

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

7 June 2007

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Wood (Chairman) (P)

Beckett (P)
Hollingbery (P)

Pearson (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Beveridge (P)
Busher (P)
Cook (P)

Jefferies
Sutton (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Coates

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Allgood

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 7 February 2007 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Weeks (Winchester City Residents' Association) expressed concern about what he believed was the inadequate community involvement in the Local Development Framework process, as Committee reports had only been made available on the Council's Website. He requested that paper copies of the agenda and reports be made available in the Council's reception, for the Local Development Framework Committee and other public meetings.

The Committee considered Mr Week's comments under CAB1472(LDF) below.

In response to a query made by Mr Weeks prior to the meeting, the Head of Legal Services explained that Appendix 2 of CAB1473(LDF) was exempt because it contained financial and business details relating to other organisations.

3. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY – PROGRESS REPORT**

(Report CAB1472(LDF) refers)

Councillor Pearson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a Parish Council representative on the Hampshire Countryside and Access Forum.

3.1. Current Progress

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that a section of the Report which set the scene on current progress had been accidentally omitted. Therefore, he provided the Committee with a verbal update as set out below:

It was important to see the current work in the context of the whole Core Strategy process. The main stages (not taking account of the changes proposed by the Planning White Paper) were:

- Front loading and evidence gathering: The Core Strategy (or any other Development Plan Document) should be evidenced-based. The evidence must include both technical studies (the ‘facts and figures’) and input from the public and other stakeholders. This was the current stage of the Core Strategy process and the next meetings of this Committee would be primarily to receive the results of this evidence gathering. The Committee would not need to reach conclusions or make decisions about the evidence at this stage, as it needed to be assimilated and developed into a number of alternative ‘options’ for the ‘spatial strategy’ for the District;
- Developing and consulting on issues and options: This involved taking the various strands of the evidence base (see Appendix B of Report CAB1472(LDF)), along with the spatial implications of existing/emerging plans and strategies and developing a number of options. Government advice emphasised the importance of developing and consulting on a series of options, rather than going straight to ‘the answer’. Only those options which may be realistic needed to be developed and tested, and they would need to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. It was proposed that the Committee should start to consider and agree the spatial/development options in September 2007, perhaps following an all-Member workshop. There would then be public consultation on the agreed Issues and Options in Autumn 2007;
- Refining a preferred option: After consultation on the issues and options, the Council must agree its ‘preferred option’, taking account of the public comments, the evidence base and Sustainability Appraisal. There were clear messages from Government and the Planning Inspectorate that Core Strategies needed to ‘take the difficult decisions’ if they were to fulfil their purpose and be declared ‘sound’, following public examination. The most significant ‘difficult decisions’ were likely to relate to the strategy for accommodating and locating development over the period of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy must be clear about matters such as the settlement hierarchy, the scale of development likely to be directed at specific settlements or types of settlements, and those areas which should accommodate growth or be subject to restraint;
- Submission to the Secretary of State: At this point the Council submits its ‘finished’ Core Strategy to Government for public examination by an independent Inspector. There was no scope for the Council to change the Strategy after this point and the recommendations in the Inspector’s Report would be binding. It was

therefore essential that the Council was satisfied that the Core Strategy was 'sound' before submitting it, to avoid the danger of it being pronounced 'unsound' and having to go back to 'square one'. The Inspector would examine the soundness of the whole Strategy, not just respond to objections to it. The Inspector would have particular regard to the evidence base, the Sustainability Appraisal and the results of the various stakeholder consultation events in coming to a conclusion on the Strategy's soundness. Indeed, the adequacy of each of those aspects would be amongst the 'tests of soundness' that the Inspector applies;

- Inspector's Report and adoption: The Inspector's report of the public examination would contain binding recommendations which the Council had to accept. They may range from total acceptance of the Core Strategy without change to its rejection as being 'unsound'. The more likely outcome was that the Inspector would recommend various changes to make the Strategy more sound or to correct perceived deficiencies. The Inspector could not however re-write a Core Strategy to remedy major deficiencies and would have to declare such a deficient Core Strategy to be unsound. Once the Inspector's Report has been published the Council must accept its recommendations and adopt the Strategy (or start again if it is found to be unsound).

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that provided the Core Strategy was supported by the evidence base and the Sustainability Appraisal, and the Council could demonstrate it had followed the correct procedure, then the Inspector would be very unlikely to declare it "unsound". He acknowledged that Government guidance was changing regarding the Local Development Framework process, but believed that the work currently undertaken and planned by the Council would remain valid, given the early stage in the process which the City Council had reached.

The Head of Strategic Planning reminded the Committee that a diagram of the Local Development Framework process had been published in the Statement of Community Involvement. In addition, Member training would be held on 10 July 2007.

The Head of Strategic Planning advised the draft South East Plan was available and included some indication of likely housing numbers required for the District. However, the Report of the Panel that held an Examination in Public would not be completed until July 2007 and might not be published until late 2007/early 2008 (i.e. after the Government published its 'Proposed Modifications'). He acknowledged this delay might cause difficulties, as it might result in the Council consulting on options which might not be feasible.

NOTE – subsequent investigation suggested the Panel Report might be published in September, before the Government Office produces Proposed Modifications.

3.2. Initial Outcomes of Community Involvement

One Member expressed concern about the low turnout at the public meetings and questionnaire responses, and whether this could risk the Inspector judging the Core Strategy 'unsound'. The Head of Strategic Planning stated that a range of consultation techniques had been used, which were considered to be sufficiently robust, and compared favourably with methods adopted by neighbouring local authorities. In addition, the Inspector would be testing to ascertain if the Council had complied with its published Statement of Community Involvement, which it had. It was emphasised that the Community involvement exercise has been aimed primarily at

identifying key issues for the LDF to address and that it was felt it had succeeded in doing this, notwithstanding the limited numbers of people involved.

The Head of Strategic Planning requested Members' guidance on the method of publication of the lengthy Community/Stakeholder Participation Report, and similar 'evidence reports' that would be produced in due course. It was agreed that this and future Reports be made available on the Council's Website and provided as a black and white photocopied document on request, at a nominal charge.

With regard to the comments made by Mr Weeks in the public participation period at the start of the meeting, the Head of Democratic Services agreed that a paper copy of the Local Development Framework Committee agenda and reports be made available in the Council's reception for public viewing. This was in addition to public access to the reports on the Council's Website, which were already available.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the results of the front-loading exercise be noted and taken into account in developing issues and options for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

2. That the Community/Stakeholder Participation Report be published in the form detailed above.

4. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

(Report CAB1474(LDF) refers)

Councillor Pearson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a Parish Council representative on the Hampshire Countryside and Access Forum.

The Head of Strategic Planning reported that a Sustainability Appraisal workshop would take place on 26 June 2007 and requested that Members attend this workshop if possible.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the form and content of the Report's Appendix be noted, subject to updates resulting from publication of new guidance and advice.

2. That the Committee encourages Members to attend the Sustainability Appraisal workshop proposed at paragraph 3.3 of the Report.

5. **UPDATE ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2007**

(Report CAB1475(LDF) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning responded to questions regarding his statement at paragraph 2.6 of the Report that "The implication is that more of the Local Plan would need to be 'saved' after its end date of 2011 than was originally envisaged." He

explained that under the Council's revised Local Development Scheme timetable, the Core Strategy would be adopted in 2009 and at that stage, the Council would have to assess which elements of the Local Plan complied with the Strategy and which sections it wished to 'save'. He emphasised that the Core Strategy would not contain the level of detail of a Local Plan and that specific site allocations would be detailed in the Development Provisions Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy could also deal with key policy areas such as affordable housing or sustainable development, but other more detailed policies might be 'saved' in the Local Plan.

The Committee expressed concern that the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) was focussing on housing provision above any other priorities, and this was the reason they had requested that the Development Provision DPD be adopted as soon as possible. The Committee believed that this implied that other priorities, such as economic issues, were of lesser importance. The Head of Strategic Planning pointed out that, although Government were emphasising housing delivery, the Core Strategy should also cover the other key issues identified through the front-loading exercise, including economic issues, transport, etc.

Following the various concerns expressed above, the Committee requested further explanation of the relationship between the current Local Plan and the Core Strategy, and how this would change as the Local Development Framework process progressed (perhaps as part of the Member Training session arranged for 10 July 2007). In addition, there should be consideration of how the balance between different priorities, such as housing and economic issues, would be achieved.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised programme for the Development Provisions and Allocations DPD set out at Appendix 1 be agreed, with authority delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, to make further limited changes as necessary.

2. That the 'profile' for the Development Control Policies DPD be removed from the revised LDS and the background text be amended to refer to this being produced following the Development Provisions DPD.

6. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT STUDY (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**
(Report CAB1473(LDF) refers)

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted that the next meeting(s) would be scheduled for late July.

Note: Subsequent to this meeting, the next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 25 July at 2.00pm in the Walton Room, Guildhall, Winchester.

8. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
##	Winchester District Development Framework – Economic and Employment Study) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

9. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT STUDY - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

(Report CAB1473(LDF) refers)

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Exempt Appendix be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.55am

Chairman