

ITEM NO

REPORT TO COUNCIL

29 June 2007

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Portfolio: Planning and Development

Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Options

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will provide the strategic planning direction and policies for the Borough to 2021. Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 states that in order to take forward this document, the Borough Council must undertake early consultation and public participation with its community.
- 1.2 The publication of the Core Strategy Preferred Options follows the publication and consideration of responses to the Key Issues Paper (2005) and Alternative Options (2006). The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment. Following this round of consultation, the Borough Council will prepare its Submission Document for publication in 2008.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet commend the attached Core Strategy Preferred Options Report to Council. The document will require Council authorisation to be published.

3 THE CORE STRATEGY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REPORT

- 3.1 Paragraphs 4.1 – 4.3 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, states that the key to the success of the new system is the early identification of all issues in the preparation of the Development Plan Document. Local authorities should “front-load” the preparation of Development Plan Documents by facilitating early involvement and securing input from its community. This is to ensure that there is full community involvement before significant decisions are taken.

- 3.2 The Core Strategy provides the spatial expression of the Borough's Community Strategy. The document provides the strategic direction within which planning decisions should be made. The overall aim of the document is to help provide balanced and sustainable communities. The form and content of the document has taken into account the Government's view that Core Strategies should be succinct documents and be no more than 30 pages.
- 3.3 To help facilitate this, there is a clear locational strategy that prioritises the re-use of contaminated land and Previously-Developed Land and Buildings before considering Greenfield releases, focuses development in the four main towns in the Borough whilst ensuring that some development takes place in the larger villages. Further policies have been developed to provide a positive approach to housing; the natural and built environment; energy; flood risk; transport; open and green space; biodiversity; employment; retail; and, tourism.
- 3.4 The document has been set out so that all relevant issues surrounding the policy theme are consistently assessed and appraised. The reader of the document can easily identify the following:
- the linkages to the over-arching Aims and Objectives;
 - the evidence base for the policy;
 - a summary of the previous consultation responses;
 - a summary of the Sustainability Appraisal findings;
 - a summary of the Appropriate Assessment screening;
 - our preferred Policy approach;
 - the reasons for this approach; and,
 - an implementation and monitoring approach.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.5 The document has been subject to a comprehensive appraisal process that meets the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the guidance contained in the ODPM document 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' (2005). This process has been overseen by the Sustainability Appraisal Team within Forward Planning, and has drawn upon expertise from other sections of the Council. This has been an iterative process and has resulted in a number of significant changes to the strategic direction of the Core Strategy. This is to be welcomed as it makes the Core Strategy more sustainable and robust to scrutiny.
- 3.6 The Sustainability Appraisal has highlighted that there is an omission from the document in respect of Environmental Protection of air, water and land. Whilst this cannot be accommodated in the Preferred Option Report due to time constraints, we will give consultees the option to either support or reject this recommendation through this period of consultation. The responses to this question will be closely analysed and considered prior to the formulation of the Submission Document next year.

Appropriate Assessment

- 3.7 Appropriate Assessment is required for any proposed plan or project which may have a significant effect on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas

(SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and which is not required for the management of those sites. Schedule 1 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 transposes into English Law the requirement to carry out a screening process for Appropriate Assessment of Local Development Documents, such as the Core Strategy. Whilst Thrislington Special Area of Conservation is the only European site in the Borough, we have to consider the effect of the document upon sites within the potential zone of influence of the Core Strategy, such as Castle Eden Dene SAC.

- 3.8 The screening process has been carried out in partnership with experts from national and regional conservation bodies, as well as colleagues from adjacent authorities. The screening process has highlighted that there are two issues that will require mitigation or avoidance measures. These relate to the effect of locating wind turbines in proximity to areas of water where protected birds migrate to, and the deposition of pollutants and nutrients that will change the soil characteristics upon which the Thrislington grassland (and to a lesser extent Castle Eden Dene SAC) is based. Avoidance measures will include exclusion zones for wind turbines from open area of water to address the first theme and to address the second theme, there is a particular need to ensure that there are sufficient areas of open and green space for dog walkers in Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill Station and West Cornforth to eliminate the need to take their pets to the protected grassland for exercise.
- 3.9 Furthermore, any new house building in the Trimdons will have to ensure that their energy consumption does not increase air pollution as these settlement lies down wind of Castle Eden Dene SAC. In effect, this means that any new development must not burn coal as their primary source of heat. This issue will be primarily resolved through the development of the Major Allocations Development Plan Document.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst there will not be any direct resource implications, apart from publication costs, there will indirect cost implications in terms of Officer time spent on this consultation exercise.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report will be subject to a period of six weeks public consultation. The consultation will be undertaken, in accordance with the consultation methods outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement and further details can be seen in the accompanying Statement of Consultation.
- 5.2 Following the consultation, the responses will be collated and analysed. The Submitted Core Strategy Document will be submitted for examination to the Secretary of State and published in 2008.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 [Links to Corporate Objectives / Values](#)

The publication of the document will help meet Corporate Aim 25, which is to provide a high quality, efficient and customer focussed Planning Service that supports sustainable improvement of the built and natural environment of the Borough.

6.2 Legal Implications

The document must be published in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

6.3 Risk Management

If the Core Strategy is not produced, the deliverability of sustainable communities across the Borough may be hindered and this could have a negative effect upon the implementation of the Borough's Community Strategy.

6.4 Health and Safety Implications

No additional implications have been identified.

6.5 Sustainability

The Sustainability Appraisal Report accompanies the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

6.6 Equality and Diversity

The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report will be made available in alternative languages, Braille or in audio format where requested, and will be placed on the website in pdf format.

Equality and diversity issues are discussed in the Core Strategy and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

6.7 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion issues are discussed with the Document.

6.8 Procurement

There are no procurement issues.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

Core Strategy Preferred Options Report
Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal
Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment
Statement of Consultation

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Ward(s): All

Key Decision Validation: This is a Key Decision as a decision made by Cabinet in the course of developing proposals to Council to amend the **policy framework**.

Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, 2005

Schedule 1 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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