



District of **easington**.

**Report to:** District of Easington  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2005  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
**Subject** LDF Advisory Panel  
**Ward:** All

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for new arrangements to engage Members in the production of Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework.

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 The Chief Executive and Management Team have been consulted and support the proposals recommended in this report.

## **3. Background**

3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to prepare a series of documents that will make up the LDF. The priority documents and programme for their production were identified in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) approved by the Council in March 2005.

3.2 The new planning system is intended to promote a more proactive, positive approach to managing development. Development plan documents will continue to be the essential framework for planning decisions but, through a process of 'front loading', community and stakeholder involvement is to be sought from the outset. This is to achieve local ownership and legitimacy for the policies that will shape the future of the area.

3.3 Early engagement with Members is fundamental to the new process of preparing development plans. This report considers the mechanisms currently available to engage Members in planning for development and makes recommendations to widen the opportunities for earlier involvement in accordance with the new framework.

## **4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal**

4.1 Preparation of development documents must be a participatory process with anyone interested in the planning of the area. This will include national organisations, government agencies, regional organisations, developers, local organisation, local community groups and the community who should all be able to assist the local authority to shape the future of the area from the earliest stage and through a continuous process.

- 4.2 Current Council procedures do not afford Members the opportunity for early involvement in document preparation when key environmental, economic and social issues should be explored and options formulated. A thorough understanding of the needs, opportunities and constraints which operate in the area is essential to provide a sound evidence base on which to found policies, this is the principle on which development plans will be tested at independent examination. Engagement with Members at this early stage of plan preparation is therefore fundamental.
- 4.3 Development plan documents are currently reported to the Executive of the Council as draft proposals when key decisions have already been explored. It is proposed that an advisory panel be set up whose members will engage in much earlier stages of LDF development plan preparation to guide the formulation of preferred options in response to community participation. Final decisions on preferred policy options would remain with full Council as at present. Frequency of panel meetings would be at appropriate stages of preparation of each document, but particularly through the options development stage identified in the programme timetable of the adopted LDS and appended to this report for information.
- 4.4 As the focus of development plans identified in the adopted LDS is on regeneration and housing renewal, it is proposed that the new advisory panel consist of the Executive Member for Regeneration, as well as the Executive Member for the Environment and Transport who currently has responsibility for development planning. It would also be appropriate to include the Chair of the Development Control and Regulatory Panel, along with a Member from the minority group, a Member from the Scrutiny and Management Board, and the Chair and a Member from each of the Area Forums to provide geographic representation.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no financial implications, funding requirements will be met from existing budgets.

### **5.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications.

### **5.3 Policy**

The proposed LDF advisory panel will assist in the formulation of planning policy for subsequent consideration by full Council.

### **5.4 Risk**

As this is a technical document, there is no risk.

### **5.5 Communications**

The outcomes from the advisory panel will form part of the evidence gathering and stakeholder consultation in the preparation of the LDF Preferred Options reports (see Appendix). These will be reported to the Council in accordance with existing procedures for planning policy documents.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

**6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities**

The report proposes new management arrangements which will address corporate priorities with regard to quality of service and striving for excellence.

**6.2 Equality and Diversity**

There are no implications

**6.3 E-Government**

There are no implications

**6.4 Procurement**

There are no implications

**7. Recommendations**

It is recommended that an LDF advisory panel is set up to engage in the preparation of development plan documents at appropriate stages identified in the Council's adopted LDS, to consist of:

Executive Member for Regeneration

Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Chair of Development Control and Regulatory Panel

Member of the minority group

Member of the Scrutiny and Management Board

Chair and one other Member of each of the Area Forums

Background Papers/Documents referred to:

Local Development Scheme



**Item no.**