

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2010

CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTION - FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION
(CHAPTERS 7 - 16)

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

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RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB 1944](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Option – Feedback on Consultation (Chapters 4-6) – 15 December 2009

[CAB 1908](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Option – Feedback on Consultation (Chapters 1-3) - 20 October 2009

[CAB 1823](#) – Winchester District Development Framework – Recommended Core Strategy Preferred Option Document (Cabinet (Local Development Framework Committee) – 25 March 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This is the third and final report in a series reporting back on the consultation responses received on the Core Strategy Preferred Option, which was subject to consultation during May – July 2009.

This report covers responses to Chapters 7-16 (including appendices) of the document, and suggests a recommended way forward given the advice received from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and the need for further technical work to be undertaken before the Core Strategy can proceed to the next stage. The schedules appended to this report cover in detail the responses received to these Chapters which include the development strategy for the Market Towns and Rural Area, together with a range of 'core' policies to be applied across the District.

There is general support for the settlement hierarchy promoted under the spatial area covering the Market Towns and Rural Area, but many comments were received in relation to the suggested levels of housing development proposed for the different levels of the hierarchy. PINS specifically advised the Council on this matter, stating that a Core Strategy does not necessarily need to include this level of detail and that more evidence would be required to establish the appropriated amounts of growth in these smaller settlements, not just for housing purposes but for other uses as well. The Council in partnership with East Hampshire District Council has recently been successful in bidding for funds under the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) 'Rural Masterplanning' programme. This will provide £15,000 of consultancy advice over the period 2009/2010 – 2010/2011 to help define the scale, nature and form of development which would be most appropriate for the various rural settlements, across both Districts. It is anticipated that this work will provide the evidence that is needed to justify retaining the detail of development proposed for each level of the settlement hierarchy.

With regard to the responses to the remaining 'core' policies set out in the Core Strategy, these raise many detailed matters that will be required to be examined when the policies are redrafted to take into account the PINS advice to make them more specific and to reflect any elements of 'local distinctiveness' as required by planning guidance. This will need to be done prior to the next formal stage of Core Strategy publication, which is now scheduled to be in October 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the responses to comments received to Chapters 7-16 of the Core Strategy Preferred Option consultation be noted and the Recommended Approaches be agreed, to enable matters raised to be taken into account when preparing the next stage of the Core Strategy.

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CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTION - FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION (CHAPTERS 7-16)

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At previous meetings of this Committee (20 October and 15 December 2009), Members received reports summarising the comments received on Chapters 1-6 of the Core Strategy Preferred Option (CAB 1908 and 1944 (LDF) refer).
- 1.2 This report therefore covers the remainder of the Core Strategy, Chapters 7-16 and sets out a recommended way forward, taking account also of the advice received from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) during August 2009, which emphasised the need to express all policies on the basis of 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'how' they will be delivered.

2 Core Strategy feedback

- 2.1 As stated in previous reports, it is not possible at this stage to give a firm view as to the precise amendments to be made to the Core Strategy policies or supporting text in response to comments received. This will depend on the outcomes of the range of additional technical work being undertaken over the next few months. The schedules appended to this report therefore include summaries of the key issues raised, results of the sustainability appraisal assessment together with any other relevant evidence and advice, leading to an officer response and conclusion on the proposed way forward for each policy issue.
- 2.2 All representations can be viewed in full on the Council's web site at <http://documents.winchester.gov.uk/preferredoption/Default.aspx>. These web pages allow responses to be searched either by chapter, policy, paragraph number or by name of respondent.
- 2.3 Appended to this report are detailed schedules for chapters 7 – 16. Each appendix commences with an introduction to the section and then includes a brief summary of the key comments received followed by a series of recommended approaches for each of the policies covered by that chapter. The detailed schedules where individual comments are grouped and summarised together with an officer response and the recommended approaches then follow :-
- Chapter 7 – Spatial Strategy – Market Towns and Rural Area (Appendix A)

- Chapter 8 – Core Policies
 - Chapter 9 – Health and Well Being (Policy CP1) (Appendix B)
 - Chapter 10 – Safe and Strong Communities (Policy CP2) (Appendix C)
 - Chapter 11 – Economic Prosperity (Policies CP3, CP4) (Appendix D)
 - Chapter 12- High Quality Environment (Policies CP5, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP14), (Appendix E)
 - Chapter 13 – Inclusive Society – (Policies CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22) (Appendix F)
- Chapter 14 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions (Policy CP23) (Appendix G)
- Chapter 15 – Implementation and Monitoring/Appendix C Monitoring Framework (Appendix H)
- Chapter 16 – Core Strategy Delivery Plan (Appendix I)
- Appendix B – Evidence Base (Appendix J)

N.B. Due to their size, appendices have been circulated to Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee only. A copy is available in the Members' Library and on the Council's website via the following link:

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/DemocracyAndElections/Committees/CommitteeMeeting.asp?id= SX9452-A784FDD4&committee=15084>

3 Chapter 7 – Market Towns and Rural Area (Appendix A)

- 3.1 In general, there seems support for the creation of a four tier settlement hierarchy covering the range of rural towns and villages that exist in the District, to ensure that any development that occurs is proportionate and reflects the sustainability and character of the settlements.
- 3.2 This part of the Core Strategy received a significant level of responses (in excess of 1000 comments). The comments received, however, fall into the following broad categories :-
- a) The position of particular settlements in the hierarchy;
 - b) the corresponding level of residential development proposed;
 - c) proposals for the release of greenfield sites and revisions to settlement boundaries.

- 3.3 The position of particular settlements in the hierarchy - CAB 1772 (LDF) 16 Dec 2008 detailed the criteria against which each settlement was considered. This involved collecting a range of data for each settlement (population, service and facility provision, catchment area/rural hinterland of settlement) etc, this was then collated to assess the role and function of each settlement with regard to these characteristics and in relation to its existing status in the adopted local plan. This 'package' of features was then used to place settlements within one of the four levels of the hierarchy, taking a balanced pragmatic approach to ensure the 'best fit' for each settlement.
- 3.4 The corresponding level of residential development proposed – the proposed development strategies for each settlement raised the most responses, particularly with reference to the specific suggestions of about 500/300 new dwellings for Level 1 and 2 settlements respectively, which could involve greenfield releases. The 500/300 development levels correspond to past levels of growth over the previous plan period and averages out at about 25/15 dwellings per annum for the settlements within Levels 1 and 2 of the hierarchy. However, the Planning Inspector advising the Council during summer 2009, specifically referred to the proposed settlement hierarchy and the approach being taken in the Preferred Option. He advised that the Core Strategy should concentrate on dealing with the high level strategy for the District, setting out the broad development principles in terms of broad locations and amounts, but leaving the detail to lower order development plan documents. He commented "*I think your attempt to set out exact housing figures for each level of settlement is too detailed.....*" and that more evidence would be needed to justify the figures if they were retained.
- 3.5 In addition, GOSE advise that it will be necessary to set out the quantum for various other types of uses (in addition to housing) within this spatial area. This matter requires further work. The Council, in partnership with East Hampshire District Council, has recently been successful in bidding for funds under the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) 'Rural Masterplanning' programme. This will provide £15,000 of consultancy advice over the period 2009/2010 – 2010/2011 to help define the scale, nature and form of development which would be most appropriate for the various rural settlements, across both Districts. This work will provide the evidence that is needed to justify retaining the detail of development proposed for each level of the settlement hierarchy.
- 3.6 The release of greenfield sites and revisions to settlement boundaries:- whilst there may well remain a requirement to release greenfield sites during the plan period, the Core Strategy is only concerned with 'strategic' scale allocations. Any smaller scale allocations which may be needed will be identified as potential sites through the SHLAA process which is underway and then subsequently allocated through the Development Management and Allocations DPD, which will follow once the Core Strategy is adopted. The need to identify land for housing or other purposes may also require the boundaries of some settlements to be revised but, given the advice from the Planning Inspector for the Core Strategy to focus at a strategic level, any non-

strategic allocations and amendments or creation of settlement boundaries should be undertaken at a later stage.

4 Chapter 8 – Core Policies

4.1 This Chapter used the themes of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy to cover a range of 'core' strategic issues which require policy guidance at a strategic level across the District. Many comments have been received to this part of the plan, which are primarily focussed on the detailed expression of the policy and subsequent interpretation. The PINS advice was very specific on this issue, together with the need to be more locally distinct, to the extent that if the policy did not offer guidance over and above that set out at the national and regional levels then the policy should be deleted.

4.2 It will be necessary to update and revise all these policies in these sections to comply with the latest guidance and to follow the 'what, where, when and how' approach advocated by both PINS and GOSE. The attached schedules at Appendices B- F cover in detail all the matters raised.

5 Chapter 14 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions; Chapter 15 – Implementation and Monitoring and Chapter 16 – Core Strategy Delivery Plan (Appendices G, H and I)

5.1 Given the emphasis now on housing delivery and the need to demonstrate that sites are available and can be delivered at the right time with the necessary infrastructure etc, it is suggested that the Chapters covering infrastructure and developer contributions and the delivery plan are merged to create an implementation plan. This will require a significant amount of work to set out in more detail the types of infrastructure required across the District and to demonstrate that the strategies and policies in the Core Strategy can be delivered.

5.2 A further element of this is the changing nature of developer contributions, with the 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) Regulations becoming effective on 6th April 2010, the Council will need to decide whether to introduce the system and, if so, to formulate charging scales to achieve the infrastructure necessary for the levels of development expected and planned across the District. This is a complex area of work which will take some time to complete and will require additional resources to ensure that it is robust and capable of scrutiny, as it will be necessary for it to be examined during the Core Strategy examination process into its soundness.

5.3 Chapter 15 (Appendix H) covering 'Implementation and Monitoring', will be required to be updated to reflect any consequential changes to policies as set out in this and other reports. Given the suggested changes to Chapters 14 and 16 (Appendices G and I) above, it is recommended that this Chapter should concentrate on monitoring only.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 Following this final report feeding back all the comments received to the Preferred Option consultation, it is now necessary to focus on redrafting the Core Strategy. This will require undertaking a range of additional evidence work in light of the advice of the Planning Inspectorate and that received via the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Spatial Planning Peer Information Sharing.
- 6.2 A critical area of work is the need to develop a robust implementation plan, which will require an assessment of existing infrastructure – its capacity to accommodate any existing and planned growth, together with an assessment of additional provision required. Given the complexities of the District and planned growth, particularly in the south, this will require close liaison with neighbouring authorities, partners, key agencies, etc.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 7.1 As part of progressing effective spatial planning of the District, the Core Strategy is one of the key implementation mechanisms for the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. To this extent the Core Strategy reflects the outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy and strategic planning policies have been expressed to cover these where there is a land use planning requirement for their delivery.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The key resources for undertaking work on the LDF have been approved as part of the budget process. However, more recent budget difficulties have resulted in some of the budget provision being removed from the budget or proposed as future 'savings'. In addition, illness and Vacancy Management has resulted in the Strategic Planning Team being below strength during all of 2009/10 and the budget proposals for 2010/11 envisage continued vacancy savings. This may threaten the recently-agreed programme for the Core Strategy and it will be necessary to give priority to Core Strategy work, possibly to the exclusion of other projects. The nature and scale of the LDF will require shared resources in terms of utilising skills and expertise from other Divisions within the Council. This is now even more critical given the emphasis on delivery and viability of development schemes, although other Divisions are also facing similar resource pressures.
- 8.2 Meetings of the Cabinet (LDF) Committee can be serviced from within existing resources in the Democratic Services Division.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 9.1 The Council's Local Development Scheme has recently been approved by Government Office for the South East and 'brought into effect' at Cabinet on 3rd February 2010 (Cab (1969) refers). This identifies that the next formal stage of the Core Strategy preparation – Publication under Regulation 26 will take place in October 2010. However, there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken to get the Core Strategy in a fit state for publication, including the preparation of an Implementation and Delivery Plan, to ensure that the Core Strategy is found to be 'sound' at examination.
- 9.2 For this to be pursued additional resources are required within the Strategic Planning team specifically to undertake the preparation of the Implementation and Delivery Plan, as without such a document there is a high risk the whole Core Strategy will be found unsound.
- 9.3 Such an outcome, or a delay in progressing the Core Strategy, would create greater risk through having an extended period of aging policy guidance and would require further resources to enable the Core Strategy to be redrafted and for certain stages to be repeated, prior to it being re-submitted for examination. The conclusions and recommendations in this report take account of the PINS advice and include the additional work recommended by the Inspector.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Schedule of responses to Chapter 7 – Spatial Strategy – Market Towns and Rural Area

Appendix B - Schedule of responses to Chapter 9 – Health and Well Being (Policy CP1)

Appendix C - Schedule of responses to Chapter 10 – Safe and Strong Communities (Policy CP2)

Appendix D - Schedule of responses to Chapter 11 – Economic Prosperity (Policies CP3, CP4)

Appendix E - Schedule of responses to Chapter 12- High Quality Environment (Policies CP5, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP14)

Appendix F - Schedule of responses to Chapter 13 – Inclusive Society – (Policies CP15, CP16, CP17, CP18, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22)

Appendix G - Schedule of responses to Chapter 14 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions (Policy CP23)

Appendix H - Schedule of responses to Chapter 15 and Appendix C –
Implementation and Monitoring/Monitoring Framework

Appendix I - Schedule of responses to Chapter 16 – Core Strategy Delivery Plan

Appendix J - Schedule of responses to appendix B – Evidence Base

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