

CAB2115(LDF)
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): ALL

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

23 February 2011

FEEDBACK ON BLUEPRINT RESPONSES AND CORE STRATEGY NEXT STEPS

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

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

RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB2091\(LDF\)](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Local Development Framework Update 6 December 2010.

[CAB2060\(LDF\)](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Core Strategy Consultation – 6 October 2010

[CAB2040\(LDF\)](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Local Development Framework Update – 22 July 2010

[CAB 1983](#) - Winchester District Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Option – Feedback on Consultation (Chapters 7-16) – 12 March 2010

[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 report highlights the key issues raised and sets out the next steps to the preparation and publication of a revised Core Strategy.

Blueprint successfully engaged a range of organisations to positively contribute to the future planning of their communities, in accordance with the Localism agenda that is emerging from the Government.

Given the ageing Local Plan, it is important to progress the Core Strategy to ensure that up to date policy guidance is available. The Localism Bill published in December 2010 reaffirms the retention of Local Development Frameworks as the key planning policy document for districts.

The report proposes that the next step should be the production of a non- technical document, which outlines a strategic framework, taking into account the responses received through the Blueprint process. This document will not set out detailed policy wording but will express in as much detail as possible the proposed development strategy to be followed in each of the three spatial areas of the District. It will also provide an opportunity to explore some key issues such as employment provision and affordable housing. This document will be subject to consultation in the Summer, prior to the final preparation of the Core Strategy, with the intention that this is then ready as a 'Pre-Submission' version under Regulation 27 by end of the year.

Members have already confirmed the retention of the spatial split for the District (CAB2040(LDF) refers), and this format is used to report the Blueprint responses. These are summarised in the appendices to this report and full copies of the responses can be viewed on the Council's website. At this stage, all comments received in relation to Winchester Town, South Hampshire Urban Areas and the Market Towns and Rural Area are covered in this report, but those responses relating to the wider District will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee scheduled for 1 April 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the revised indicative programme for the LDF Core Strategy set out at paragraph 6.10 be agreed, including consultation on "Plans for Places, *after Blueprint*" a non-technical document in June/July 2011;
2. That "Plans for Places, *after Blueprint*" be developed taking account of the results of Blueprint, further discussions with representatives of local communities and further technical work
3. That a draft document be presented to a future meeting of this Committee for approval prior to publication.

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

23 FEBRUARY 2011

FEEDBACK ON BLUEPRINT RESPONSES AND CORE STRATEGY NEXT STEPS

DETAIL:

- 1 Introduction
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the key issues raised by local communities through Blueprint and to set out the recommended next steps for the preparation and publication of the Core Strategy including a revised timetable.
- 1.2 Report CAB2091(LDF) set out the provisional levels of responses created by Blueprint in advance of the formal closing date of 10 December 2010. A total of 164 responses have now been received from community groups, individuals and other interested parties. In addition, the specifically designed website received over 3000 unique hits and some 25 local events were held. Responses have been received from groups and organisations that do not normally respond to LDF consultations and the bulk of responses are constructive comments, many representing the results of a wide community debate about the future of their communities.
- 1.3 The Blueprint process has received some national recognition and officers have been invited to present the Blueprint toolkit at a number of professional meetings as an example of good practice in engaging local communities in the planning process, following the localism agenda introduced by the Coalition Government.
- 1.4 The Localism Bill was published in December 2010 and reaffirms the retention of Local Development Frameworks, and the intention to abolish Regional Strategies. This reinforces the need to continue with the preparation of Development Plan Documents such as the Core Strategy. Consequently, the Core Strategy now needs to continue to progress to ensure that the District has up to date planning guidance, given the ageing Local Plan. This report therefore proposes a revised timetable for Core Strategy preparation, given Blueprint responses and a number of other key matters.
- 1.5 The status of the South East Plan has been subject to much debate and challenge following announcements in May 2010 of the Government's intention to revoke Regional Strategies, and the statement in July 2010 formally revoking them with immediate effect. This latter decision was subsequently challenged by Cala Homes through the High Court and on 10 November the judgement was published, which concluded that the Secretary of State had acted unlawfully. Regional Strategies (RS) were thereby

immediately re-established as part of the 'development plan' and are now expected to remain in place until legislation formally removes them.

- 1.6 On 10 November 2010, the Government's Chief Planner sent a letter to local planning authorities, and the Secretary of State issued a statement asserting that "the ruling changes little" and referring back to the previous announcements in May (which advised that authorities should take into account the Government's intention to abolish regional strategies when taking planning decisions). This letter and statement were then challenged in a second judicial review action by Cala Homes, and judgment on this second challenge was given on 7 February 2011. The Judge dismissed the challenge, and agreed with Leading Counsel for the Secretary of State that the duty to have regard to the regional strategy when preparing development plan documents (the LDF) in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 (as amended) did not exclude the discretion to have regard to other considerations. The Judge indicated that such "other considerations" could include the Government's intention to removal regional planning policy altogether. Furthermore, the duty under Section 24 of the 2004 Act to prepare local plan documents "in general conformity" with the regional strategy was not prejudiced by the Government's intention to remove such strategies.
- 1.7 The effect of these two decisions is that the proposed abolition of the Regional Strategy can be taken into account as a material consideration in planning decisions. It will still however, be necessary to have regard to the Regional Strategy in preparing the LDF under Section 19 of the 2004 Act (as amended), and Section 24 of the 2004 Act still requires adopted local plan documents to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy.

2 Feedback on Blueprint

- 2.1 The following sections of this report highlight the main common issues raised through Blueprint that present an opportunity to be addressed through the LDF and more specifically the Core Strategy. The non-planning related comments have also been highlighted to the relevant teams within the Council, to be picked up through the preparation of other plans and strategies. In relation to Winchester Town, Blueprint comments will inform the preparation of a revised 'Vision for Winchester' to be prepared with the Town Forum. It is particularly important to draw attention to the time and effort that communities have put into producing very thoughtful and considered responses about their future.
- 2.2 The Council has decided to retain the three spatial areas of the District as the basis for spatial planning policies (CAB2040(LDF)), which also reinforces the concept of localism across the District:-
- Winchester Town

- The South Hampshire Urban Areas
- The Market Towns and the Rural Area

These areas are therefore used to assess the range and content of the responses received. All the comments have been summarised according to which spatial area/Parish they fall within and these are set out in the Appendices to this report. The Appendices also include a list of the key matters raised under the headings of housing, employment and community.

A number of general/District wide comments were also received: these are not covered in this report and will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee. A full list of the organisations making general comments is set out at Appendix D. All the original submissions can be viewed in full on the Council's website via the following link :

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/General.asp?id= SX9452-A785B157&cat=6247>

- 2.3 The complexity of the boundary of the South Downs National Park must not be overlooked, as many rural parishes are wholly covered by the National Park and many others have a part of their parish falling within it. In addition, the National Park boundary includes part of some Winchester wards as it extends to the urban edge around Winnall, Highcliffe/Bar End and St Cross.
- 2.4 Winchester Town
- 2.5 A number of community discussions were held in Winchester led by existing community/neighbourhood groups, in addition to specific meetings being organised by the City Council to bring together similar interest groups. In particular, a joint discussion organised between The City of Winchester Trust, WinACC and WACA which attracted over 130 people resulted in the identification of 10 principles and five recommendations for the Future of Winchester. These principles also received support or comment from other community groups and individuals. The 10 principles are :-
1. A city that is good for, and encourages, walking and cycling, with as near a traffic-free area within the historic walls as is compatible with economic success and freedom of movement for all.
 2. Good affordable public transport and other means of reducing the need for local private-car journeys, with improvement of commercial delivery arrangements.
 3. Mixed-use urban development, including the secondary centres and the villages that look to Winchester, so that these areas remain compact and defined, and so that the setting can be preserved.
 4. Sustainable new and old buildings; sustainable energy generation and distribution; conservation of water resources, and encouragement of local food production and sale.

5. Development of policies to ensure a better mix and distribution of housing.
6. Expert guidance provided in advance for the location and design of new build and redevelopment to ensure enhancement of the character of the City and the well-being of its residents
7. Retention and reinforcement of the unusually well-defined transition between town and countryside
8. A programme of planting to perpetuate the famously green character of the City (from within and without) and to enhance the enjoyment of walking and cycling.
9. Development of a vibrant and healthy economic and cultural life in the City which attracts inward investment. This includes business, education, events, sports, entertainment and tourism.
10. Improvement of opportunities and encouragement for involvement and participation in local decision-making.

2.6 Many of these principles are already embedded in planning or other Council plans and strategies. They will however, be valuable to the revision of the Vision for Winchester which could provide an opportunity for these to be translated into specific actions. In terms of the Core Strategy, a number of the principles could equally apply to the wider District and some matters are already expressed within the spatial planning objectives set out in the Preferred Option.

2.7 With regard to the 5 recommendations put forward, these are considered below :-

Recommendation by City of Winchester; WinACC and WACA	WCC Officer Response
Ten Principles for the Future of Winchester are adopted by Winchester City Council.	The principles provide an opportunity for these matters to be given further consideration in the revision of the Vision for Winchester, a document that will purely focus on Winchester Town. They will also be informative to the development strategy for Winchester Town as expressed under draft Policy WT1.
The LDF should be led by consideration of place and character and not numbers alone.	The LDF requires many factors to be taken into account in its preparation and policy expression, based on the principles of place shaping and sustainable development. It is

Recommendation by City of Winchester; WinACC and WACA	WCC Officer Response
	agreed that there is a need to balance long term numerical requirements for housing and employment growth with 'place-making' considerations, to achieve sustainable development which is a key objective for the LDF, as set out in PPS1 and PPS12.
The "Winchester City and its Setting" Report should be adopted and reissued as evidence for the LDF (if not already the case), or a separate Landscape Character Assessment is produced for the City and its surrounding villages to provide the necessary evidence.	The "Winchester City and its Setting" Report is already a piece of evidence that has been used to inform preparation of the LDF to date. It provides useful information rather than being a policy document. The Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment covers the whole District and includes landscape areas and typologies up to the built up edge of the City, and has again been used to inform preparation of the LDF to date.
Before the LDF is written, all existing evidence, together with further predictions, should be drawn together in the form of a comprehensive Urban Capacity Report, which is in an accessible form for public engagement, showing all potential urban land in the City and surrounding villages that might become available for development. The object is to show the extent to which housing and commerce might be contained within the urban areas, and to assess how much additional green field land might be required.	The LDF is already required to take account of all existing evidence and a considerable number of new evidence studies have been produced to inform it. These include the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which provides a comprehensive examination of all the sites in the District that are available and deliverable, and replaces the Urban Capacity Study. The 2010 Assessment has recently been approved and published by the Council (CAB2094(LDF) refers) in December 2010. The SHLAA is an identification tool of potential development sites and a key part of the LDF evidence base. It is updated annually and its conclusions used in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report to illustrate housing capacity

Recommendation by City of Winchester; WinACC and WACA	WCC Officer Response
	estimates for a range of potential sites across the whole District. It is a key tool to understand the opportunities presented by brownfield sites and how much greenfield land may be required to be identified.
<p>Before the LDF is finalised, a guiding neighbourhood plan/conceptual framework for the City and its setting should be commissioned. The Principles, the Urban Capacity Report and the Winchester and its Setting Report (or Landscape Character Assessment) should be key parts of the brief.</p>	<p>The Core Strategy will provide a development strategy and guiding principles for the future of Winchester Town from a spatial planning perspective. The Vision for Winchester, being focussed on the Town, provides the opportunity for more detail.</p> <p>The potential for Neighbourhood Plans to be produced by the local community is introduced through the Localism Bill – however, a requirement is that they comply with guidance from a higher order strategy, and up until a time when the Core Strategy is adopted this will be the adopted Local Plan. Therefore, the opportunity for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the City will be available in due course, but the strategic guidance will be provided by the Local Plan/Core Strategy.</p>

- 2.8 All the comments in relation to Winchester Town are summarised at Appendix A.
- 2.9 Housing comments – the majority of responses acknowledged the need for more affordable housing, specific housing for the elderly, together with family homes and the recognition that there are many groups all competing for 2/3 bedroom housing.
- 2.10 There is a division of views in terms of growth vs containment, with a strong emphasis on retaining and protecting the character and setting of the City.

This division of views is evident with some suggesting 'organic' growth of small development/more dense development at local nodes throughout the City, whilst others refer to the need for significant urban expansion to address the affordable housing issue.

- 2.11 Many responses refer to using 'proper' brownfield sites and not back gardens, suggesting the redevelopment of Council-owned land and buildings including car parks to provide additional housing stock. Some responses questioned the actual, as opposed to perceived, housing need.
- 2.12 Employment comments- the economic role of Winchester and the potential impact of a declining public sector receives a number of comments, particularly in relation to other alternatives such as the role of green/low carbon industries, role of Universities, role of tourism/culture and opportunities for knowledge and creative industries and/or the creation of a niche market sector, with specialist nodes/centres of excellence of commerce/business across the City.
- 2.13 The recognised commuting issue receives some comment, notably the need to reverse the imbalance of jobs and workers, whereas others suggest that with changing work patterns, cost and time of travel etc., this could naturally resolve itself in the future.
- 2.14 The bulk of comments relate to the current provision of business premises in terms of size and affordability, with provision for start-ups, need for business infrastructure and support, reduction of business rates/rents and redevelopment opportunities presented by vacant and underused buildings. Some refer to the Council taking a more proactive role.
- 2.15 A few comments refer to the potential for Bushfield Camp as a business park, with the need to address impact on character, need for an anchor unit that is pre-let and clarity on the overall role and function of the development.
- 2.16 Community comments- this broad category includes a range of comments covering transport, social provision, green infrastructure, local democracy and energy and efficiency. The transport comments include a number of references to improving public transport, including the need for better frequency and coverage of service together with reduced fares. The issue of the town centre car parks receives opposing comments, with some suggesting these need to be retained and others advocating their redevelopment. In terms of overall traffic and transport in the City, a number of representations refer to the need for greater pedestrian/cycle priority and the need to introduce speed and other restrictions.

Summary of Winchester Town Comments

- 2.17 The broad range of comments received highlights some critical issues which need to be discussed and addressed. Of particular note is the opposing view of those who advocate no growth of the settlement boundary and those suggesting expansion. Winchester Town, given its size and location, is

already a sustainable community. However, there are a number of significant sustainability issues and inherent matters that must be resolved if it is to remain attractive and resilient to further economic changes that are now apparent with the contraction of the public sector.

- 2.18 Current evidence from population projections and assessments of development capacity indicate that there is only sufficient land available to maintain recent modest levels of development for a short period (approx 5 years). Core Strategies are required to plan for a 20 year period and to provide 15 years of policy certainty once adopted. Key choices will need to be made about whether Winchester can/should meet various needs and whether this will mean expansion of its extent or further intensification within its existing boundaries. The role and consequent function of Winchester Town in relation to other parts of the District and the mid Hampshire area is a question that has to be answered if the right long-term choices are to be made.
- 2.19 In relation to the economy, a number of clear messages are emerging, in terms of Winchester Town offering a diverse economy with shops, businesses and potential opportunities offered by the presence of the Universities, tourism and whether there are niche markets to be exploited. The availability of small business units for start-ups and entrepreneurs is a matter that will need to be explored further. There is no clear view on the preferred scale and location of sites and work is currently underway to assess site availability, which will need to be taken into account.
- 2.20 Many of the comments made under the community heading relate to transport. Given that the Winchester Town Access Plan is still being prepared, these comments will be able to inform that policy document, particularly as the Core Strategy will only be able to address more strategic matters. A key issue that needs further assessment is whether some town centre car parks should be retained or redeveloped for other purposes.

3 The South Hampshire Urban Areas

- 3.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 22 July 2010 (CAB2040 (LDF) refers), it was agreed to continue with the development strategy for the PUSH part of the District, as proposed in the Core Strategy Preferred Option, of meeting the majority of housing requirements through strategic allocations in the South Hampshire Urban Areas at Whiteley (3000 dwellings) and West of Waterlooville (2500 dwellings). Both these schemes are progressing with technical evidence and ongoing discussions with a range of stakeholders and the community.
- 3.2 Despite the scale of development proposed in this small spatial area, there were only a small number of Blueprint responses. Most received relate to Whiteley, together with a submission from the promoters of the North Fareham SDA, summaries of which are set out at Appendix B to this report.
- 3.3 Housing comments – there are conflicting views on the need for the development at North Whiteley. Whiteley Parish Council supports the

development provided it is limited to a maximum of 3000 dwellings and provided that it delivers the infrastructure improvements which are considered essential by existing residents. Respondents in Curbridge object to the scale of this development, commenting that the bulk of it will take place on rural land and that this number of dwellings is not needed locally and the impact it will have on wildlife and local habitats.

- 3.4 Employment comments – comments relate to the need for a better range of jobs in the area.
- 3.5 Community comments – responses stress the need for the infrastructure deficits to be reconciled, particularly in relation to roads and drainage. There is concern that these deficits will also be exacerbated with the implementation of the strategic development area immediately to the south of the District boundary in Fareham.

Summary of South Hampshire Urban Areas Comments

- 3.6 The Council has resolved to support a development strategy which allocates two strategic sites at West of Waterlooville and Whiteley. These will deliver the quantum of development required in this location without the need to allocate substantial new development in the smaller towns and villages, which received strong opposition in previous Core Strategy consultations.
- 3.7 The possibility of development at North Whiteley receives a mixed response. Whiteley Parish Council supports development, provided it can deal with some or all of the infrastructure deficits arising from the incomplete nature of the settlement, whilst there is opposition from local residents elsewhere commenting that the development is not needed and its potential impact on wildlife and local habitats. The scale of this development would require that a number of complex and detailed studies to be undertaken before granting planning consent could be considered. These procedures will ensure that impact on wildlife, local habitats and drainage is tested and any compensatory measures evaluated. Work undertaken so far has not raised any 'show-stoppers' in terms of ecological or other impacts. If the Council continues to support the principle as it has done to date, the proposed development will be subject to lengthy discussions and negotiations with thorough community consultations, which will be the appropriate forum for local people concerned about the detailed impact to influence the outcome.

4 The Market Towns and the Rural Area

- 4.1 The remainder of the District lies within this spatial area, which includes all the smaller towns and villages. A significant part of it now lies within the South Downs National Park, which will require the Core Strategy to be jointly prepared and agreed with the South Downs National Park Authority, prior to formal submission.
- 4.2 The Preferred Option Core Strategy received much support for the settlement hierarchy proposed under draft Policy MTRA2, which divided the settlements

in this spatial area into four levels according to a range of criteria. These criteria and approach are being assessed through the Council's successful bid to receive assistance from DCLG via CABE through its Rural Masterplanning Fund. The Council is expecting the final report of this project to be received in late February/March and the findings and recommendations will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee. These will be taken into account to finalise both the settlement hierarchy and development approach for this area of the District.

- 4.3 In the meantime, many constructive responses have been received to Blueprint, from the various settlements that lie within this spatial area following a range of events organised by both Parish Councils and other local organisations. All summaries relating to the market towns and rural settlements are set out at Appendix C.

Level 1 Settlements (New Alresford and Bishops Waltham)

- 4.4 Housing comments- in general, there appears to be a recognition that there needs to be some growth in order to sustain the local economy and to remain vibrant communities. There is no single consensus view as to what scale would be acceptable, but there is agreement that it should not be piecemeal and should be planned for with supporting infrastructure, transport improvements and mitigation measures. Some individual comments disagree with the need for further growth and comment on the need to restrict future development to safeguard both the existing environment and community or that the capacity of surrounding settlements needs to be investigated in order to provide truly local housing.
- 4.5 Matters such as the need for 2/3 bed dwellings to suit either families, professionals or older people wishing to downsize, together with more affordable rented accommodation, are also raised. There are also suggestions of the need for the development of sheltered accommodation close to the town centres to address the needs of an aging population. A further common element is that any new development must be supported by new infrastructure and be energy efficient/sustainable.
- 4.6 Employment comments – comments relate to the need to reduce rates/rents to ensure that existing businesses and shops can be retained, but also to attract new businesses with the provision of start-up units, along with faster and more reliable broadband. Both Level 1 settlements are situated in gateway positions to the South Downs National Park and both identify this as an opportunity to be exploited and for the need for improved tourism provision.
- 4.7 Community comments- Both settlements recognise the need to ensure that local facilities are retained and improved. Of particular concern is the need for more/better town centre car parking, traffic management and speed restrictions. There are also requests for improved public transport services, more cycle routes, and more leisure facilities.

Level 2 Settlements (Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, Swanmore, Waltham Chase and Wickham):

- 4.8 Housing comments – support for new housing development varies considerably. There is a strong preference for small infill developments and little support for larger developments on greenfield sites. A key issue is that these settlements wish to retain their own character and identity and strongly oppose development which would be a threat to this, whilst not necessarily opposing development which would retain it. Those with adjacent designated ‘gaps’ are keen to see these retained, again to maintain their identity. Some are concerned that large scale developments nearby, such as the Fareham SDA, may have a detrimental impact and do not wish to see this exacerbated by local development. There is a mixed response to the type of new housing that may be acceptable, ranging from starter homes to family homes, and a strong preference for affordable housing to be made available to local people only.
- 4.9 Some of the Level 2 settlements are in the process of assessing and consulting on potential housing sites through their work on Parish Plans and the outcome of these discussions will be valuable to progress this matter. However, it will be necessary to undertake a further investigation of the housing needs and capacity of Level 2 settlements compared to population forecasts and household growth estimates. Given their relative high position in the settlement hierarchy, the potential of these sustainable locations must not be overlooked, particularly where they act as a hub/service centre for a wider rural area.
- 4.10 All settlements in this level acknowledge the need to address the ageing population and many suggest that smaller homes for older people to downsize to, sheltered accommodation or even a care home will be required.
- 4.11 Employment comments – these communities value the local shops and services that they have and are keen for these to be retained, not only as a service but also as a local employer. A number of settlements acknowledged the need for small business units to encourage new businesses/start-ups, particularly those supporting agriculture and other countryside activities. All are concerned at the impact of large vehicles on rural roads and wish for warehousing/more intense industrial uses to be avoided. Improvement to the broadband service was raised by all responses for not only local business uses but also home working opportunities.
- 4.12 Community comments – these vary from the need to retain local shops and services to managing traffic speeds through these smaller settlements. All responses request that public transport provision is improved to include both evening and weekend services. There is concern from some about the capacity of local facilities to accommodate more development e.g. schools, at the same time as requests for more facilities such as built leisure facilities and comments relating to the underuse of some schools and community halls.

- 4.13 There are a number of suggestions to improve local services through the provision of mobile services e.g. dental/medical. Local communities value their strong community spirit and rural setting and wish to avoid being urbanised.

Level 3 and 4 Settlements/Parishes - Some Level 3 and 4 settlements fall within a single Parish and have been considered collectively rather than individually as part of Blueprint. The schedules at Appendix C indicate their designated level in the settlement hierarchy.

- 4.14 Housing comments – many responses identify the need for small scale affordable housing (2 -3 beds) for local people and provision for the elderly, either through attractive smaller houses, sheltered/warden controlled housing or a care home, including the provision of bungalows. In terms of general housing, a number of parishes refer to the need to provide small starter homes to allow young people/families to remain in the settlement(again 2-3 beds), but most do not see the need for any more large houses. Some also refer to the provision of live/work units. There is consensus that any new development must positively contribute to the area and existing character be retained and enhanced, with a preference for brownfield sites. A number of sites are suggested as suitable for development.
- 4.15 Employment comments- all Parishes support the need to improve the broadband service both for business and domestic use. Some also refer to the lack of mobile telephone reception. Some suggest that they would support small business units/start-up units, either via exception sites or through the conversion of unused farm or other buildings, but there is concern about traffic on rural roads. The retention of local facilities such as the shop and school are seen as important in providing local employment opportunities.
- 4.16 Community comments – the capacity of local services and infrastructure to accommodate more development is of concern to many Parishes. The frequency of public transport is also an issue, as is vehicle speed on rural roads. All value local services and are keen to see these retained but not overburdened as a result of further development. In some instances Parishes are keen for further facilities – shops, open space, etc. There are many requests to improve a range of community facilities from village halls to local footpaths and parking.
- 4.17 Some parishes recognise and acknowledge that part of their appeal is that they do not have ready access to services and facilities and they wish to see this retained: some also specifically refer to the fact that they do not want street lighting or more pavements.
- 4.18 Provision of infrastructure such as the lack of main drains is mentioned by many as a restriction on the amount of any future development that could potentially take place.

Summary of Market Towns and the Rural Area Comments

- 4.19 Regardless of where settlements lie within the settlement hierarchy set out under draft policy MTRA2, there are consistent concerns about: the need for affordable housing for local people; some housing to allow families/young people to remain locally; need for sheltered housing/care home for the elderly; need for small business units; better broadband; retention of shops, services and facilities; and improvements to the public transport service.
- 4.20 The response to these matters will, however, vary according to the development strategy to be proposed. The Council is awaiting the final report from CABE, which will provide an analysis of the proposed settlement hierarchy and set out suggested sustainability criteria (taking a broad definition of sustainability) and highlight any other factors that need to be taken into account.
- 4.21 In general terms, it appears the sub-division between the levels is appropriate, although the subsequent quantum of development needed is unclear from the responses and will require further technical work, analysis and discussions. This reflects the overall responses to the Core Strategy Preferred Option consultation (July 2009), which generally confirmed the settlement hierarchy approach but lacked consensus on the amount of development.

5 Reflections on Blueprint

- 5.1 The Blueprint process has so far stimulated constructive comments across the District, many reflecting the emerging development strategies being proposed through the Core Strategy and confirming that this is the correct approach. There are a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, particularly around the quantum of new development to plan for, and the necessity to consider local communities' requests for 'limited or small scale' growth alongside population projections and household formation evidence, to ensure that the right amount of development is planned for in the most sustainable locations.

6 Revised Core Strategy Timetable

- 6.1 Publication of the Localism Bill reaffirms the retention of LDFs (albeit with some with minor changes to Local Development Schemes and Annual Monitoring Reports), with Development Plan Documents to be produced following the same procedures and regulations. The only significant change is to the status of the Inspectors' reports, which will be no longer binding although they will still determine whether a Development Plan Document is 'sound'.
- 6.2 The Bill introduces the concept of Neighbourhood Plans and makes clear that these will need to conform to the strategic guidance in a higher order plan. There is no provision in the Bill for Neighbourhood Plans to allow a community to "opt out" of the provisions of an LDF or indeed the Government's forthcoming national planning framework which will promote sustainable

development. The Localism Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in November 2011, if not sooner given the Government's commitment to its contents.

- 6.3 There are a number of local issues pending that may have an impact on Core Strategy progress:-
- Further technical evidence – the LDF/Core Strategy will still be required to be based on sound and up to date evidence (Regulations 27 and 28). However, given the time that has lapsed between some of the studies and the potential impact of the recession, etc, there may be a need to expedite some updates. A particular matter which is under review is housing needs (both market and affordable) and technical information on this is essential in addition to the Blueprint process, to ensure a sound approach is put forward through the Core Strategy policies and the long term development strategy for the District.
 - As of 1 April 2011 it will be necessary to progress a joint Core Strategy with South Downs National Park Authority and to meet all the constitutional requirements of both authorities, in addition to ensuring the SDNPA agrees with the detailed content of the Core Strategy.
- 6.4 Report (CAB 2040(LDF) on 22 July 2010 put forward a revised timescale with publication of the Core Strategy under Regulation 27 (Pre-Submission) during July – September 2011. However, given the feedback on Blueprint and the need to take this and other technical data into consideration, including the matters listed above, this could be challenging.
- 6.5 To prepare for publication (Regulation 27) of the Core Strategy in July would require formal approval of a revised document by Cabinet (LDF Committee) in April 2011 followed by Council approval in May. Guidance in relation to Core Strategy preparation refers to this version as being the final draft, with only minor editing amendments being allowed between the Regulation 27 stage, and the Regulation 30 stage (Submission). Therefore, to proceed to Regulation 27 publication, the Council must be confident that the content is sound – justified, effective and consistent with national policy and compliant in legal terms.
- 6.6 Also, the feedback from Blueprint needs to be followed up with more focussed discussions with a number of the larger settlements in the District to seek an agreed way forward.
- 6.7 Given that the Core Strategy Preferred Option was published in May 2009 and that the Blueprint programme completed in late 2010, it is proposed that, as an interim measure prior to formal publication of the Core Strategy, a non-technical document is published for consultation in due course, to be referred to as “Plans for Places *after Blueprint*”. This will set out the proposed development strategy for the District as relating to the three spatial areas, (as confirmed at the meeting of this committee on 22 July 2010 (CAB2040(LDF) refers). It will also concentrate on those policy areas that have changed since the Preferred Option or received greater levels of comment i.e. housing

numbers, affordable housing. Such a document will therefore, 'bridge the gap' between Blueprint and publication of a formal Regulation 27 version of the Core Strategy later in the year.

- 6.8 Such a non-technical document will be able to reflect the outcomes of Blueprint and bring these together with evidence to propose a development strategy that is realistic and deliverable.
- 6.9 Therefore it is suggested that Core Strategy preparation follows the revised timetable during 2011 set out below:-

January	Summarise all Blueprint comments Assess need for further technical evidence – housing need in particular and commission any additional technical evidence if required.
February LDF Cab 23 Feb	Report back on bulk of Blueprint comments
March	Follow up discussions with Parish Councils and other local groups during March to try to arrive at a consensus as to the level of growth / development strategy for particular settlements.
April Cabinet (LDF) Committee 1 April	Report back on any outstanding Blueprint comments, plus updates of evidence studies and feedback from Draft Infrastructure Study.
May LDF Cab (to be arranged late May) Minutes to be agreed at Cabinet	Prepare and seek approval to non- technical document "Plans for Places <i>after Blueprint</i> " for consultation during June/July. Finalise any further evidence
June	Commence consultation on "Plans for Places <i>after Blueprint</i> ". (6 weeks) Commence preparation of Reg 27 Core Strategy Finalise any further evidence

July	Continue preparation Core Strategy Reg 27 version Close of consultation on “Plans for Places <i>after Blueprint</i> ”.
August	Continue preparation Core Strategy Reg 27 version
September LDF Cab to be arranged	Consideration of comments on non-technical document and amendment of emerging Reg 27 Core Strategy to reflect feedback.
October Cab 12 Oct	Finalise Reg 27 version
November Council 2 Nov	Council to agree Reg 27 version Publish Pre-Submission (Reg 27) version

- 6.10 This timescale ties in with the anticipated approval of the Localism Bill, and allows the Council to continue with its Core Strategy to a formal position pending any potential changes to detailed planning regulations which may follow.
- 6.11 At present, the plan period for the Core Strategy runs from 2006 – 2026 in accordance with the South East Plan timeframe. Government advice in relation to Core Strategy preparation advises that they should provide certainty for 15 years from adoption. The Core Strategy will, at the earliest, be adopted in 2012, a 15 year period post adoption will mean that the strategy extends beyond its intended timescale. To overcome this, it is suggested that the timeframe is extended to 2031 commencing at 2011. This will require some of the evidence studies to be updated as already highlighted, in addition to population projections, including household growth being undertaken to cover this period.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 It is proposed to prepare a non-technical document “Plans for Places *after Blueprint*”, to highlight the outcome of Blueprint, and include a development strategy with an indication of how that will be delivered. This document will then be subject to consultation during Summer 2011 and the responses will inform the ‘Pre-Submission’ version of the Core Strategy to be published in late 2011.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

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

- 8.1 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 the emerging strategic planning policies will be expressed to cover these matters where there is a land use planning requirement for their delivery. It is envisaged, even with the revised planning regime and the emphasis now on localism, that this element will continue to be a core requirement of any replacement LDF.

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 The key resources for undertaking work on the LDF have been approved as part of the budget process. All materials and resources for Blueprint have been serviced through existing budgets and staff skills. The nature and scale of the LDF will continue to require shared resources in terms of utilising skills and expertise from other Teams within the Council. This is now even more critical given the emphasis on localism.
- 9.2 Proposals for the 2011/12 budget include withdrawing the annual contribution of £40,000 to the LDF Reserve to fund future major costs such as the public examination stage. Based on current forecasts of expenditure on the LDF, this is likely to result in a significant budget shortfall from 2013/14 onwards and this would need to be reviewed in due course to assess whether additional funding is required to enable the LDF to progress.
- 9.3 The precise implications of the reinstatement of Regional Strategies are unknown at this stage, but any financial implications are expected to be limited given the impending abolition of Regional Strategies. PPS3 still requires the Council to demonstrate a 5 year supply of available housing land and this is again a relevant consideration. Further delays in progressing the Core Strategy and allocating key strategic sites to address any assessed housing need could result in developers submitting speculative planning applications and appeals, which could create an unplanned need for resources.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 10.1 The Council's Local Development Scheme was approved by Government Office for the South East late 2009 and 'brought into effect' at Cabinet on 3 February 2010 (CAB1969 refers). The publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010 reaffirms Government's intention to retain LDFs and Local Development Schemes. The milestones in the LDS will need to be reviewed to reflect the proposed revised timetable set out in this report.

- 11 A particular risk to the Council in the short term is the issue of an ageing Local Plan and challenges regarding the supply of housing land, as set out in paragraph 9.3 above.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

APPENDICES:

Due to their size, Appendices attached for Committee Members, Group Leaders and Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee only. A copy has also been placed in the Members' Library and can be viewed on the Council's website via the following link: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/ElectedRepresentatives/Committees/CommitteeMeeting.asp?id=SX9452-A78596B6&committee=15084>

Appendix A : Blueprint - Summaries of Responses relating to Winchester Town

Appendix B : Blueprint - Summaries of Responses relating to South Hampshire Urban Areas

Appendix C : Blueprint - Summaries of Responses relating to Market Towns and Rural Area

Appendix D : Blueprint – List of Organisations submitting District wide comments