

## **Local Development Framework Steering Group**

A meeting of the Local Development Framework Steering Group was held on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

Present:- Councillor Cook (Chairman), Councillors Lupton, Nelson and Stoker.

Officers:- Mrs J Elliott , Mrs R Young (DNS); P K Bell (LD).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Cherrett, Leonard, Narroway, Mrs O'Donnell and Walmsley.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

### **Advice from Department for Communities and Local Government Development Framework**

Consideration was given to a report which informed the Steering Group of advice received for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) following the first two Development Plan Document examinations.

The Planning Inspectorate had reported on the first two examinations of the soundness of core strategies under the new LDF system. The relevant documents were reports to Lichfield District Council and Stafford Borough Council.

Both these plans had been found unsound. This meant that the authorities concerned had to withdraw their core strategies and start again, with the inevitable knock-on delays to other related plans they were preparing.

DCLG had written to Local Authorities to highlight issues raised in order to try and avoid similar cases.

It was the Inspectors' views that the two core strategies were unsound because they did not meet all the following criteria largely reflected in current guidance. Core strategies should:

1. Set out broadly but clearly what kind of place the area will be in the future; what kind of changes will be needed to make this happen; and how this will be brought about.
2. Be prepared through a process of options generation and appraisal. Options should be alternative strategic spatial options, effectively alternative scenarios for the future development of the area. These options should be consulted upon. The preferred options report should set out the alternative options considered; and give clear reasons including sustainability appraisal findings for the selection of the preferred option or options and for the rejection of others.
3. Make serious spatial choices about what will happen and where in broad terms it will happen over the life of the strategy, underpinned by consultation and sustainability appraisal. This will then provide clear guidance to subsidiary DPDs and avoid a return to the old process of protracted arguments over site allocations.

4. Avoid repetition of national and regional policy but explain how these have been applied to the spatial decisions which have been made about the future development of the area.
5. Look to the long term and include sufficient flexibility to be able to deal with a variety of future circumstances.
6. Be cross-sectoral – developed with regard to (and ideally in conjunction with) the community strategy, in partnership with the Local Strategic Partnership and other parts of the Council and other key organisations and with wide community involvement.
7. Not contain excessive detail.
8. Be supported by relevant evidence.
9. Set clear goals, show how these will be delivered (including through other DPDs), and show how progress on delivery will be monitored.

Members and officers would need to keep this advice in mind during the preparation of DPDs. DCLG was working with Government Offices, the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Advisory Service to ensure that the early lessons of the new system would be disseminated quickly. The inspectorate would be publishing the lessons learnt at the end of the first six months of examinations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

### **Regional Spatial Strategy - Examination in Public – Panel Report**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the main recommendations of the Inspector's Panel following the Examination in Public (EiP) into the Regional Spatial strategy for the North East (RSS).

Attached to the item was the report considered by Planning Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006, which set out the recommendations of the Panel of Inspectors in relation to the RSS, following the EiP.

The main points to be borne in mind as far as the Core Strategy was concerned were:

1. Support for the concept of the Tees Valley City Region.
2. Support for the locational strategy (i.e. concentration of the majority of new development within the conurbation, particularly within the core areas; priority to regeneration of both banks of the River Tees; focusing new economic development in conurbations, particularly in the core areas; priority to regional brownfield mixed-use developments e.g. North shore).
3. Proposed housing allocation for the Borough of 9065 new dwellings 2004 – 2021.
4. Additional uses at Durham Tees Valley Airport restricted to airport-related uses.
5. Wynyard is not regarded as a sustainable location for development.

It was noted that this would not be the end of the process. The next steps were:

1. Government Office North East (GONE) consider the Panel report.
2. GONE publish and consult on Proposed Modifications.
3. GONE consider any responses to the consultation exercise.
4. Final version of RSS published Spring 2007.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

### **Consultation with Young People – Local Development Framework**

Consideration was given to a report that set out the concerns of young people as expressed at two consultation events.

In line with the Government's inclusivity agenda, and in accordance with the Local Development Framework's Statement of Community Involvement, officers from the Development Plans Team attended two consultation events for young people. The first was a structured event, Learning from Each Other, held at the Oakwood Centre in July, where a stall was manned and young people asked to give their views on transport, leisure and open space, town centres and shopping, the environment, energy and climate change, heritage and conservation and housing issues. The second was a disco evening at Zanzibar. Young people were asked what they liked and disliked about the area where they lived and what could be done to improve it.

45 forms were completed at the Oakwood Centre consultation day and a brief summary of concerns was detailed within the report. Also a summary of the views from the event at Zanzibar were detailed within the report.

The views obtained from the two consultation events showed that young people were concerned with many of the issues which would be addressed in the Local Development framework, such as better public transport, recreation and open space, renewable energy and energy efficiency and the quality of their neighbourhood.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

### **Vision and Objectives – Revised Wording – Local Development Framework**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the revised wording for the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives.

Following discussions at the Member Steering Group meeting on 1 August 2006, and taking on board both comments of Members and consultation responses, both the Vision and Objectives had been revised. These were set out as Appendices to the report.

When considering the revised wording, Members considered whether:-

1. The revised wording reflected their concerns expressed at the August meeting.

2. The revised wording reflected the views expressed through consultation, as agreed at the August meeting.
3. The revised wording “set out broadly but clearly what kind of place the area would be in the future”, as set out in the advice from DCLG (previous item).

Also appended to the report was the consultation responses in full, in relation to questions 1 and 2 (Vision and themes/objectives) together with the Council’s response.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The revised wording be agreed.
2. The Council’s response to comments received in relation to the consultation exercise be confirmed.

### **Core Strategy Issues and Options: Key Issues Consultation Responses**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the responses received to the consultation exercise carried out in relation to the Key Issues set out in the Core Strategy Issues and Options, and the consideration of these in taking the process forward to the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

With regard Key Issue 1: Regeneration of the Urban Core it was reported that this key issue set out the national and emerging regional policy background to the location of development, and decisions made under this heading would determine the locational strategy for the Local Development Framework and the Core Strategy. Three options were put forward in relation to the main locational focus for development (this included all types of development – housing, economic development, services and facilities). The three options, advantages and disadvantages were detailed within the report.

40 consultees responded to the question. 26 supported Option 1, 12 supported Option 2, although three of these had misinterpreted this option to read “to distribute the majority of development more evenly across the Borough”. Two respondents supported none of the options. An important point to note was that Stockton Renaissance, and the three Area Partnership Boards who responded (key players in this consultation exercise), were in agreement that Option 1 was the approach to take.

Detailed responses to the question “Which of the options (1, 2, or 3) will, in your opinion, best meet the development needs of the area as a whole?” were set out as an appendix to the report. A number of additional options were put forward and these were set out for Members’ consideration.

The additional options (or variations) which had been put forward for Members consideration were:-

1. Options for the location of development should also recognise the role of Teesside Park in the retail hierarchy of the Borough and Tees Valley city Region.
2. Add Ingleby Barwick to Option 2 as a key service centre.

3. Allow the majority of development to take place in Stockton and Thornaby towns and allowing evenly distributed development where necessary on the basis of sequential testing and sustainability with the priority being within urban areas. Major development to take place only as part of mixed-use redevelopment proposals which enhance the Borough's economic status.

4. To distribute the majority of development more evenly across the Borough.

All of the above were valid alternative options for consideration, each with merits and drawbacks. However, bearing in mind the advice given in the letter from DCLG, it was advisable to carry out a reconsultation on these options, to get views. This should not delay the process of developing the Council's Preferred Options, as Members of the Group could continue to consider the other Key Issues and the development of generic development control policies whilst the consultation was going on. Additionally, a sustainability appraisal of all the options could be undertaken to feed into the process.

To take account of some of the comments received during the first round of consultation, this was an opportunity to reword the initial options, to clarify the intention of the option. Reconsultation on the range of options was suggested within the report.

As an appendix to the report was the remainder of the questions associated with the key issues, a summary of responses and a detailed table of the comments received. A summary of the questions covered was detailed within the report.

These separate strands were very much interlinked. For example, the role of the university related to employment issues; the role of the airport into both employment and transport infrastructure. Most had a bearing on the locational strategy. Therefore, it was proposed that suite of policies for the Core Strategy was developed under the following headings:

1. Sustainable development
2. Location of development
3. Scale and type of employment provision
4. Scale and type of housing provision
5. Retail policy
6. Transport
7. Built and natural environment

Members agreed that an amendment be made to Option 1, this was as follows:- Remove the word "infill" and the words "local needs". The amendment would then be cascaded down through the options.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation, in relation to the Key Issues, and the amendments and further consultation be agreed.
3. The development of the Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options in line with the policy areas be supported and outlined as:

- a) Sustainable development
- b) Location of development
- c) Scale and type of employment provision
- d) Scale and type of housing provision
- e) Retail policy
- f) Transport
- g) Built and natural environment.