CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

25 March 2009

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Wood (Chairman) Beckett (in the Chair) (P)

Coates Pearson (P)

Deputy Members in attendance:

Councillors Cooper and Godfrey

Other invited Councillors:

Busher (P) Jeffs (P) Pines

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Achwal, Barratt and Learney

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Bell, Humby, Mitchell, Stallard and Weston

1. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>

Councillor Pearson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as he was the Council's representative on the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). He was also a member of the Hampshire Countryside and Access Forum and a trustee of Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinAcc). He remained in the room, spoke and voted.

Councillor Godfrey declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as an employee of Hampshire County Council. He remained in the room, spoke and voted.

Councillor Cooper declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as Chairman of Southwick and Widley Parish Council. He remained in the room, spoke and voted.

Councillor Beckett declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a member of Compton and Shawford Parish Council. He remained in the room, spoke and voted.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 6 March 2009 be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A number of members of the public and various interest groups spoke under the public participation procedures and their comments are summarised under the relevant agenda item below.

4. WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – RECOMMENDED CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTION DOCUMENT (Report CAB1823(LDF) refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting approximately thirty members of the public and explained that the Committee's recommendations on the Preferred Option would be considered by Council on 22 April 2009 for final decision.

In introducing the Report, the Head of Strategic Planning emphasised paragraph 1.8 which set out the Government's tests of "soundness" which the Core Strategy must meet. As such, it must comply with various legal requirements, including having regard to national policy and conforming to the Regional Spatial Strategy (i.e. the housing requirements to be specified in the South East Plan). He confirmed that the South East Plan was expected to be adopted within the next few weeks.

The Head of Strategic Planning gave a presentation outlining the background to the preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Option, the proposals for further consultation with the public on the document and summarising the next steps of the Local Development Framework (LDF) timetable.

The Head of Strategic Planning highlighted a correction to paragraph 3.7 of the covering Report to reflect the Committee's decision at its last meeting regarding allocations at Whiteley and Waterlooville. In addition, he requested that a recommendation be added to the Report permitting him to agree an Executive Summary to the Preferred Options document, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access. This was agreed.

The Committee discussed the Core Strategy Preferred Option as set out in Appendix D to the Report in detail and as summarised under the relevant sections below.

4.1. The Spatial Strategy (pages 29 – 38)

The Head of Strategic Planning outlined the background to the proposed overall Spatial Strategy which had been developed in response to consultations under the Issues and Options process. This had resulted in the Strategy being split into three main sections: Winchester Town; South Hampshire Urban Areas; and Market Towns and Rural Areas.

4.2. Spatial Strategy – Winchester Town (pages 39 – 47)

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that Winchester had been recognised as the most sustainable location for major development in the non-PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) part of the District. It had been concluded that a large development of about 2,000 houses was needed to meet the housing requirements of the South East Plan and Barton Farm had been selected as the most suitable site. The Preferred Option approach also had regard to promoting the economic role of Winchester and meeting other needs within the town.

The Chairman mentioned that various correspondence had been received by Members suggesting that South Wonston was a suitable alternative site. In response, the Head of Strategic Planning explained that South Wonston had been thoroughly examined and was not considered suitable or sustainable for major growth for a number of reasons, including its limited facilities and transport infrastructure and landscape/visibility issues. In addition, the Ministry of Defence had indicated that land at Worthy Down would not be made available for housing development in the foreseeable future.

A number of Members expressed concern about the impacts of any development on Barton Farm on traffic flows into and out of Winchester, particularly along Andover Road and City Road. The Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that the third bullet point of Policy SS2 (Requirement for major large scale developments) included a strong requirement for sustainable transport measures to be in place. More detailed consideration of exactly what mitigation measures would be required would be undertaken at the appropriate later stage.

Six members of the public and/or representatives of local interest groups spoke regarding this item: Mr M Carden (City of Winchester Trust); Mr M Tod, Mrs C Slattery (Save Barton Farm Group and Council for the Protection of Rural England); Mr and Mrs Bruty; and Mr J MacDonald. In summary, their comments raised included the following points:

- requests that Barton Farm retain its reserve site status to increase its protection from unnecessary development;
- emphasis on the special character of land at Barton Farm and its importance to the setting of Winchester generally;
- requests that the Preferred Options document include a sequential approach which favoured brownfield site development and only released greenfield sites as a "last resort";

- concern that the Government did not take account of the large number of "windfall" developments in calculating its housing requirements;
- concern that a planning application was likely to be submitted imminently by CALA Homes for development at Barton Farm and decisions made at this meeting could make it more difficult for the Council to resist such an application;

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- concern that development could commence at Barton Farm, but be left partially completed due to lack of resources in the current financial climate:
- concern that the level of housing requirement stipulated by Government could reduce after development had commenced, removing the need for Barton Farm.
- suggestion that the housing requirement be better met by smaller developments at various locations;
- if development was approved, the requirement for a City brief and Master Plan to be prepared, independently from developers;
- concern that development should not take place before detailed plans regarding infrastructure were agreed;
- concern about the practicalities of encouraging alternative means of transport, such as walking and cycling, from Barton Farm due to the restrictions of the existing road network etc.
- request that any development include a high standard of sustainable building design.
- concern about proposals for a knowledge park at Bushfield Camp including: the risk of destruction of sensitive landscape; lack of demonstrable need for such a park; increase in commuting in and out of any park; a belief that it could be better situated elsewhere, such as in the town centre or near the existing Intech site.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Learney supported the comments in favour of retaining the reserve site status of Barton Farm. She agreed with the decision that South Wonston was not suitable as an alternative location for major development. If development at Barton Farm was to take place, she agreed that a Master Plan was required to ensure the development was to the highest possible standard and met the agreed policies. She highlighted a discrepancy between wording relating to affordable housing requirements in different parts of the District, as the document sometimes stated "at least 40%" and sometimes "40%". With regard to proposals for a knowledge park at Bushfield Camp, she reiterated concerns that its location would increase commuter traffic and it would be better located within the town centre. A central location would also benefit the existing economy of Winchester.

The Committee responded to the detailed comments made, as summarised below.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that a Master Plan would be produced for any major development at Barton Farm. He also confirmed that the wording relating to provision of affordable housing should just state "40%" and not "at least 40%". He agreed to amend this throughout the Preferred Option document.

The Corporate Director (Operations) advised that any planning application received regarding Barton Farm would be considered in the light of existing Local Plan policies. However, regard would also have to be had to emerging policies at both a national level and a local level under the LDF process.

The Head of Strategic Planning stated that circumstances had changed since Barton Farm (or Winchester City (North) as it was referred to previously) was identified as a reserve site in the Structure Plan. It was now evident that there was not sufficient housing provision to meet the revised Government requirements, without making a firm allocation of adequate land. Therefore, it would not be possible for the Council to demonstrate that it had made adequate plans to meet this housing requirement, if the status of Barton Farm as a reserve site was retained.

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that the suggestion of a number of smaller scale developments had been considered and rejected in previous Reports. He emphasised the benefits of large scale developments in terms of ensuring adequate transport and other infrastructure provision.

With regard to the various concerns raised above about sustainable transport requirements for any development, the Head of Strategic Planning highlighted that in the introductory paragraph, Policy WT2 did stipulate that development *must* accord with Policy SS2 and the specific requirements listed in WT2. Members requested that the wording of WT2 be strengthened in terms of measures to mitigate traffic impacts. He suggested that the third bullet point (2nd sentence) be rearranged, including removal of the word "should".

The Committee also requested the addition of the word "serious" before "consideration of the potential to relocate Henry Beaufort secondary school" in the second bullet point of Policy WT2. This was agreed.

With regard to Bushfield Camp, the Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that it was recommended in Policy WT3 that further studies were required as to its suitability and viability. In addition, if it were to proceed, the Council would need to work closely with developers to ensure that the buildings at the park were of the right type in order to attract the desired employers. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that further work to supplement the Economic and Employment Land Study had concluded that there were not any suitable sites for a knowledge park of this type and size within the town centre.

One Member expressed concern that the current economic difficulties might reduce the housing requirement in the future. In addition, the Committee noted the requests outlined above that the release of Barton Farm should be delayed unless and until absolutely necessary. Whilst acknowledging this point, the Chairman emphasised that the Council was required to meet current legislative requirements. However, he was proposing an amendment to the Report's recommendations to re-emphasise the Committee's decisions at its meeting on 28 January 2009, which sought to address some of these

concerns. The proposed additional recommendations were agreed as set out in Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 below.

4.3. Spatial Strategy – South Hampshire Urban Areas (pages 49 – 62)

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that following consultation on the Issues and Options document, it had been concluded that concentrating development in large allocations of at least 2,000 dwellings, as extensions to the urban areas of Whiteley and Waterlooville, was the most appropriate approach. This was also consistent with the location of the major employment commitments in the area and the concept of concentrating other PUSH growth within the Strategic Development Areas at Fareham and Hedge End.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the Council would adopt similar consultation and involvement processes for the local communities to those used for the West of Waterlooville MDA masterplan and planning applications.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the Council was more advanced than Eastleigh Borough Council regarding timing of preparation of its Core Strategy. This caused some difficulties in terms of planning as the Hedge End SDA might extend partly into the Winchester District. Members and officers were in discussions with Eastleigh Borough Council and a joint Area Action Plan is currently planned for the SDA.

The Committee raised a number of concerns about the importance of ensuring the adequate transport infrastructure was in place before any additional development commenced at Whiteley. The current traffic problems in the Whiteley area were highlighted and concern was expressed that these would be exacerbated by additional homes and construction traffic.

The Committee noted an error in the Map of the North Fareham SDA on page 62 in that the green infrastructure/strategic gap hatched area should be extended to the east of Knowle Village, to maintain separation from the SDA.

Mr M Evans (Chairman of Whiteley Parish Council) and Mr J Hayter spoke during the public participation period and their comments are summarised below:

- broad support for the expansion to the North of Whiteley in order to facilitate the provision of improved facilities and infrastructure;
- a request that the LDF would reflect the responses outlined in the updated Whiteley Parish Plan 2008;
- concern that the Council should have a contingency plan to ensure improvements to the current infrastructure at Whiteley if economic circumstances delayed/prevented further development;
- querying the justification for 'Other Greenfield Allocations' (Table 3, page 104) having regard to the figures quoted in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

The Committee also noted a letter received from Mr and Mrs Wyatt which outlined a suggestion for a particular strategic allocation, but concluded that detailed site-specific comments should be made through the public consultation process.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the LDF would refer to the most up to date information as contained in the recently published Whiteley Parish Plan 2008. The Chairman noted the suggestion for a contingency plan for Whiteley for further investigation, whilst commenting that it was not a matter for the Core Strategy.

The Head of Strategic Planning re-emphasised comments made at the previous meeting, stating that it was prudent for the Council to include some flexibility in the housing provision, especially as the requirements were 'minima'. An element of over-provision would reduce the risk of successful challenge and the consequential likelihood of additional sites being allocated by the Inspector, or the Plan being found 'unsound'.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Achwal and Learney addressed the Committee and their comments are summarised below.

- Councillor Achwal shared the concerns expressed by the Committee about the requirement for urgent action to address the current traffic problems in Whiteley and taking steps to ensure new development did not exacerbate the situation. She also emphasised that Whiteley needed a new primary school as soon as possible to meet existing demand.
- Councillor Learney requested that the Council make a statement in the light of recent reports regarding the suspension of development at West of Waterlooville. She suggested that the developers be reminded of the legal options available to the Council if they did not progress the scheme. Councillor Learney also expressed objection to the possible inclusion of 1,000 dwellings from the Hedge End SDA within the Winchester District (Policy SH4). Finally, she expressed concern about the changing nature of the gap between Fareham and Knowle and requested clarification of what types of open rural uses would be considered acceptable (as outlined in Policy SH5).

In response, the Chairman agreed to arrange for the Council to make a statement on the current situation regarding development of the West of Waterlooville MDA. He stated that the potential commitment relating to the Hedge End SDA had been made by the previous Council Leader prior to 2006. The Head of Strategic Planning clarified that the Hedge End SDA included a total of 6,000 dwellings which were not allocated within any particular District. However, its location to the north/north-east of Hedge End suggested the majority would fall within the Eastleigh Borough Council area. He emphasised that Policy SH4 had been carefully worded so as not to commit the Council to the provision of any houses from the SDA within its area, if the SDA did not go ahead or if more suitable land were available within Eastleigh Borough.

The Committee discussed in detail in the wording of the third bullet point of Policy SH3 (North Whiteley) and requested that it be rephrased, to emphasise that proposed solutions to the access difficulties affecting Whiteley should be identified before permission for development is granted. The Corporate Director (Operations) confirmed that the Policy could be redrafted to this effect and he would agree the final wording, in consultation with the Chairman. The following additional bullet point was agreed following the meeting:

"Provide a comprehensive assessment of existing access difficulties affecting Whiteley, and agree proposed solutions prior to planning permission being granted, and incorporate specific proposals to ensure that these are implemented at an early stage of the development."

4.4. Spatial Strategy – Market Towns and Rural Areas (pages 63 – 67)

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that the final words of Policy MTRA2 (Page 66) had inadvertently been omitted, and should be as follows (missing words in italics):

"...only with 'enabling' market housing permitted where necessary (no more than 20%) to meet *demonstrable local needs*."

The Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that development in this section was proposed primarily to meet the particular requirements of the local communities, as highlighted through the Issues and Options consultation, rather than strategic housing requirements. In response to a question about 'proportionality', he explained that the designation of Level 1 to 4 settlements had not solely been based on the population of settlements, as had been explained in previous Reports.

With regard to Policy MTRA1, the Committee agreed that the second bullet point be revised to refer to "improvement" as well as "retention", to reflect the aim of improving public transport services in rural areas.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained why it was not possible to extend the new approach to 'Local Connections Homes' proposed for "Level 4" settlements to "Level 3" settlements. Level 3 settlements were of a relatively large size so that it would not be realistic to restrict development to only meet local needs.

The Head of Strategic Planning clarified that the number of dwellings contained within the four hierarchical levels was an estimate of likely development rather than a target or a ceiling. Levels of development were limited by the settlements' boundaries. The Development Management and Allocations DPD would assess whether any greenfield allocations were needed at the time it is produced and, if so, allocate appropriate sites or make adjustments to settlement boundaries.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Barratt welcomed the proposed change to Policy MTRA1 to emphasise the requirement to improve public transport provision in rural areas. She suggested that new provisions on developers' contributions should be used to secure funding for this purpose.

4.5. <u>Core Policies (pages 69 – 121)</u>

The Committee discussed each of the policies in detail and made a number of recommended amendments, as outlined below.

Policy CP5 Green Infrastructure

Substitute the word "support" for "favour".

Policy CP8 Cultural Heritage and Landscape Character

Addition of words "and built" after "landscape" in first bullet point.

Policy CP13 Sustainable Low and Zero Carbon Built Development

One Member suggested that the first bullet point be amended to require new residential developments to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. However, the majority of the Committee felt that the Policy need not repeat matters which were expected to be adopted as statutory requirements and that the Policy was a suitable basis for consultation as drafted.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Barratt reiterated her suggestion made at the previous Committee meeting that the Council adopt a Sustainable Building Design Supplementary Planning Document and requested that a report on this be submitted to a future Committee meeting as soon as possible.

Policy CP17 Housing Mix

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the Policy was sufficiently flexible to enable different size housing to meet different local circumstances and/or changing economic requirements. It was agreed that the Policy wording be amended by replacement of the words in brackets with the following alternative: "(Table 5 indicates currently forecast requirements)".

Policy CP19 Affordable Housing – Quota Sites

One Member queried whether, if normally 70% of the affordable homes should be for social rent, it was appropriate for the Policy to state that the remainder would be for an agreed intermediate tenure, given current market circumstances. It was agreed that the wording should be amended to enable the potential for 100% social housing provision, by deleting the words after "for social rent" at the end of the first paragraph.

Members discussed whether the second paragraph of the Policy could be rephrased to allow more flexibility about whether affordable housing provision could be provided off-site as an alternative to on-site provision. Some Members were also in favour of removing the possibility of financial contributions as an alternative. The Head of Strategic Planning advised that Government advice was that provision should be on-site where possible and

also highlighted the lack of available land generally for off-site provision. Also, as affordable housing provision would be required for every housing development, financial contributions would be needed where the mathematical calculation resulted in a requirement for a fraction of a dwelling. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to the redrafting of the second paragraph of the Policy to be replaced with the following:

"Affordable housing should be provided on-site unless off-site provision of dwellings locally would better meet priority housing needs and support the creation of mixed and balanced communities. A financial contribution in lieu of provision may be accepted where physical provision is not possible, such as on small sites."

Make corresponding changes to explanatory text (paragraph 13.44).

Policy CP21 Non-Residential Development

Members expressed concern about this proposed policy as it was considered that it might deter new businesses from locating in the District. The Head of Strategic Planning advised that it was proposed to offset the possible impacts of substantial employment development and as another possible means of providing affordable housing. However, following further discussion the Committee agreed to the deletion of this Policy and its explanatory et (paragraph 13.53).

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

RECOMMENDED (TO CABINET AND COUNCIL):

- 1. THAT THE DRAFT CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTION DOCUMENT BE APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION FOR A PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD OF AT LEAST SIX WEEKS, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX D TO CAB1823(LDF) AND AMENDED AS OUTLINED ABOVE (AND SUMMARISED IN THE SCHEDULE OF CHANGES APPENDED).
- 2. THAT THE HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND ACCESS, BE GIVEN DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO:
- A) AGREE THE WORDING OF AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY TO THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT:
- B) MAKE MINOR EDITORIAL AND PRESENTATIONAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT PRIOR TO PUBLICATION; AND
- C) MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLICISING AND CONSULTING ON THE DOCUMENT.

3. THAT, IN ORDER TO MEET THE GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING TARGETS, COUNCIL AGREE THAT THEIR OVERALL STRATEGY FOR ACCOMMODATING THE REQUIRED LEVELS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY, SHOULD BE TO PRIORITISE THE USE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND.

- 4. THAT COUNCIL SHOULD SUPPORT THE HOUSING TRAJECTORY IN THE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (2008), WHICH SUGGESTS THAT LARGE GREENFIELD RELEASES OUTSIDE THE PUSH AREA WILL NOT COME FORWARD UNTIL THE LATTER PART OF THE PLAN PERIOD.
- 5. THAT THE COUNCIL CONTINUE TO PRESS THIS AND FUTURE GOVERNMENTS TO ALTER THEIR HOUSING TARGETS, SO THAT WINCHESTER IS NOT COMPELLED TO DEVELOP SENSITIVE GREENFIELD LOCATIONS.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am, adjourned for lunch between 1.15pm and 2pm, and concluded at 5.00pm.

Chairman

<u>APPENDIX</u>

Schedule of changes to Winchester District Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Option following Cabinet (LDF) Committee 25 March 2009:-

Page, para, policy number	Details of amendment
Policy WT2 Strategic Housing Allocation - Barton Farm	2 nd bullet point
	add 'serious' before consideration, to read "and <u>serious</u> consideration of the potential to relocate Henry Beaufort secondary school."
	3 rd bullet point
	rearrange 2 nd sentence to read "Include/fund measures to mitigate the traffic impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road networks should be included/funded."
Policy SH1 Strategy for South Hampshire Urban Areas	1 st and 2 nd bullet point
Tramporino Orban / trode	remove 'at least' from references to 40% affordable housing; to read "of which at least 40% will be affordable"
Policy SH3 Strategic Housing Allocation - North Whiteley	Additional bullet point to be inserted before 3 rd bullet
	"Provide a comprehensive assessment of existing access difficulties affecting Whiteley, and agree proposed solutions prior to planning permission being granted, and incorporate specific proposals to ensure that these are implemented at an early stage of the development."
Map SH5 North Fareham SDA (page 62)	Extend green infrastructure notation to land east of Knowle

Policy MTRA 1 Strategy for the	2 nd bullet point
Market Towns and Rural Area	add 'and improvement', to read
	"supporting rural transport initiatives that improve accessibility including the retention and improvement of public transport services."
Policy MTRA 2 Market Towns and Rural Area settlement hierarchy	Level 4 settlements add 'demonstrable local needs' to end of paragraph to read,
	"only with 'enabling' market housing permitted where necessary (no more that 20%) to meet demonstrable local needs".
Policy CP5 Green Infrastructure	Replace 'favour' with 'support' in the first line, to read,
	"The City Council will favour support development that"
Policy CP8 Cultural heritage and landscape character	1 st bullet point add 'and built' to read,
	"recognised landscape <u>and built</u> character that includes"
Policy CP 17 Housing Mix	Replace brackets (on 3 rd line) with
	"(see-Table 5 for indicative indicates currently forecast requirements)
Policy CP 19 Affordable Housing – Quota Sites	1 st paragraph delete 'with the remainder being an agreed intermediate tenure.'
	Final sentence reads "Normally, 70% of the affordable housing should be for social rent. with the remainder being an agreed intermediate tenure."
	2 nd paragraph, revise to read: "Affordable housing should be provided on-site, unless off-site provision of dwellings locally would better meet priority housing needs and support the creation of mixed and

	balanced communities. A financial contribution in lieu of provision may be accepted where physical provision is not possible, such as on small sites.
	Replace supporting text paragraph 13.44 with:
	"Affordable housing should normally be provided on site, but the policy allows for physical provision of dwellings off-site in the locality providing this better meets local housing needs. On smaller sites it may not be possible for all the required provision to be made on site, in which case a financial contribution will be required."
Section Affordable Housing – non- residential development	Delete Policy CP21 and supporting text paragraph 13.53
Policy CP21 non residential development	
Appendix B – Evidence Base	Under community plans – amend Whiteley Parish Plan from 2004 to 2008