

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

11 September 2007

WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE STRATEGY –
PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Contact Officer: Jenny Nell Tel No: 01962 848278 email jnell@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1472 – Winchester District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – 7th June 2007

CAB 1405 - Winchester District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – 7th February 2007

CAB 1328 - Winchester District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – 11th October 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides Members with an update of the progress to date with the preparation of the Core Strategy the first development plan document being produced as part of the Winchester LDF.

A number of the technical reports that will comprise the evidence base are complete or nearing completion, the more complex ones taking slightly longer than originally programmed. Recent guidance from the Government (July 2007) has however introduced a new piece of work that must be undertaken in the form of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (see CAB1522(LDF) on this agenda). This will have resource implications for the Strategic Planning team and it is estimated that this report, due to the detail required, will take some four months to complete. In addition, the Panel's Report into the Examination in Public to the South East Plan has just been released and will have implications for the Core Strategy.

Links between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF will be reinforced with the introduction of the new structure for the Winchester District Strategic Partnership, agreed by Cabinet in July (CAB1479). This has resulted in the creation of five strategic outcome groups which will provide an ideal forum with which to engage with partners covering a range of groups and organisations across the District. Consequently a series of meetings of these groups is currently in the process of being arranged and officers will be attending where relevant to explain the LDF process and the Core Strategy and to debate specific spatial planning matters.

The consequence of the above is that the LDS (as amended) requires the Core Strategy to have completed its 'production stage', which includes publication of the Issues and Options Paper under Regulation 25 for a statutory 6 week period, by end of December 2007. It is now clear that this is unlikely to be achieved and that there will be a short delay. Officers do not consider that this delay is so critical as to have a significant negative impact on receipt of Planning Delivery Grant funding received, which in fact will be measured on meeting the key milestone at Preferred Options stage under Regulation 26. It is therefore important that this short delay in preparation of the Issues and Options report does not have a negative impact on the achievement of the Preferred Options stage (Regulation 26) which is when the Council will be assessed as to its achievement against this key milestone, and funding awarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That Members note the progress being made with the evidence studies and the delay in the programme for the preparation and publication of the Issues and Options Paper for the Core Strategy.

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

11 September 2007

WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE STRATEGY – PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update of the progress to date with the preparation of the Core Strategy, the first development plan document being produced as part of the Winchester LDF. As explained in previous reports, the Core Strategy will set out the key elements of the spatial planning framework for the area. It will comprise of a spatial vision and spatial objectives and key policies for the development and use of land and will provide certainty for at least ten years after its adoption.
- 1.2 The Local Development Framework is recognised to be one of the key components in the delivery of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy which was approved in March 2007. Consequently, officers are working together through the early stages of the Core Strategy preparation, further details of the links between the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy are explained later in this report.
- 1.3 The following sections provide details of two key elements of the Core Strategy preparation - the evidence base and the preparation of the emerging issues and options.

2 The Evidence Base

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the evidence base contains a range of technical reports and studies. A number of these studies have already been presented to the LDF Cabinet, providing details of their scope, methodology and conclusions. Reports presented so far include:-

Sustainability Appraisal (CAB 1474 & CAB 1502)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (CAB 1504)

Rural Facilities Audit (CAB 1505)

Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (initial report) (CAB 1506)

- 2.2 Reports on the 'Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Study', together with a report on the 'Review of the 2001 Urban Capacity Study' are set out elsewhere on this agenda (Reports CAB1523(LDF) and CAB1522(LDF) respectively).

- 2.3 The schedule at Appendix A provides details of the remaining reports. A number of these, due to their technical nature, are taking longer than anticipated to complete and will be reported to the LDF Cabinet as soon as feasible. It is also hoped that presentations will be made to Members on both the Retail and Town Centre Uses Study, together with the Economic and Employment Land Study, dates for these are to be confirmed shortly.
- 2.4 A critical matter that will need to be explored through the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper will be the amount and general distribution of housing land to be allocated across the District up to 2026. Linked with this is, is the type of housing required. This is being investigated through the Housing Market Assessment, a joint study with the other Central Hampshire Local Authorities. Consultants undertaking this study are currently in the process of finalising the results and it is anticipated the findings will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.
- 2.5 In addition, the Panel Report into the Examination in Public to the South East Plan (RSS 9) has been recently published (29th August). This includes pertinent information to the Council in relation to level of housing expected to be provided in the Winchester District up to 2026. The consequences of this and other changes included in the Panel's Report for the District will be highlighted at the meeting in an oral report.
- 2.6 A further matter that has come to light in relation to LDF evidence and linked with the broader housing issue, is that in late July, the Government published new practice guidance in support of Planning Policy Statement 3 (November 2006) entitled 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments'.
- 2.7 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) are seen as a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing. The guidance gives detailed advice on how to identify land for housing and to assess the deliverability and developability of sites identified for such purposes.
- 2.8 A consequence of this guidance is that it cancels previous advice on undertaking Urban Capacity Studies which officers were in the process of following – the initial findings of this study which commenced with a review of the Council's 2001 Urban Capacity Study are included elsewhere on this agenda.
- 2.9 This new advice on Strategic Housing Land Availability introduces a more detailed approach to the identification of housing land, together with a requirement to ensure that such identified sites are available for housing development and unconstrained. Report CAB 1522(LDF) deals in more detail with the requirements for the SHLAA. The main aim of the assessment is to identify sufficient specific sites for at least the first 10 years of a plan and ideally for 15 years. The Assessment is seen as important evidence to inform the LDF and the Core Strategy, particularly to identify recent patterns of housing development and the potential choices available to meet the need and demand for more housing and to provide a basis for making decisions about how to shape places in the future. The scale and detail required for this assessment has resource implications for the Strategic Planning Team undertaking the LDF. This matter is explored further later in this report under Next Steps.

3 Preparation of the Emerging Issues and Options Paper

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Community and Stakeholder participation undertaken earlier in the year was based on the themes and outcomes of the community strategy to explore the concept of creating sustainable communities and delivering sustainable development within the district up until 2026. As mentioned earlier in this report and as emphasised at the recent Member training session run by the Planning Advisory Service, the links between the community strategy and LDF are critical to ensure that the outcomes are deliverable.
- 3.2 The recent Community Strategy Action Planning Event held at the end of June raised a number of spatial planning matters that relate directly to the preparation of the LDF – particularly in relation to the provision of affordable housing and general housing provision across the District.
- 3.3 A further consideration is the recent restructuring of the Winchester District Strategic Partnership agreed by Cabinet in July (CAB 1479). This has resulted in the creation of strategic outcome groups covering the five themes of :-
- Health and Wellbeing
 - Freedom from Fear
 - Economic Prosperity
 - High Quality Environment
 - Inclusive Society
- 3.4 These groups present an ideal forum in which to engage with partners covering a range of groups and organisations across the District. Consequently a series of meetings of these groups is currently in the process of being arranged and officers will be attending where relevant to explain the LDF process and the Core Strategy and to debate specific spatial planning matters of interest to the outcome groups.
- 3.5 This engagement will ensure that the issues and options paper will have been generated through a series of on-going debates following the advice in PPS12.
- 3.6 The Sustainability Appraisal process of the LDF has commenced with the publication of the Scoping Report which Members agreed to the publication of at the last meeting (CAB 1502). This report identifies a number of sustainability issues to be explored through the LDF.
- 3.7 When considering the findings of the community and stakeholder participation, the priorities and outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy including the results of the Action Planning event together with the initial sustainability appraisal work identifying objectives and issues for the LDF there is a large amount of data emerging as to what are the issues around the District. The technical reports being prepared are essential for officers to understand the facts and figures behind the specific topics being explored and the results of these will assist with the identification of the alternative options that may be available to address the issues.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

4.1 The above highlights a number of matters that will have an impact on the preparation of the Core Strategy Issues and Options. The LDS (as amended) requires the Core Strategy to have completed its 'production stage', which includes publication of the Issues and Options Paper for a statutory 6 week period, by end of December 2007. It is now clear that this is unlikely to be achieved for the following reasons :-

- The need to commence and complete a comprehensive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Due to the level of detail set out in the Government guidance on this matter, this report is estimated to take four months to complete as a large part of its preparation will be to undertake site visits for all the sites identified. Whilst the Core Strategy itself is not required to identify sites other than those that are considered 'strategic', this piece of work will need to identify a wider range of sites which is essential for officers and members to understand the amount and general distribution of housing land and its timing in terms of delivery. Failure to comply with this new advice now could result in further delays during the later more critical stages of Core Strategy production.
- The need for the results of a number of complex technical papers covering topics such as Housing Market Assessment, Economic and Employment Matters and Infrastructure Requirements. These reports will raise a range of complex issues that will require detailed consideration and analysis to ensure that they do not contradict each other. As part of the Core Strategy, there is also a requirement for an implementation plan to be produced to demonstrate how the spatial strategy and policies will be delivered. Consequently information in the infrastructure assessment is critical to this. Whilst meetings have been set up with a number of infrastructure providers, some remain outstanding and without a comprehensive view of all infrastructure requirements, the preparation of this study would be premature.
- The recent restructuring of the Winchester District Strategic Partnership and the creation of the five outcome groups mentioned above, whilst presenting an ideal opportunity for further integration between the LDF and Sustainable Community Strategy, has implications for the timing of the preparation of the issues and options paper, as it will be necessary to attend a number of the outcome groups to have a wider debate. Meetings of these new outcome groups are still being arranged and it is unlikely that officers will have attended enough to have a comprehensive view to be able to prepare the issues and options paper under the original core strategy timescale.

4.2 The consequences are that publication of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper under Regulation 25 for a six week consultant period is unlikely to commence until the New Year, a short delay to the programme expressed in the Local Development Scheme (as amended and resubmitted to GOSE July 07). Officers do not consider that this delay is so critical as to have a significant negative impact on receipt of Planning Delivery Grant funding received, which in fact will be measured on meeting the key milestone at Preferred Options stage under Regulation 26. It is therefore important that this short delay in preparation of the Issues and Options report does not have a negative impact on the achievement of the Preferred Options stage (Regulation 26), which is when the Council will be assessed as to its achievement against this key milestone, and funding awarded.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

5 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

5.1 The LDF is a key corporate priority and will contribute to achieving the Council's vision through the outcomes set out under providing better services.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The 2007/08 budget provides adequate funding for the LDF.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix A : Status of Evidence Reports as at August 2007

Components of the LDF Evidence Base : Status report : August 2007					
Topic	LDF Requirement	Author of report	Examples of studies, strategies and reports	Status – August 2007	Target LDF Cabinet Committee
Scoping	To ensure the LDF reflects and complies with National, regional and local guidance, studies, plans and strategies.	ZJ	All WCC, national and regional plans and strategies	ongoing	
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPS3 SHLAA	ED	LDF - AMR	Review of 2001 urban capacity study completed Land availability assessment to commence	Dec
Urban Capacity Study & Brownfield Strategy	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines	SO/ZJ	NLUD 2001 study to be updated	Review of 2001 study completed	Sept

Winchester Housing Market Assessment	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPS3 + affordable housing guidelines	SM/MK	Central Hampshire and New Forest Housing Market Assessment Housing Strategies	Central Hampshire HMA commenced early 2007 covering whole of Winchester district Consultants appointed Feb 07 – awaiting final report & viability study	Oct
Hampshire Gypsy/Traveller Study	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines ODPM Circular 01/06	GW	Hampshire Study published late 2006	Consultants report received via Hants CC	Sept
Climate Change and Renewable Energy	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPS1 annex 1	NG	WCC Climate Change Plan	commence May 07	Oct

<p>Economic and Employment Land Study</p>	<p>Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines</p> <p>ODPM Review of Employment Land 2004</p> <p>PPS3</p>	<p>SO/JN//KC</p>	<p>Contaminated Land Strategy 2005</p> <p>Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Tourism Strategy</p> <p>NLUD – annual return</p> <p>WCC Winnall Study</p> <p>WCC/HCC Contaminated land register</p>	<p>Consultants appointed May 2007 and study commenced – first stage expected late August 2007</p>	<p>Oct</p>
<p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</p>	<p>Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines</p> <p>PPG25/PPS25</p> <p>PPS3</p>	<p>Consultants</p> <p>JN/PA</p>	<p>PUSH report</p>	<p>Halcrow appointed</p> <p>Stage 1 study completed July 2007</p>	<p>July</p>

Accessibility and Transport Assessment	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPG13 Circ 2/2007	GW/AH	Hampshire Local Transport Plan	commenced	Oct/Nov
Open Space and Recreation Study - PPG17 Assessment	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPG17	MK	Winchester District Open Space Strategy 2006	Draft report received May 07 final report due end August	Oct/Nov
Green Infrastructure Audit	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPG17	GW	Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment 2004 Tree Strategy Winchester District local BAP 2005 HCC Countryside Access Plans	Project to commence after assessment of PPG17 study and the need to fill any gaps. PUSH appointing consultants to commence study late 06 – completion due mid 07.	Nov
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	JN/ED	Existing plans, policies and	Consultants appointed. PP review and	July

Environmental Assessment	(39(2)) EU directive 2001/42/EC Appropriate Assessment Habitats Directive (Article 6(3) & (4)) 92/43/EEC Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines		strategies of WCC and its partners to develop an understanding of the wider range of matters that are relevant to the LDF	baseline assessment completed May 2007. SA scoping work and development of SA objectives June 2007 – Scoping report out to consultation August – end of September	
District Retail and Town Centre Study	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPS6 SEP	JA	Assessment of retail floorspace in Winchester 2003	Consultants appointed May 07 First draft report due late July	Member presentation late Sept/ early Oct
Rural Facilities Study	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines PPS6 PPS7	JA/ED	Parish Plans Market Town Health Checks	Commenced March 07 Fieldwork April/May 07 draft report July	July

	PPG13				
	SEP				
Infrastructure assessment	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines	SO/ED/		Letters issued to infrastructure organisations and providers March 07 Meetings being held with individual providers Draft report due Sept 07	Nov
Social Issues Deprivation Educational achievement	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines	Jen Anderson/JN	Community safety strategy Health strategy People strategy Workforce strategy Social inclusion	On going through community strategy and partnership groups/LSP	

Community Aspirations	Checklist 5a PPS12 guidelines	Jen Anderson/JN	<p>Future of Winchester Study 1999</p> <p>Help Shape Winchester District consultation 1999</p> <p>Parish Plans & market town health checks</p> <p>Village Design Statements</p> <p>Neighbourhood Design statements</p> <p>Winchester Vision 2007</p> <p>Winchester City and its Setting</p>	<p>Front loading events completed during February / March 2007</p> <p>Community Participation report now available</p>	7 th June 07
-----------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------	---	--	-------------------------