

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

29 October 2015

County Durham Plan - Update



Report of 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 a further update in relation to the current position regarding the County Durham Plan and the process to be followed.

Background

- 2 As Members will remember the County Durham Plan (CDP) is a key Council document, seeking to guide the future development of the County and to improve the lives of its existing and future residents.
- 3 Overview and Scrutiny have received regular updates and workshops in relation to the ongoing preparation/progress on the CDP. The last update report was provided to committee on the 6 October, 2014 and related to: the appointment of a Planning Inspector for the Examination in Public (EIP) and the appointment of a Programme Officer to support the EIP; how the EIP would be carried out and focus for each stage of the examination.
- 4 At the meeting of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 29 September, 2015 members received a verbal update on the CDP from the Spatial Planning Team Leader who informed members that the High Court made a resolution that the Inspector's Interim Report be quashed.

Current Position

- 5 As part of the agreement reached with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and endorsed by the court, the CDP will now be withdrawn. As much has changed in regard to Government policy and elements of the Plan's evidence base it is currently being updated and refreshed. Key areas of work include:
 - Economic, population and household forecasting;
 - Housing Market Assessment;

- Employment Land Review;
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
 - Sustainable Transport Strategy for Durham City;
 - Local Plan and CIL Viability; and
 - Retail Needs Assessment.
- 6 The updated evidence will inform the refreshing of the Plan and indicate where any changes may have to be made.

Next Steps

7. In order to ensure an amended and refreshed Plan is back to Examination as soon as possible we are hoping to have the new draft approved by Cabinet and out to consultation early in the new year. We will then look to submit the Plan for Examination in late spring.
8. After Submission a new Planning Inspector will be appointed who will then determine the timescales and the format of the Examination in Public

Recommendation

- 9 That the members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the position regarding progress of the County Durham Plan and receive a further update at a future meeting.

Background papers:

Economy and Enterprise OSC - County Durham Plan update report – 6 October 2014

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The Regeneration Statement and the County Durham Plan outline the approach for investment which includes Durham County's Council's capital programme.

Staffing – The Spatial Policy Team's work programme reflect the requirements of the CDP Project Plan.

Risk – The evidence base does not arrive in a timely fashion to allow policies to be drafted and considered by the Sustainability Appraisal team.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – Detailed Equality Impact Assessments and will be amended and refreshed to reflect the emerging Plan.

Accommodation – None.

Crime and Disorder – None.

Human Rights – None.

Consultation – Further consultation is required before Submission of the Plan.

Procurement – None.

Disability Issues – None.

Legal Implications – The Council's legal team are fully involved in the update and refreshing of the Plan. In addition a barrister has been appointed to assist the Council throughout the entire process including the Examination in Public.