



Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

Date: 22nd April 2009

Report of: Rebecca Mayman (Principal Forward Planning Officer)
Open Report

Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Consultation Responses to the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper

1. Purpose of Briefing Paper

- 1.1 To inform Members of the level and scope of the responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper and to set out how these will be taken forward to inform the Submission Core Strategy Document.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Members will recall that the development of the Preferred Options paper was reported to the November 2008 Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee meeting following its detailed consideration at a series of Local Development Framework (LDF) Panel meetings. Subsequently, Council approved the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper along with the Issues and Options Consultation Papers for the Site Allocations & Policies and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP), for the purposes of public consultation in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended), at its meeting in November 2008.

3. Role of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper

- 3.1 Once adopted, the Core Strategy will be the key strategic level document within the LDF and has a central role in the process of place shaping. It will set out the broad strategy and vision for development within the District up until 2026 and provide the strategic context for more detailed, site specific elements of the LDF.
- 3.2 The Paper's main purpose is to set out the preferred approach to developing the Core Policies, rather than detailing actual draft policies. Therefore the Preferred Options Paper's role was not intended to be as a Draft Core Strategy. Rather it sets out an indication of the Council's approach to the direction of future policies. It is considered that this approach provides a useful basis to obtain views on policy directions and the overall vision for future development in the District.

- 3.3 The Preferred Options Paper has been informed by the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process and a draft SA Report was also published for consultation purposes in January.

4. Preferred Options Consultation

- 4.1 In accordance with the Revised Local Development Scheme (August 2008), consultation on the papers outlined above at paragraph 2.1 took place during January/February 2009. The purpose of consultation was to inform key stakeholders, local residents and businesses of the next stages in preparing the District's Local Development Framework and to seek views on the future development of the area.
- 4.2 The consultation period ran for 6 weeks from 15th January -26th February 2009 and was extended until 13th March to provide key stakeholders, such as Parish Councils, with more time to formulate their responses.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 provides a detailed summary of the wide ranging consultation procedures undertaken on the Preferred Options Paper. These included notification letters to key stakeholders; leaflet delivery to local households; manned exhibitions; on line consultation, free loan copies of documents to the public and presentations to Parish Councils and interest groups.

5. Scope of consultation responses

- 5.1 A good level of response was received to the Preferred Options Paper, with 78 respondents (including statutory consultees and key stakeholders such as Government Office West Midlands (GOWM); the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage), submitting a total of 540 comments. In addition, 46 separate comments were received on the Draft SA Report. Detailed summaries of the responses together with Officer recommendations are set out at Appendix 2 for Members' information and comment.
- 5.2 The responses received from the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) highlighted the need for the preparation of the Submission Version of the Core Strategy, to be closely informed by the recommendations arising from the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 Examination in Public (EiP) Panel Report. This may affect the District with regard to both the quantity and location of housing and employment growth.
- 5.3 Overall responses were generally supportive of the emerging development strategy and core policy areas, particularly those received from key stakeholders. However, a level of concern can be detected relating to the viability of development on brownfield sites given the current economic climate. The responses to the SA report were generally supportive with many identifying additional potential impacts relating to the options or suggesting extra monitoring indicators.

5.4 Responses were considered in detail at the LDF Panel meeting on 21/04/09. Any additional points raised by the Panel will be verbally reported to the Committee.

6. Developing the Submission Version of the Core Strategy DPD

6.1 The responses received on the paper will be used to help prepare policies for inclusion in the Submission Core Strategy Document. It is important that these are considered alongside the context of a robust evidence base and national and regional planning policy.

6.2 As stated by the WMRA in its response, it is very important that the Submission Version is able to take account of the RSS Phase 2 Examination in Public (EiP) Panel Report. The findings of the report could have implications for the overarching development strategy. This would be the case if there are recommendations arising that differ from the Preferred Option put forward for the District in relation to the levels of housing, employment, retail and office development.

6.3 The Forward Planning Section is progressing work on comprising a comprehensive evidence base to inform the production of the Submission Core Strategy. Details of the studies commissioned as part of the evidence base have been reported to the LDF Panel. Work is currently being finalised on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 2, which is due for completion in June.

6.4 Given the important role of the RSS 2 EiP Panel Report, a delay in its publication beyond September 2009, would result in a subsequent delay to the Core Strategy production timetable. In particular the publication of the Submission version would need to be postponed pending the publication of the Panel Report.

6.5 As set out in the Revised LDS, it is anticipated that given the timely publication of the RSS Phase 2 EiP Panel Report, Council approval for the Publication of the Core Strategy will be sought this November. Following Council approval the Submission version of the Core Strategy will be subject to a 6 week publication period during December – January 2010. It will then be submitted along with the representations made at the publication stage, for Independent Examination in late February 2010.

7. Options for the Committee

7.1 The Committee may wish:

- to endorse and recommend to Cabinet the summary of officer recommendations to the responses received on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper, as set out at Appendix 2 to this report.
- to suggest amendments to the officer recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

8. Next Steps

8.1 The schedule of responses received and Officer recommendations will be reported to Cabinet on 23rd April. It will then be used as a basis for developing the Submission version of the Core Strategy. Paragraph 6.5 above sets out the timescale for the publication of the Submission document.

9. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Summary of consultation measures undertaken.
- Appendix 2: Summary of responses received in relation to the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper (circulated electronically)

10. Background Papers

- Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper (January 2009)
- Core Strategy Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report (January 2009)
- Revised Local Development Scheme (August 2008)
- Full consultation responses received (March 2009)
- LDF Panel Report (21/04/09)

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