

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – 16 JUNE 2009

Title of report	CORE STRATEGY – UPDATE FROM CONSULTATION
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community No
Contacts	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Director of Environment 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Planning Policy and Sustainability Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk
Purpose of report	To provide an update on the Core Strategy, including the results from the public consultation undertaken in late 2008/early 2009 and to outline the next steps.
Reason for Decision	To make Cabinet aware of some of the key issues arising from the consultation and to agree how the Core Strategy can be taken forward.
Strategic aims	Sustainable Communities
Implications: Financial/Staff Link to relevant CAT Risk Management	Allowed for within existing budgets Place Shaping Local Prosperity Cleaner Greener A risk assessment of the project has been undertaken. As far as possible control measures have been put in place to minimise these risks, including monthly updates to the Corporate Leadership Team.
Equalities Impact Assessment	The Core Strategy will have to ensure that any policies have taken account of any diversity and equality issues. Therefore all new policies will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as part of their preparation.

Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Not applicable
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	<p>'A Strategy For Growth and Change' – North West Leicestershire Local Development framework – Core Strategy Further Consultation. Copies can be viewed at Local Development Framework - North West Leicestershire District Council. Copies also held in the Planning Policy Team in Room 100.</p> <p>Copies of all representations received are held by the Planning Policy Team in Room 100.</p>
Recommendations	<p>(I) THAT CABINET NOTE THE PROGRESS ON THE CORE STRATEGY AND; (II) AGREE THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE AS SET OUT AT APPENDIX B</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Members will recall that it was agreed at the 21st October 2008 meeting of Cabinet to the publication of the Core Strategy Further Consultation document for public consultation.

1.2 The document was published on 10th November 2008. Due to an unprecedented level of interest in the Core Strategy it was decided to extend the consultation from the initial end date of 22 December 2008 to 23 March 2009. The consultation process included:

- holding a series of drop in sessions across the district;
- three public meetings (in Coalville, Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington) where promoters of some of the potential major developments were invited to give presentations to outline their proposals;
- Inviting Parish and Town Councils to three meetings specifically for the parishes;
- Publication of a four page spread in the Council's Vision magazine and
- Writing directly to about 5,500 households whose properties were closest to the potential major developments
- Presentation to the District Local Strategic Partnership

- 1.3 This report provides an update for members on the consultation and outlines how it is proposed to take forward the Core strategy over the coming months.

2.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 2.1 The number of representations received stands at 4131. Whilst the number of representations is clearly significant the vast majority (about 3,350) are in the form of some type of standard response (i.e. where somebody has provided a standard letter which individuals send in, in their own name). There are nineteen different forms of standard response which have been submitted. Of these:
- 500 express concern about the possibility of development on the Green Wedge and the potential implications on infrastructure as a result of new development;
 - 480 are opposed to development at Greenhill Farm Coalville;
 - 450 oppose the potential Strategic Freight Rail Interchange on land west of Junction 24 of the M1;
 - 200 object to the scale of development in Ibstock;
 - 380 responses object to the overall scale of housing development in the district;
 - 1500 responses have been received entitled 'Ashby Local Development Survey'. This takes the form of series of options, but it has not been possible to work out fully the results from these so far. However, it is clear that the overwhelming response is that Option 1 (i.e. The Coalville Focus option) is supported;
 - 200 suggest that a fifth alternative in respect of the Development strategy should be included which preserves the Green Wedge and keep Whitwick and Thringstone separate from Coalville.
- 2.2 The issues raised by the consultation are numerous. The following provides a short summary of the issues raised by the different type of respondents. A more detailed summary of responses from some of the key public agencies is set out at Appendix A.

Public

- Concern about the scale of housing development, both generally and in specific settlements. This also includes impact upon local infrastructure such as roads and schools;
- Concern about the potential Strategic Distribution Site west of Junction 24 on the M1;
- Objection to potential development on the Green wedge;
- Concerns about the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers.

Public agencies

- General support for concentrating development in Coalville;
- Some support for deletion of the Green Wedge;
- Concern that the threshold for 'Strategic Sites' is too low;
- Need to ensure that any targets for affordable housing reflect the findings from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
- Some support for identifying a Strategic Distribution Site as part of the Core Strategy but a number of local authorities consider that further work is required at a regional or sub-regional level to identify the most appropriate locations;
- Support for addressing need to make provision for gypsies and travellers;

- Potential infrastructure issues, principally highways, flooding and environmental issues which could affect the scale of development in Ashby de la Zouch.

Development Sector

- Support for the identification of Coalville as a focus for growth and the inclusion of a Sustainable Urban Extension;
- Limited support for Option 1 and 2 due to issues of deliverability of such a high concentration of housing in Coalville and the excessive demand on Coalville's infrastructure and services.
- Option 3 or 4 or a hybrid of both these options, is supported as a more realistic and sustainable approach to development;
- Support for a portfolio of sites of different sizes to deliver housing;
- Some support for identifying Ashby and Castle Donington as 'Principal Rural Towns';
- Should also consider other sustainable locations for development, such as those related to other settlements within and adjacent to the district;
- General overall agreement with the approach that the housing figures contained should be regarded as a minimum. In addition, Core Strategy should address potential development needs beyond the end of the plan period. Suggestions include the identification of broad locations or the identification of contingency sites and use of phasing policies;
- Core Strategy should acknowledge that a Strategic Distribution Site is likely to involve development over a number of years;
- General support for the principle of identifying strategic sites in the Core Strategy. Some support for the threshold to be 100 houses but recognised that setting threshold is difficult;
- A robust economic viability assessment is needed to support approach on affordable housing;
- No support for the favoured approach for gypsy and travellers sites to be located on housing sites. It is suggested that such an approach is not feasible, given reluctance of landowners to make land available given the impact that this would have on land values. In addition, such sites are not best placed to meet the more immediate needs for gypsy and traveller provision as sites will take time to develop;
- Support the favoured approach to the delivery of well designed, high quality sustainable development;
- No support for district wide targets to go further than those contained within the Regional Plan, particularly given the likelihood of these targets being reviewed. Furthermore, it is not appropriate for the Council to adopt any requirements that go beyond nationally set targets.

2.3 Therefore, there is some conflict between the public on one hand and public agencies/developers on the other hand, particularly in respect of the issue of the scale of new development. It is generally the case that most of the responses from the public oppose development in some way or the other, with many legitimate issues raised about impact upon local communities. This is not unexpected and reflects similar patterns of responses elsewhere, both locally and nationally. As such this represents the tensions which the planning system has to try and reconcile as far as possible, whilst accepting that it will not be possible to satisfy everybody's point of view.

- 2.4 In addition to considering the consultation responses, work is also ongoing in respect of the continuing development of the evidence base to support the Core Strategy. Work on an initial Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (in respect of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation) and initial work on transport assessment have all been recently completed. The various implications of these are being assessed.

3.0 THE NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The next formal stage in the process will be for Council to determine what should go into the 'Submission' document, which ultimately will be sent to the Secretary of State for approval. It is currently anticipated that this decision will be made in January 2010. This will be a decision of the whole Council. It will be appreciated that in view of the significance of the Core Strategy in setting out the Council's future planning policies for the district, that the consideration as to what goes into the 'Submission' will be controversial. In order to try and ensure that such considerations are as smooth as possible it is necessary to ensure that all members are engaged as far as possible in the process prior to Council making a decision.
- 3.2 To this end a programme of member engagement has been developed which extends up to the January 2010 Council meeting. The timetable for this is set out Appendix B. It is also proposed to undertake a short period of consultation following the October Cabinet to obtain the views of the public and other stakeholders. This will not involve public meetings, exhibitions etc but will be an opportunity for further comment and reflection prior to the Council determining the 'Submission' document in January 2010. In addition, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will also be consulted as part of this process to ensure that the Core Strategy is in accordance with the overall aims and objectives of the LSP.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM KEY PUBLIC AGENCIES

APPENDIX A

Government Office for the East Midlands

- Support the Coalville focus as being in accordance with the RSS. However, also note that whichever option is chosen will have to be demonstrably deliverable;
- Support the target of 9600 dwellings as minimum figure and to identify additional housing supply that takes place beyond 2026;
- Note that development in the catchment of the River Mease may be restricted due to capacity issues at Packington;
- Strongly support the deletion of the Green Wedge;
- Consider that the suggested threshold for 'strategic sites' is too low. Suggest a threshold of 2,000 dwellings in respect of housing and the potential Strategic Distribution Site from an employment point of view;
- Query the suggestion that the opportunity for renewable energy from wind is limited due to the presence of East Midlands Airport.

Environment Agency

- Recommend the preparation of a Water Cycle Study to support the Core Strategy;
- Suggest that 'water neutrality' should be sought as part of new developments;
- Consider that the Green Wedge in its existing form or as a 'strategic gap' should form part of Green Infrastructure provision for the district as it provides opportunities for cycling and walking;
- Note that water quality in the River Mease is an issue. Future development will need to seek improvements;
- In respect of development at Ashby, option 1 and 4 are preferred from a flooding point of view but note that development south of Ashby could be designed to incorporate flood mitigation measures;
- Concerned that potential site for Strategic Distribution Site at Sawley is within flood zone 3 therefore the other two options identified in the consultation are preferable.

Highways Agency

- Note capacity issues on both the M1 and the A453. Some spare capacity on both A50 and A42 but some issues around Junction 13 of A42 (Ashby north);
- Support approach of concentrating development in Coalville;
- Core Strategy will need to identify appropriate transport interventions and costs required to deliver infrastructure required to support preferred strategy;
- Note that development south-east of Coalville and in the Green Wedge could impact upon the specified road network. Some concerns that area south-east of Coalville not well related to town centre and that could result in extra traffic being pulled towards Leicester;
- Development in Kegworth both individually and cumulatively could impact upon Junction 24 of the M1;
- Development at Measham could raise capacity issues on A42;
- In respect of potential sites for SFRI, note that capacity issues may affect all sites and that need to demonstrate that rail access can be secured.

English Heritage

- Broadly support preferred approach to concentrate development in Coalville. Not clear as to whether Ashby and Castle Donington can accommodate significant growth having regard to historic character of towns;
- Concerned about the potential impact of an SFRI west of Junction 24 of the M1 upon Castle Donington;

emda

- Broadly support the approach to concentrate development in the larger settlements;
- Question definition of sustainable villages and restrictive nature of development to be permitted;
- Supports 9,600 dwellings as a minimum provision;
- Supports approach of allocating strategic sites and point out that for their purposes they take proposals for 10,000 square metres of floorspace for employment development or 250 dwellings for housing as being regionally or sub regionally significant.
- Supports identification of Strategic Distribution sites and consider the J24 proposal broadly accords with Policy 21 of the Regional Plan;
- The preferred approach to the airport needs to be done in such a way as to allow the operational development of the airport including freight.

EMRA

- Broadly support the overall strategy but refer to the lack of reference to reducing the impact of climate change in the objectives;
- Have concerns that the preferred approach for Gypsy and Traveller provision will not meet the need for immediate progress on identification;
- Coalville is well placed as a Sub regional Centre to accommodate employment related development including science based high technology industries;

Leicestershire County Council

- The rigid application of the sustainability triangle to the geography of the district would lead to an unsustainable pattern of development (segregating new homes from new jobs);
- Do not support the figure of 9,600 as minimum provision as this is an overprovision of the Regional Plan and does not take into account the impact of the recession on housing supply;
- Coalville Focus is supported, but considers that provision for employment should be co-located with housing;
- Small amount of housing for Ashby is supported given the River Mease SAC, the constrained road system and it's a dormitory settlement for the West Midlands.
- If development takes place in the Green Wedge, substantial green infrastructure is required;
- Agree with identifying Strategic Sites but consider that the threshold of 100 is too low;
- The County Council considers that inclusion of Strategic Distribution Site is premature. Proposals for such sites are emerging at several locations in the Derby, Nottingham Core and Leicester & Leicestershire HMAs, and indeed elsewhere in the Region, but there is limited understanding of which of these sites would best meet the requirements of Policy 21 of the the Regional Plan The Economic Activity Zone at Donington Park / EMA is contrary to the Regional Plan Urban Concentration policy;
- The Core Strategy needs to strengthen its reference to developer contributions and should be adaptable to future changes;

Derbyshire County Council

- The four broad options for growth are in accordance with the Regional Plan;
- The Regional Plan does not include any specific requirements for regionally significant employment development in any district as Policy 21 highlights broad locations, and a comparative study is required of the various potential locations already identified, in order to provide context for LDF preparation.

South Derbyshire District Council

- The four broad options for growth are in accordance with the Regional Plan;
- The Regional Plan does not include any specific requirements for regionally significant employment development in any district as Policy 21 highlights broad locations, and a comparative study is required of the various potential locations already identified, in order to provide context for LDF preparation.

Derby City Council

- Generally support the overall approach but have objections to Issue 10 (Strategic Distribution) and Issue 11 (Strengthening the Local Economy)
- Issues 10 – have reservations over Policy 21 of the Regional Plan as a site selection tool. In particular it does not address the issue of assessing which are the most appropriate sites in the region and it is unclear how much weight should be attached to each of the criteria in the Policy.
- For Issue 11 are concerned that employment development associated with the airport outside of the airport boundary would not be in accordance with the Regional Plan and would potentially prejudice development in Derby and would lead to unsustainable mainly car based journeys.

Nottingham City Council

- The location and scale of the potential SRFI means it could serve all three HMAs;
- Until a comparative study has been undertaken it is unclear how this location would compare against others;
- The proposal would be likely to cause traffic congestion and could harm the operation of the airport;
- Does not consider that the locational guidance in Policy 21 will lead to the best sites coming forward as it does not address the issue of assessing which are the most appropriate sites in the region and it is unclear how much weight should be attached to each of the criteria in the Policy.
- Support the approach to balance the development of the airport with other environmental issues.

APPENDIX B

Date	Where	What
14 th July 2009	Cabinet	Report to Cabinet on a number of key issues where Cabinet can identify areas for further scrutiny but no decisions taken.
11 th August 2009	Environment Scrutiny	Report seeking views of Scrutiny on the key issues in the light of Cabinet conclusions in July.
1st September 2009	Planning Committee	Report seeking views of Scrutiny on the key issues in the light of Cabinet conclusions in July.
10 th September 2009	Members Planning Forum	Discussion with all Members on the key issues in the light of Cabinet conclusions in July.
20 th October 2009	Cabinet	Report seeking formal views of Cabinet on: Development Strategy Strategic Sites - threshold SFRI Gypsies and Travellers Also seek views in respect of which sites to include in view of overall development strategy
11 TH November 2009	Environment Scrutiny	Consider outcome from October Cabinet
12 th November 2009	Members Planning Forum	Consider outcome from October Cabinet
8 December 2009	Planning Committee	Consider outcome from October Cabinet
15 th December 2009	Cabinet	Report views from consultation and make final recommendations to Council in January.
26 th January 2010	Council	Report to agree submission Core Strategy