

AGENDA NO.

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 29 JUNE 2011

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

Local Development Framework

**Core Strategy Development Plan Document Review – Issues and Options
Document**

**Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report of Core Strategy Review - Issues and
Options**

Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Issues and Options

**Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy Review Issues and
Options**

SUMMARY

The Core Strategy DPD adopted in March 2010 is the key document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). It provides the strategic planning policies for the Borough.

As a result of the current economic situation, malaise in the development industry and uncertainties in higher level planning and central government's funding policy, a review of the housing element of the Adopted Core Strategy is necessary, and the detail of that Review and Issues and Options arising for consideration are to be found in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) Review Issues and Options Document (the DPD Review Document).

This report summarises the main detail of the DPD Review Document, and notes that a Habitats Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options and Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Issues and Options will accompany the Review Document. It seeks consideration and approval of those documents for consultation, delegation of authority to officers to make minor changes to those documents prior to consultation and advises of the next steps towards Preferred Options and submission for independent examination. The DPD Review Document is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options and Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Issues and Options are substantial documents and have therefore been made available for inspection in the Member's Library.

Furthermore, it advises that the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report of the Core Strategy Review was prepared earlier this year and consulted upon in March 2010. This document has informed the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Issues and Options, and requires adoption by the Council; this report also seeks Member's agreement to adopt the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This is also a substantial document and a copy has been made available in the Member's Library.

It should be noted that although comments are invited on the documents, under the powers delegated to the Head of Planning by Council on 29 June 2011, only minor amendments can be made to the Core Strategy Review Issues and Options and supporting documents at this time. However, there are further opportunities to make

substantive comments and observations during the consultation period in July, August and September this year.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the contents of this report; and
2. Make comment upon the Core Strategy Development Plan Document Review Issues and Options Document, Habitats Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options and Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Review Issues and Options for consultation

THE CORE STRATEGY REVIEW DPD ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT

Introduction and Context

1. The Stockton on Tees Core Strategy was adopted in March 2010 and contained policies requiring new housing to be located on sites in the Core Area of the Borough, alongside the riverside and in the urban area.
2. On 20th December 2010, Cabinet agreed that, in the light of the downturn in the development industry and prevailing economic situation, a scoping exercise should be undertaken to determine if a review of the housing element of the adopted Core Strategy would be necessary (D100158). Further to this, it was agreed that if a review were considered necessary, that approval would be sought for a work programme and timetable for completion of the work.
3. The scoping exercise has identified that the number of homes that will be built between 2004 and 2028 is about 2800 less than the number needed to address housing need and demand. Contributory factors include the current economic situation and the dwindling supply of public finance to support those schemes in the Core Area that require public subsidy. Officers have therefore taken the view that the housing element of the adopted Core Strategy is not deliverable unless new housing sites are identified and allocated.
4. It is for those reasons that a review of the Council's locational strategy for housing is taking place and subsequent work to identify deliverable sites to accommodate new housing development in the Borough has commenced. The DPD Review Document is the first stage in this process. It identifies a number of potential housing sites across the Borough and will be the subject of an extensive consultation exercise to assist in determining which should be allocated for housing.
5. The adopted Core Strategy will continue to provide a sound basis for considering sustainable and sustained growth in the Borough. At this stage, the intention is not to completely re-work the existing Core Strategy but to build on its provisions and to indicate how the housing objectives might be delivered in the future, in the light of experience and changing circumstances since it was prepared and adopted.
6. The Issues and Options stage is an exercise that includes sites that have significant policy or environmental constraints. The inclusion of such sites does not reduce in any way the weight that the Council attaches to these constraints. It does not imply any Council support for a site. They are options

from which the Council will select a preferred site or sites and will subsequently consult on these.

Status of the Core Strategy Review Issues and Options Document

7. The adopted development plan for the Borough comprises the adopted Core Strategy (dated March 2010), the 'saved' policies in the adopted Local Plan, and the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (pending its revocation through national legislation). The process of reviewing the Core Strategy does not alter the status of the adopted development plan with regards to the determination of planning applications or in its role as a source of guidance for new development in Stockton.
8. The Issues and Options stage is an exercise that includes sites that have significant policy or environmental constraints. The inclusion of such sites does not reduce in any way the weight that the Council attaches to these constraints. It does not imply any Council support for a site. They are options from which the Council will select a preferred site or sites and will subsequently consult on these.
9. At no stage in the process of producing the Core Strategy Review will it carry weight in the determination of planning applications until, following independent examination, subject to being found sound by the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, it is adopted by the Council. Until that time it cannot be used to determine planning applications, or be used to provide guidance for new development.

Issues and Options

10. The DPD Review Document is the basis for a formal debate about housing in the Borough. It acknowledges the relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy and confirms that the appropriate early stages of a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report have been prepared.
11. The review has identified that from 2021 to the end of the plan period there are not enough sites that are both deliverable and compliant with the adopted Core Strategy to meet the housing target. The result is a gap of about 2800 dwellings. The review will seek to ensure that the site selection process identifies the most sustainable locations for a housing site or sites to allocate. The DPD Review Document also states the reasons why identifying sites to accommodate approximately 2800 dwellings through a review of the Core Strategy is important. The reasons are as follows:
 - Ensuring that development is in the most sustainable locations and co-ordinated with the provision of infrastructure
 - Providing affordable housing
 - Enhancing economic competitiveness
 - Addressing housing need and demand
12. The document sets out the background and context to the issues and options and sets out the site options together with site maps and details such as site descriptions. The Issues and Options stage is an exercise that includes sites that have significant policy or environmental constraints. The DPD Review Document makes clear that the inclusion of such sites does not reduce in any way the weight that the Council attaches to these constraints. It does not imply any Council support for a site. They are options from which the Council will select a preferred site or sites and will subsequently consult on these.

Issue 1: Deliverability:

9. a) Potential Housing Sites in the Core Area
Identifies that sufficient sites cannot be identified in the Core Area with enough certainty that they will be developed between 2013 and 2028 on the basis that the public investment required for these sites is overwhelmingly uncertain. If sites that have been previously identified as regeneration sites come forward it may be at a time beyond the plan period.
- b) Potential Housing Sites on School and Hospital Land
States that funding has been cancelled for Building Schools for the Future programme and reduced for the new hospital at Wynyard. This creates some uncertainty regarding the release of land for housing envisaged as a result of the subsequent rationalisations of land use arising from this process.

Issue 2: Strategy

10. Sets out that a strategy to provide for deliverable housing sites may include urban extensions, conurbation sites, and village extensions, and that potential sites have been identified at:
- Wynyard Hall Estate
 - Wynyard Park
 - Land east of Wynyard Village
 - North West Billingham
 - Billingham Bottoms
 - Harrowgate Lane, West Stockton
 - Yarm Back Lane, West Stockton
 - West Preston
 - Land South of Preston Farm Industrial Estate
 - Land at Durham Lane Industrial Estate
 - Land at Urray Nook – Site 1
 - Land at Urray Nook – Site 2
 - West Yarm
 - South West Yarm
 - South East Yarm
 - Land at Ingleby Barwick

The question asked is whether the Strategy for delivering sites for new homes should concentrate on a single large site or allocate new housing on a combination of types of site.

Issue 3: Urban Extensions

11. Explains that urban extensions provide opportunities for concentrated rather than sprawling development, and by virtue of their scale, and if carefully designed and developed to produce integrated, holistic settlements, they can encourage and accommodate highly sustainable patterns of living. It is acknowledged that the allocation of an urban extension would not be consistent with the adopted Core Strategy. However, it is unlikely to be possible to achieve the housing requirement to 2028 without allocating sites of a significant scale such as urban extensions.

The question is whether urban extensions should be allocated and potential sites are identified for consideration at:

- North West Billingham
- Harrowgate Lane, West Stockton
- Yarm Back Lane, West Stockton
- West Preston
- West Yarm
- South West Yarm
- South East Yarm

Issue 4: The Conurbation

12. Sets out that large-scale strategic sites on land within the conurbation have been identified for housing, and these include existing employment land and land currently designated as green wedge. The question is whether conurbation sites should be allocated and potential sites for this purpose are identified at:

- Billingham Bottoms
- Land South of Preston Farm Industrial Estate
- Durham Lane Industrial Estate
- Land at Urlay Nook – Site 1
- Land at Urlay Nook – Site 2
- Land at Ingleby Barwick

Issue 5: The Villages

13. The Review explains the adopted Core Strategy, which states that there will be no site allocations in the rural parts of the Borough, but notes that new legislation could provide the means for rural communities to promote development should they wish to do so.

A summary of the findings of the Council's audit of village services and facilities in 'Planning the Future of Rural Villages in Stockton on Tees' are set out for information. The potential scale, function, benefits and disbenefits of village extensions are discussed. The questions asked are should village extension be allowed for some development, and if so, should this be limited to the more sustainable villages such as Stillington, Long Newton, Carlton, Maltby, Kirklevington, Wolviston, and again if so, by how much. Furthermore, it asks if infill development should be allowed in all the villages in the Borough, thereby adding the villages of Redmarshall, Hilton, Elton, Thorpe Thewles, Wynyard, Whitton Cowpen Bewley and Aislaby to the list of settlements available for infill development.

Issue 6: Wynyard

14. Discusses the future of Wynyard, and in particular Wynyard Park where a significant amount of land is permitted for employment development. Explains that Wynyard Park is a Key Employment Location, and that there is insufficient highway capacity to accommodate the traffic arising should all development permitted there be implemented.

The questions surrounding the broad employment strategy that should be pursued are whether Wynyard Park should continue to provide a significant amount of office development opportunities in line with the current permissions, consider employment alternative uses to reduce the impact on the highway, allow a mixed use development where employment remains the dominant use, allow a mixed use development with a significant element of housing or follow another strategy.

Issue 6b: Wynyard as a Housing Location

15. Wynyard is identified as an executive housing location, but with very few commercial and community facilities. It is acknowledged that residents rely on the private car to access basic services. It states that it has been contended that an increase in the number of residents could help to improve the sustainability of Wynyard but that there are concerns that this would place a strain on highway capacity. Sites at Wynyard Hall Estate, Wynyard Park (to the north of the A689) and Land to the east of Wynyard Village, could collectively address the highway implications arising from such a large development; a comprehensive masterplan may deliver that development. The questions ask for views on the potential location of new development at Wynyard, the types of properties that ought to be provided and how links between the northern and southern areas of Wynyard could be improved.

Issue 7: The Identified Sites

16. Potential site options have been listed and mapped in the document. The document asks for views on the extent of those boundaries, any additional information about the identified sites, which might help in further assessments, and the details of any additional sites for consideration that may help provide for housing.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA) AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) FOR STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY REVIEW

Scoping Report

17. The Scoping Report records the process of deciding on the scope and level of detail for the Sustainability Appraisal, including the Sustainability Objectives, issues which need to be considered and the assessment methods to be used. A Scoping Report for the Core Strategy was produced in 2005 and an updated Scoping Report for the Local Development Framework was produced in May 2010. Neither of these two documents relate to the Core Strategy Review.
18. In 2011, an updated Scoping Report relating to the Core Strategy Review was consulted upon for a five-week consultation period beginning in March. The Council specifically consulted the three statutory bodies, English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency, and selected organisations with social, economic or environmental responsibilities.
19. Comments were received from the following sources and a summary of those consultation responses are provided within the Scoping Report Document and attached at **Appendix 2**:
 - Natural England
 - Environment Agency
 - English Heritage
 - Sport England
 - Tees Archaeology
 - Tees Valley Unlimited
20. The Scoping Report has been amended, in response to the comments received, and has been used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy DPD Review Core Strategy Issues and Options. A

Consultation Statement and an Infrastructure Strategy will also support later Versions Of The Document.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT OF CORE STRATEGY REVIEW ISSUES AND OPTIONS

21. A Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Development Site Options will accompany the DPD Review Document. These documents are statutory requirements for land use plans and consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of the plan and the potential for impacts upon sites designated as of European importance for their nature conservation value. Both documents will be published for consultation alongside the DPD Review Document.

THE NEXT STEPS

22. Following the initial round of consultation for a period of up to ten weeks during July, August and September 2011, the preparation process can be divided into 3 further stages:

- **Production** – preparation of Preferred Options (formal consultation/participation will take place on these), followed by the preparation and submission of the Core Strategy Review development plan document in the light of representations on the preferred options
- **Examination** – the independent examination into the soundness of the Core Strategy Review
- **Adoption** – the Inspector's report and adoption

The Core Strategy Review will be scheduled in the next revision of the Local Development Scheme.

23. This report and the Core Strategy Review Issues and Options Documents were presented to the LDF Steering Group on 14 June, Cabinet on 16 June and will be presented to Full Council on 29 June 2011.
24. Although comments are invited, it should be noted that at this stage, under the powers delegated to the Head of Planning, only minor amendments can be made to the documents. However, there is an opportunity to make substantive comments and observations during the consultation period in July, August and September this year.

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Background Papers –

- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document March 2010
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document Review - Issues and Options Document May 2011
- Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options
- Habitats Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy Review Issues and Options

Financial Implications - Provision for the production of the documents and consultation at this stage for consultation can be made from within existing budgetary provision. Independent examination by an independent assessor will be required in the future, and this will have a cost, but unknown at present.

Environmental Implications- One of the fundamental purpose of the Core Strategy is the protection and enhancement of the environment and to ensure new development does not create negative impacts. It contains specific policies that encourage sustainable design and living and afford protection to the environment.

Community Safety Implications – The Adopted Core Strategy also aims to ensure development can make a positive impact to the safety and well being of the Borough’s residents. The Vision specifically refers to the “creation of safe, healthy, prosperous, inclusive, sustainable communities”. Safety and well-being are central to proposals, and that aim and vision remains unaffected by the Review.

Human Rights Implications - The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 has been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward and Ward Councillors – As this is a Borough wide document, it is not possible to identify specific wards or ward councillors for consultation. The document will be subject to a full public consultation for a period of up to twelve weeks in July/August/September 2011.