

Local Development Framework Steering Group

A meeting of the Local Development Framework Steering Group was held on Tuesday 12th June, 2007.

Present:- Councillor Cook (Chairman), Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Patterson, Mrs Rigg, Rix and Womphrey.

Officers:- M. Clifford, Mrs J Elliott , Ms C Straughan, Mrs R Young (DNS); Miss S Johnson, Miss F Shayler (LD).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Fletcher, Nelson, Stoker and Walmsley.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

Core Strategy DPD – Preferred Options

Following the report on 19th March, 2007, which considered a draft of the emerging Core Strategy Preferred Options (PO) paper, a series of meetings had been held with officers of the Council, to obtain views and comments of the draft document.

This draft was discussed at a meeting with GO North East, and advice was given on improving the document to meet the tests of soundness. It was suggested that amendments be made as follows:

- Whilst the links between the PO and the Community Strategy were clear, more emphasis could be placed on links between the document and other local strategies and neighbouring LDFs
- The options considered could be made more explicit by setting out the amount of development which would be expected in the various scenarios
- More explanatory preamble is required before the specific policies
- Core Strategy Policy 1 needed to spell out in more detail what scale of development would be anticipated and where
- The provision of transport infrastructure was key to the implementation of CS1 and therefore should follow CS1 to made the link between development and infrastructure provision
- The PO should be more explicit about how the Sustainability Appraisal has influenced decisions on preferred options selected
- Options relating to the amount of housing to be provided should be explained

The amended Core Strategy Preferred Options paper was circulated to members prior to today's meeting for comments, prior to formal consideration of the document by Cabinet and Council, to obtain authorisation for wider consultation in September/October.

Members discussed the paper and made some minor amendments which the Officers would include prior to submitting to Cabinet and Council.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the report be noted.
2. The Core Strategy Preferred Options subject to some minor amendments be referred to Cabinet and Council for authorisation to go to public consultation.

Regeneration Development Plan Document Issues and Options Paper

Following the report at the meeting on 19th March, 2007, which considered a draft of the emerging Regeneration DPD issues and Options (IO) paper, the Spatial Planning team have held a series of meetings to discuss further revisions and further views have also been sought from other officers of the Council. Members were provided with a revised draft incorporating the revisions.

This draft was discussed at a meeting with GO North East, and advice was given on improving the document to meet the tests of soundness. It was suggested that amendments be made as follows:

- The issue of housing distribution and phasing should be dealt with in the Core Strategy Preferred Options.
- Linkages to the Core Strategy Preferred Options should be explicit i.e. Regeneration issues and options should be grouped under Core Strategy Policy headings e.g. Sustainable Living, Spatial Strategy etc.

Work was currently ongoing to amend the draft Regeneration IO paper to incorporate the complimentary mapping work that the Council's Geographic Information System team were currently progressing. A final draft paper was submitted at the meeting for further consideration, prior to formal consideration of the document by Cabinet and Council, to obtain authorisation for wider consultation in September/October.

Members held discussion on the paper particularly in relation to housing allocations. Following the initial consultation that had taken place developers had highlighted possible areas for development but Members were informed that these were only expressions of interest and most were not part of planning applications. During the next phase of the consultation process developers would be requested to submit sites for consideration.

Discussion was also held on the Southern Gateway Roundabout and Riverside Road and it was requested that a further option be included with detail on the Northern Gateway.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the report and Members comments be noted.
2. A further option with regard to the Northern Gateway be added.
3. The Regeneration DPD Issues and Options be referred to Cabinet and Council for authorisation to go to public consultation be approved.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report of the Regeneration Development Plan Document and the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan

Members were provided with a report that set out the need for, and purpose of, a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Regeneration Development Plan Document and the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan (YAEAAP).

Sustainability Appraisals (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) were required to be carried out on all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). They assessed whether the objectives, options or policies contained in the DPD or SPD would contribute to achieving sustainable development, a concept at the heart of new planning policy. They appraised the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the plan.

There were four principle stages to the actual Sustainability Appraisal Process:

- Scoping
- Appraising the plan's Objectives, Options and Policies
- Producing a final Sustainability Appraisal Report for consultation alongside the Regeneration DPD Preferred Options
- Monitoring the effects of the implemented plan

The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal was not to choose the best option or policy, but rather to inform the decision making process by appraising each of the preferred options / policies, establishing their likely impacts, and the scope for mitigating any possible negative impacts.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report of the Regeneration DPD documents the first stage of the SA process. To avoid duplication and ensure consistency, much of the work for the SA Scoping Report of the Regeneration DPD is based around the scoping carried out for the Core Strategy DPD, which was consulted on in 2006.

The first stage involved reviewing other relevant plans and programmes that may be relevant to the Regeneration DPD, to ensure there was consistency with any other external objectives or issues. The collection of baseline information mainly consisted of indicators and targets concerning economic, social, and environmental issues within the Borough. This information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects of the adopted Regeneration DPD, and together with the review of plans and programmes, allowed for the identification of sustainability issues that exist within the Borough.

The framework consisted of a set of sustainability objectives that would test the sustainability of the Regeneration DPD, along with indicators and targets that would be used to monitor the adopted plans impact.

The SA Scoping Report will be subject to a formal period of public consultation in parallel with the Regeneration DPD Issues and Options paper. This period of consultation would allow time to comment on the scope and detail of the environmental information.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Draft Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper

Members were updated as to the progress and content of the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan (Y&EAAP) following an initial stakeholder meeting held on 22nd May 2007.

There were pressures in the Yarm and Eaglescliffe area that were being addressed by a range of organisations including the Council, Town Council and Government Agencies, and within these organisations there were numerous departments dealing with different projects. It was intended that the Y&EAAP would coordinate these various plans and strategies to assist in delivering the various schemes.

Officers had been consulting with other Stockton Council Services to build a picture of the plans and strategies that would be brought forward over the coming years and comments had been included within the Y&EAAP. A draft was considered at the meeting on 30th April, 2007 to which a number of changes to the document were made. Officers then undertook initial consultation with Yarm Town Council, Egglecliffe Parish Council, residents groups and Ward Councillors. Further suggestions were made following the initial consultation which had been included within the Y&EAAP.

Members were invited at today's meeting to consider the content of the draft Area Action Plan before Planning Committee, Cabinet and Full Council were requested to approve it for public consultation. It was intended that the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan Issues and Options paper would be subject to 6 weeks consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement beginning in July.

Members discussed the Y&EAAP and felt that a covering letter should be sent with the consultation paper to explain to stakeholders where the initial questions, suggestions and comments on the paper had arisen from.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the DRAFT Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report be endorsed, prior to its referral to Planning Committee and Cabinet for approval for public consultation purposes in July and August, 2007.
2. A covering letter as detailed be distributed with the Y&EAAP.