b>ENV53</b>	The Major Derelict Sites of Marley Hill and Byermoor identified on the Proposals Map under Policy ENV53 are not illustrated in the correct position. Most of the former Byermoor colliery is in Derwentside and the Marley Hill site is now proposed as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.	The comment is accepted and the Plan has been amended with the correct location shown.
<b>JE4</b>	The notation used for the Tourism Action Areas along the Derwent Valley is misleading as it suggests that specific sites have been identified for tourism. It is appreciated that the notation is similar to that used on the Proposals Map for the adopted UDP, but where identifying the Derwent Valley it should be more indicative of the wider Derwent Valley area in order to facilitate tourism development in appropriate locations.	The former JE4 Proposals Map annotation has been removed. The revised Proposals Map has now been given new criteria policy and supporting text to assess proposals.
<b>JE4</b>	It is not considered appropriate to include the Derwent Valley within the Jobs and Employment Chapter Policy JE4, which views it in the same light as the north of the Metro Centre and the Central Riverside. While the Derwent Valley has the ability to contribute to employment through tourism related developments it is a sensitive environmental resource with employment related development most likely to be vastly smaller and more sensitive than proposals related to the other sites identified in the Policy JE4. On this basis a specific tourism policy relating to the Derwent Valley should be focused more towards promoting visitor countryside and tourism	Supporting text in criteria e and f of Chapter 7 of JE5 has been revised to be in accordance with PPS7, i.e. sustainable rural tourism facilities of an appropriate scale will be supported within the Derwent Valley, provided that they are needed to enhance visitors' enjoyment of the natural landscape and/or improve the financial viability and provided that they will not detract from the attractiveness or importance of the countryside.

attractions than strictly job creation.

**JE4**

The Tanfield Railway is an important tourism resource to the area and there is an opportunity to develop another operational track between Marley Hill and Burnopfield, which should be identified for protection as a future tourism railway link. This should be considered in connection with a specific tourism related policy in a similar manner to the Derwent Valley. Also there is a need to identify the route of a cycle path linking the Tanfield Railway Path at Marley Hill with the Bowes Railway path at Burnopfield.

Reference has been added to Chapter 7 of supporting text of JE5. Added to the tourism policy supporting text reference to heritage attractions cluster and safeguarding the potential to extend the line between Marley Hill and Byermoor along the route of Bowes Railway.