

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

1 APRIL 2011

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: UPDATE ON EVIDENCE STUDIES

REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Contact Officer: Jenny Nell (telephone:01962 848278) jnell@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB 2062\(LDF\)](#) - Local Development Framework: Update on Evidence Studies – 6 October 2010

[CAB 2039\(LDF\)](#) – Local Development Framework: Update on Evidence Studies – 22 July 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report reviews and updates the current position in relation to the Local Development Framework's (LDF) evidence base and sets out the ongoing programme to progress and complete this work.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the further evidence-gathering work programme referred to in this report be noted and the publication of the Rural Masterplanning project Final Report on the Council's web site be agreed.

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE1 April 2011LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: UPDATE ON EVIDENCE STUDIESREPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNINGDETAIL:1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress with the evidence base used to inform preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF), and in particular the Core Strategy.

1.2 A large number of studies have already been completed, whilst some are still being finalised. This report follows the same format of others (CAB2039(LDF) and CAB2062(LDF)). All existing studies can be viewed or downloaded from the Councils website via the following link [Winchester District Evidence Base](#) .

2 Update on Current Studies

2.1 The table below provides a list of studies completed since the last update report (October 2010, CAB2062 (LDF)) and studies which are programmed for completion in the near future.

Title	Scope of study and author	Status	Complete by:
Winchester Housing Market Assessment Update	Update and compilation of Central Hampshire and South Hampshire SHMA by DTZ consultants	Complete	September 2010
Infrastructure Study	New Technical Work. Information regarding infrastructure provision/ requirements in District. Produced by WCC Officers with input from infrastructure providers	Complete Study published for consultation November 2010 – January 2011 (see Report CAB 2150(LDF) elsewhere on this agenda)	Spring 2011
Retail and Town Centres Study Update	Update of 2007 Study. By NLP consultants	Complete	September 2010

Title	Scope of study and author	Status	Complete by:
Bushfield Camp	Evidence Studies, relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways impacts/mitigation • Biodiversity management • Recording archaeological findings By Terence O'Rourke consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic viability update By Vail Williams for WCC	Draft reports under consideration	Spring 2011
Winchester Town Employment Study	New Technical Work, building on District-wide study. By WCC officers in-house.	Work in progress	Spring 2011
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	2010 Update By WCC officers in-house.	Complete reported to LDF Cab December 2010 (Cab 2094(LDF))	Dec 2010
Rural Masterplanning /Settlement Hierarchy	New work, enabled by CLG and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)/rural masterplanning project.	Complete, see remainder of this report	March 2011
Local Facilities Survey	Update to feed into CABE rural masterplanning work. By officers in-house.	Work in progress	Spring 2011

- 2.2 Officers have recently received the final report of the Rural Masterplanning – ‘spatial thinking’ project, which commenced in April 2010 funded by CLG and HCA and enabled by CABE. Members were made aware of our successful bid for funding for this project with East Hampshire District Council in March 2010 (CAB1983(LDF)).

3 Rural Masterplanning Fund – spatial thinking project

- 3.1 This project, funded under the Government’s Rural Masterplanning programme implements the commitment given in the Government’s response to the Taylor review (2009) *“to develop the Review’s suggestion of a competition, particularly for rural authorities wanting to provide growth over an extended period in one or more of their market towns.”*
- 3.2 Winchester and East Hampshire submitted a joint bid for funding, given the similarities between the Districts in terms of a wide variety of market towns

and rural villages and the need to define a settlement hierarchy. The purpose for requesting funding and external assistance was to exploit the expertise of others, to determine if what was expressed in the emerging core strategies in relation to rural settlement hierarchies was robust and 'future proofed', given the changing nature of rural communities and the people that both live and work in them.

- 3.3 The project was funded until end March 2011 and £15,000 worth of consultancy support was made available. This equated to 20 'enabler' days, plus support from a member of CABI staff and included supporting tasks such as project set up and reporting.
- 3.4 Following our successful bid for this project, which was reported to Members in March 2010, officers met with CABI enablers (and East Hampshire officers) to discuss how the details of the project would be implemented. At that time CABI proposed that the project should be carried out in 4 stages :-
- Stage 1: review the existing evidence base for rural settlement hierarchies focussing on key issues of sustainability, affordable housing and economic vitality, together with design considerations through examining a sample of settlements in detail, to refine a methodology for evaluating the development potential of villages based on sustainability considerations.
- Stage 2: to develop a profile for each of the case study settlements following site visits and a detail audit of the settlements. The profiling format to then be developed and adapted to suit smaller settlements.
- Stage 3: promotion and facilitation of a series of events in the case study settlements to test the profile and discuss development capacity through examining a series of sustainability criteria.
- Stage 4: strategy formulation following stage 3.
- 3.5 As the project evolved it became clear that the above four stages were very ambitious given the amount of enabler time that had been allocated. It was therefore agreed between the local authorities and CABI that the project would focus on moving from having a series of settlement hierarchies defined according to what facilities they had, to one that also explored what settlements needed and could accommodate, looking at a wider range of issues that affect rural communities and could affect the sustainability of such communities in the future.
- 3.6 Therefore the final work programme included the following elements:
1. sustainability assessment criteria – develop a series of criteria to assess a range of factors for either individual settlements or a cluster of settlements including vulnerabilities and risks.
 2. settlement profile – update the profile to reflect comments/suggestions made at an officer workshop held in September 2010
 3. settlement hierarchy – provide a critique/commentary on each local authorities approach to defining their settlement hierarchy.

4. final report – to pull together the various elements of work undertaken including a series of next steps/action plan.
- 3.7 The Final Report is set out at Appendix A to this report and includes a brief précis of the work undertaken together with cross references to the individual elements of the project which are listed on the final page of the report. A number of appendices are referred to and these are presentations and notes of meetings which have subsequently informed the final output. In terms of the sustainability checklist and settlement profile, and commentary on the District Council's approach to such matters, these are still being tested by officers as suggested by CABE, including liaison with the original authors prior to publication and implementation.
 - 3.8 The report includes the following 'Next steps and Action Plan', acknowledging the draft nature of many of the component parts and for these to be further tested and developed to suit local circumstances of the local authorities. In reality a number of these actions will be merged through the assessment and development of an appropriate development strategy for our range of rural settlements :-
 - a. A final officer check of the references and any local sensitivity of the documents.
 - b. with officers, councillors and community representatives to test the proposed sustainability criteria, settlement profile and discuss further development of the settlement hierarchy in the light of the proposed additional criteria. It may be appropriate to hold this in two sessions first with officers and then with councillors and community representatives and other stakeholders.
 - c. Engage the case study settlements (or others) through community workshops and parish meetings.
 - d. Draft settlement profiles for the selected settlements.
 - e. Test the settlement profile and sustainability criteria with the selected settlements.
 - f. Refine and adapt the profile and sustainability criteria based on community and stakeholder feedback.
 - g. Extend the profiling and sustainability assessment to the other rural settlements in the Districts.
 - h. Review and revise the Settlement Hierarchies for each District based on the CABE assessment and feedback from offices, members and the communities.
 - i. Draw the information gathered to inform the statutory plans and future growth in the rural areas.
 - 3.9 The project has provided the Council with a number of additional tools to assess the relative sustainability of rural settlements and these will be used in the preparation of Plans for Places, in combination with the feedback from Blueprint and the various discussions held with parish councils, to determine the role and development potential of the rural settlements situated within the Market Towns and Rural Area. A particular focus will be on whether some settlements are 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' given a reliance on a particular service and if this was to be withdrawn or close in the future the impact this may have.

- 3.10 The requirements identified in (b)- (e) of the above action plan will in effect be actioned through the preparation of Plans for Places. The Blueprint follow up meetings and briefing sessions held during March, have provided the opportunity for officers to explain the current work being undertaken to inform the development of a revised settlement hierarchy and to request assistance from parish council with the collation of data etc. Plans for Places will be subject to consultation during June/July and this will provide an opportunity for further specific discussions on this matter if necessary.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The evidence referred to above is an essential component of the work needed to inform the development of the policy response to be included in the Core Strategy and future DPDs. It is recommended that the final report is placed on the Council's website whilst officers liaise with CABE on the final details of the supporting documents and then commence to utilise these to assess and inform the development strategies to be proposed for the rural settlements in the District. These would be the subject of consultation as part of the 'Plans for Places' exercise.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

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

- 5.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy promotes economic prosperity and an inclusive society, which include providing employment opportunities; housing to meet people's needs and evenly distributed access to important services and facilities. The LDF is a key mechanism for delivering various outcomes of the SCS and progressing this is a corporate priority and project within the Corporate Business Plan.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 No additional resources are required as a result of the recommendations of this report, as resources are already allocated to progress the LDF and the formation of its evidence base. The Rural Masterplanning work has resulted from a Government grant equivalent to £15,000 of consultancy support.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES:

- 7.1 The formulation of a robust, transparent and up-to-date evidence base is a key element in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework and the development of future planning policy for the District. Failure to do this may result in the Council's LDF being found to be 'unsound'. The on-going preparation of evidence for the LDF is key to minimising this risk.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDIX: Appendix A: Rural Masterplanning Fund Project – Spatial Thinking – summary report

Rural Masterplanning Fund Project Winchester City Council and East Hampshire District Council

1. Introduction and background

CABE's staff and enablers have provided support to Winchester City Council / East Hampshire District Council funded through the Rural Masterplanning Fund.

The programme implements the commitment given in the Government's response to Matthew Taylor's Review on 25 March 2009 *"to develop the Review's suggestion of a competition, particularly for rural authorities wanting to provide growth over an extended period in one or more of their market towns."*

The Government's response stated that:

- *"Authorities who present the most compelling vision for their futures would receive a package of resources, and be given expert support to help develop their vision into workable masterplans for their areas.*
- *The resulting plans, and the experience and expertise developed through the process, would be used to develop a range of rural-proofed tools to support other authorities to build on these exemplar programmes, and possible future national policies."*

The fund was available until the end of March 2011. Over this time, CABE and the HCA provided support to the successful Local Authority bidders to assist them in achieving their outcomes and outputs as proposed in each bid. CABE and the HCA also gathered learning from each project to share more widely with Central Government and other rural authorities.

Winchester City Council / East Hampshire District Council (WCC/EHDC) successfully bid for £15,000 for CABE's assistance to facilitate and guide the Councils developing a strategy that focused on the rural areas in their Districts and draw out relevant rural issues to inform their respective Core Strategies.

2. Scope of works

Initially a workshop was held with officers and stakeholders to develop the brief for the project. The results of this event are recorded in the appendix. It was agreed that the enabling work would be carried out in four stages covering:

- a. **Review** of the existing evidence base for rural settlement hierarchies and functional sub-areas focusing on the key issues and themes reflected in the Mathew Taylor review: sustainability, affordable housing and economic vitality. As an integral part of sustainability, this review included design considerations relating to character and qualitative aspects of place.

The following case studies were identified to inform the process:

Winchester CC settlements

- Micheldever

- Cheriton*
- Bighton*
- West Meon (focus on the areas which straddle the WCC/EHDC boundary)

East Hampshire DC settlements

- Ropley*
- Upper and Lower Farringdon
- Bentley

*Typical catchment villages of New Alresford

These settlements were selected as representative of the rural area due to their functional and spatial relationship. The issues specific to these villages would also help test issues to be faced at community engagement events. Data was gathered for all the settlements however in practice due to time constraints only Upper and Lower Farringdon were examined in detail and used to test and refine a methodology for evaluating development potential and sustainability considerations.

- b. **Working sessions with WCC/EHDC officers;** to develop the RMP outputs and establish a draft profile for a typical case study settlement (Farringdon). This work involved site visits and sourcing data with officers. Information drawn from the review of evidence was used to shed light on any significant gaps and opportunities. This process helped identify the sustainability position and inform a draft set of sustainability criteria. A workshop was held with officers, Council Members and other stakeholders to test and refine the settlement profile. The event was also used to present a range of community engagement techniques- drawing on the Localism Agenda. A perspective on the influences on the rural economy and housing from the Taylor Review was also presented. This event and further discussions with officers also informed the sustainability based criteria for evaluating development capacity.
- c. **Engagement events;** the enablers were to assist in the promotion and facilitation of events in the case study settlements; to investigate the potential for sustainable growth and in particular leading discussions on place making and economic development. Due to time constraints these events were not held. It was also planned that these sessions would also test the workshop method as a model of engagement for other settlements for use in future community consultations.
- d. **Strategy formulation:** a final working session with officers to address feedback from workshops and identify next steps for policy formulation.

During the course of the study the scope of work was refined and updated to take account of lessons learnt from the officer workshop and allow for time constraints. The final work programme included the following key outputs:

- e. **Sustainability Assessment Criteria;** draft a set of sustainability criteria suitable for each settlement, or cluster of settlements and develop the draft further in consultation with key officers. Test the criteria and profile with officers and councillors at an officer and councillor workshop (WCC/EHDC to organise) Due to time constraints testing of the criteria has been limited to consultation of a draft criteria with officers.
- f. **Settlement Profile;** Update the generic/sample settlement profile tested at the officer workshop.
- g. **Settlement Hierarchy;** provide a critique/commentary of each authority's settlement hierarchy in the light of the draft sustainability criteria, Taylor report and recommendations.
- h. **Final report;** produce final report setting out the evidence/methodology used (including Taylor report, officer /councillors workshops, etc), the Sustainability Assessment Criteria, the methodology for applying the criteria (including settlement profiles), and conclusions/ recommendations.

3. Commentary on the outputs of the programme

a. Settlement hierarchy assessment

The report included as an appendix has been drafted and refined by enabler Vincent Goodstadt and reflects his assessment of the hierarchies for EHDC and WCC, discussions with CABE staff and other enablers and feedback from officers of EHDC and WCC.

The report draws a number of strategic conclusions that could be taken into account:

- Widening the range of services considered
- The quality of services
- The vulnerability of services
- The need for additional services
- Functional relationships between the settlements

The review concludes that the identification of the Settlement Hierarchy is central to a spatial approach to planning rural areas. The range of factors used in the two studies are sound but could be supplemented by others. Consideration should be given to the inter-linkage of settlements into community groupings thus allowing a more holistic assessment of development impacts and needs. The relationship of these groupings to wider Policy Areas would allow the development of more sensitive and sustainable development policies. An assessment of the quality and

vulnerability of communities would make it a powerful tool in corporate community planning.

The approaches outlined in the assessment would move the use of rural settlement planning focus away from the focus of PPS7 to one that addresses the needs of the existing community. It would become a more proactive tool for community engagement and support.

Specific references to the Taylor Review are made in an appendix to the assessment. General considerations and a commentary are provided against many of the recommendations of Taylor. It is observed that the use of rural settlement hierarchies is key to 'rural proofing' of planning policies.

b. Sustainability criteria

An appraisal of the underlying factors affecting a rural settlement's sustainability together with a checklist of the key criteria has been compiled by enabler Lynne Ceeney. The work draws on the observations of CABE staff, the enablers as well as those of Taylor and ACRE / RCC / JRF.

The sustainability checklist produced in Excel has been drafted so that it can help enable sustainability and the need for growth to be assessed. A working copy of the spreadsheet together with a background document and guidance on how to use the spreadsheet is included in the appendix. We recommend that the proposed assessment criteria are first tested with selected community groups. Officers and community representatives will be able to add facilities or thresholds to the spreadsheet as they wish. The calculations and logic behind the criteria assessment has been locked. Once tested, we can provide an unlocked version to revise and tailor the attributes. **NB USERS MUST ENABLE MACROS** before testing the spreadsheet.

In summary the appraisal concludes that the sustainability of rural settlements are at risk due to:

- Those on lower incomes experiencing "transport poverty" and "fuel poverty", and being locked into social and economic deprivation;
- Depopulation of older people who cannot drive, families with younger teenagers, and those on lower incomes.
- Settlements becoming more homogenous and are only habitable by those on higher incomes.
- A dearth of people available to fulfil lower paid jobs – notably carers.
- Impacts of carbon emissions and noise / air quality / safety issues associated with extensive car travel.

Risks to the robustness of a settlement to one or more of these consequences can be established by looking at settlement vulnerabilities, and connectivity to services and facilities influenced by:

- Demography of the residential population and how this is changing;
- Price of houses, the spread of house prices, and the number of second / holiday homes;
- Age of housing stock;
- Number of people considered to be in economic or fuel poverty;
- Access to a private car;
- The number and breadth of local employment opportunities;
- Class sizes in the local primary school.

On their own these factors do not indicate poor resilience. However settlements which do not have their own facilities and are poorly connected to other places with the day to day facilities that residents need combined with higher levels of vulnerability are at risk of socio economic decline.

The appraisal identifies how robustness can be maintained or improved by either enabling facilities and services, or by providing non-car based access to these services in other locations. The Taylor Review identifies the contribution that new development can make in contributing to critical mass so that facilities and services can be supported. The current Government has indicated that the “Community Right to Build” and neighbourhood planning approach is in part a means to enable local people to allocate housing development for this purpose.

Working with local communities to agree where a larger allocation of new housing could help to support the settlements is a key way to reinforce the sustainability of rural settlements. Development does not all have to be in one settlement, since clusters of settlements can provide sufficient “market” to enable the facility to survive. Vincent Goodstadt’s report commenting on Settlement Hierarchies explores this in more detail.

c. Settlement profile

Enabler Peter Sandover has updated the settlement profile previously presented and discussed with officers, members and stakeholders in September 2010. The profile for Farringdon included in the appendix remains in draft awaiting final statistics, which we hope EHDC will be able to complete.

Following feedback from the workshops the profile allows for significant inputs by the community-either as individuals or in groups. Most of statements have now been changed into questions and more emphasis has

been put on sustainability issues with additional information on transport, connections and other dependencies.

The new format will help the various community groups understand how their place functions and what needs to change to make it more sustainable. The responses should help inform both the sustainability checklist, and settlement hierarchy. The data could also help the community put together a neighbourhood plan.

We originally planned to complete profiles for all the case study settlements however this one example will be sufficient for individual communities to draft their own. We would recommend that the Councils make the appropriate mapping and standard format (Microsoft Publisher) available for each settlement.

The profile does not link directly to the sustainability criteria above but it does follow and pick up the main themes:

- Age profile and trends
- Car ownership
- Access to services and facilities
- Impact of fuel poverty
- Connectivity and interrelationships with other settlements
- Housing profile and trends
- Employment profile and trends
- Physical characteristics
- Community/ social structures

4. The rural economy

Economic factors are key to the success of sustainable rural settlements. Enabler Michael McCarthy at workshops and officer briefings outlined many of the challenges facing the districts. These can be summarised as follows:

- The need to roll out a robust model for affordable housing in smaller settlements.
- Investigate ways to mitigate fears of inappropriate design, issues of scale and location, 'importation' of non-locals.
- A methodology for rural development with new thinking on use of space, design and sustainability driven by local need and community engagement- for example live work, home working and age in place.
- Promote LPA officers as '*facilitators*'—with communities, parishes, developers, housing providers, and enterprises.
- Deploying up to date small area data —housing need, market assessment, health and care trends, demographics, investment and economic development.

A copy of Michael's presentation to the officer group is included in the appendix.

5. Community Engagement

Engagement with the rural communities will require effective processes and tools and personnel well versed in these processes. A level of tailoring will be required to ensure the methodologies used locally are proportionate and appropriate however there are some sound and basic principles that officers, members and volunteers can follow. These were summarised in the officer briefing by Lynne Ceeney.

A copy of Lynne's presentation to the officer group is included in the appendix.

6. Next steps and Action Plan

We appreciate that the outputs from this process are in draft and that further work will be required of the officers of WCC and EHDC to move our proposals, ideas and recommendations forward. We outline below the steps required.

- a. A final officer check of the references and any local sensitivity of the documents.
- b. Workshop with officers, councillors and community representatives to test the proposed sustainability criteria, settlement profile and discuss further development of the settlement hierarchy in the light of the proposed additional criteria. It may be appropriate to hold this in two sessions first with officers and then with councillors and community representatives and other stakeholders.
- c. Engage the case study settlements (or others) through community workshops and parish meetings.
- d. Draft settlement profiles for the selected settlements.
- e. Test the settlement profile and sustainability criteria with the selected settlements.
- f. Refine and adapt the profile and sustainability criteria based on community and stakeholder feedback.
- g. Extend the profiling and sustainability assessment to the other rural settlements in the Districts.
- h. Review and revise the Settlement Hierarchies for each District based on the CABE assessment and feedback from offices, members and the communities.
- i. Draw the information gathered to inform the statutory plans and future growth in the rural areas.

PJS
18th February 2011

List of Appendices

- A. Commentary on the approach to the District's Rural Settlement Hierarchy
- B. Checklist for Settlement Robustness (sustainability)- Background and guidance notes
- C. Sustainability checklist, Excel document
- D. Draft Settlement Profile
- E. Community Engagement –Context and Principles
- F. Sustaining Rural Living
- G. Officer workshop agenda
- H. Officer workshop feedback
- I. Community workshop draft agenda