

The County Durham Plan

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with supporting information in advance of a presentation by Mike Allum, Strategic Planning Team Leader and Rick Long, Principal Planner, Strategic Planning Team, Regeneration and Economic Development focusing on the County Durham Plan.

Background

- 2 All local Planning authorities have a statutory requirement to prepare and maintain an up to date Development Plan for their area. The Development Plan comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Framework which the Council is now developing, referred to as the County Durham Plan. Members will recall that the Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2009/2010 identified that the Committee would receive an Overview of the development of the County Durham Plan.
- 3 On the 6 July, 2011 a special joint meeting was held between Members of the Economy and Enterprise and the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees when Members received a presentation providing an update in relation to the Core Strategy followed by focus group work. The special meeting provided Members with the opportunity to participate in the second stage of the public and stakeholder consultation exercise in relation to the development of the County Durham Plan.
- 4 Discussion within the groups focused around five key questions with comments from the various groups collated into a response on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Members. This response was then fed into the extensive consultation exercise for the development of the Core Strategy which concluded on the 8 July, 2011. The questions considered by Members were as follows:
 - Have we got the policy direction right? With the focus on increasing economic performance.
 - Does the distribution of housing, retail and industry reflect this?

- Other key issues in the plan are tourism, the rural economy and town centres, what are your thoughts on these?
- We are looking to increase renewable energy but only to a point which County Durham has the capacity to generate and also to provide the necessary waste strategy. Do you agree?
- Have we missed anything?

Current Position

- 5 The responses from the consultation exercise are now being collated and used to inform the further development of the Core Strategy, helping to decide which strategy and proposals would be pursued. Further public events have also been held for the residents of Durham City during October, to update them on progress in developing the design principles that would guide the master planning of key strategic sites around Durham City.
- 6 It is therefore timely that Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive an update in relation to the development of the Core Strategy and Draft Plan, providing a further opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Members to comment.

Next Steps

- 7 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity at the meeting on the 14 November, 2011 to provide comments in relation to the development of the Core Strategy and the Draft Plan.
- 8 It is intended that the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update in relation to the progress of the County Durham Plan at the meeting on the 29 March, 2012 prior to the publication of the County Durham Plan.

Recommendations

- 9 That Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee provide comments in relation to the development of the Core Strategy and the Draft Plan.
- 10 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to receive a further update in relation to the progress of the County Durham Plan at the meeting on the 29 March, 2012 prior to the publication of the County Durham Plan.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - There will be a need to update the evidence base studies in the future in order that they remain robust. This will be carried out in-house where specialist skills and knowledge are available.

Staffing - None

Equality and Diversity - Equality and Diversity will be built into the wider LDF preparation process, particularly through the methods used for consultation, and through an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - The extensive consultation process began on the 11th June 2010 and ran for 8 weeks concluding on the 6th August 2010 with further additional engagement leading up to the publication of the Draft Plan in July 2011.

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act - None

Legal Implications - None