

GATESHEAD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK- ISSUES AND OPTIONS TOWARDS THE CORE STRATEGY 2030. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION.

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council has been consulted by Gateshead Council on its Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Issues and Options). This report summarises key subject areas arising from the Core Strategy and provides officer comments to those issues for endorsement by the Committee.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government has introduced Local Development Frameworks (LDF) as part of the reforms to the Planning System. Gateshead Council's Local Development Framework will in due course replace its recently revised Unitary Development Plan (adopted 2007).
- 2.2 As a neighbouring authority, Sunderland City Council is a statutory consultee in these issues and as such has been invited to comment on the Core Strategy (Issues and Options). The closing date for comments was 31 October.
- 2.3 The officer comments set out in this report have been forwarded to Gateshead Council within the deadline for consideration subject to Committee endorsement.

3.0 THE CORE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The overall purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out the spatial vision, spatial objectives and strategic policies for the Borough of Gateshead. All other LDF development plan documents must be in conformity with the Core Strategy which will also include a monitoring and implementation framework outlining targets, indicators and the delivery mechanism for policies.
- 3.2 The Issues and Options is the first stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy. Gateshead Council is consulting stakeholders on the issues that need to be considered and the possible options available for inclusion. This process will be informed by the evidence base studies undertaken by Gateshead Council, the Regional Spatial Strategy

(RSS) and the need to ensure the resulting document is sound in terms of sustainable development. The Issues and Option document does not contain any policies as these will be included in subsequent drafts of the document.

3.3 The Issues and Options document identifies some 28 issues. Attached to each issue is a range of realistic options which Gateshead Council seeks comment on. The issues relate to key topics for Gateshead including providing for employment land, town and local centres, housing provision, green space, local heritage, biodiversity and the natural environment.

3.4 The range of issues and options most relevant to Sunderland are discussed in turn.

4.0 Green Networks and the Leamside Line

4.1 The establishment of green networks and working with neighbouring authorities to link these networks across local authority boundaries (paragraph 9.9.2) is supported. The proposals for the potential reinstatement of the Leamside Line for freight and passenger movement (paragraph 9.3.2 and issue 26), which could bring potential economic benefits to Sunderland are also supported.

5.0 Waste

5.1 Gateshead's commitment to meeting landfill diversion, and recycling targets, and through its role as a partner, along with Sunderland and South Tyneside Council's, in the Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership is supported. The Partnership has successfully sought private initiative funding to procure solutions for treatment and disposal of residual municipal waste that it can't recycle. Based on ten options for residual waste treatment in the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy, the two best performing options were put forward to DEFRA in an outline business case. These were Energy from Waste with combined heat and power and Mechanical Biological treatment with Aerobic Digestion. Within the context of planning guidance (PPS10), the partnership is assessing a range of sites capable of accommodating the technologies throughout the partnership area.

5.2 It is anticipated that this process will assist in providing a type of technology and location. However, this could then change when companies are invited to bid on delivering the waste treatment solution.

6.0 Metro Centre

6.1 In terms of the Metro Centre, option "A" which proposes to renew the existing facilities but without an overall increase in floorspace or car parking is supported. The description of the Metro Centre and the surrounding area as a 'town centre', which would subsequently

encourage more residential and commercial uses (option “B”) is not supported. Likewise the expanding of the Metro Centre’s retail and leisure facilities (option “C”) is also not supported. These options could potentially have a detrimental effect on the city and town centres in Sunderland and their vitality and viability.

- 6.2 Options “B” and “C” above would be contrary to Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) policy 26 which states that “No provision should be made for additional retail or leisure development at the Metro Centre or the surrounding retail complex.” Government’s Policy Statement 6 on planning for town centres sets out the policy approach that development at regional out-of-centre destinations, such as the Metro Centre, should be strictly controlled.

7.0 Housing Provision

- 7.1 Paragraph 8.1.1 of the Core Strategy states that, “The number of additional dwellings to be developed in Gateshead will be established through the RSS. The Further Proposed Changes to the Draft RSS (February 2008) makes provision for an average of 580 new homes each year.” This figure was confirmed when the RSS was adopted in July of this year.
- 7.2 The Core Strategy goes on to say that through the Sustainable Community Strategy, “the Council is wishing to provide higher levels of growth than RSS.”
- 7.3 The five Tyne and Wear Authorities have worked collectively in making the case for giving primacy to Tyne and Wear through the various stages of the Regional Spatial Strategy (now adopted). This option is consistent with the fact that the Tyne and Wear conurbation is and will continue to act as the main economic driver for the city region.
- 7.4 Therefore in relation to issue 19, to meet the housing needs and demand in Gateshead up to 2030, Option ‘B’, to deliver enough houses to meet higher growth aspirations is supported. It is considered that this should not have a detrimental impact on Sunderland’s prospects as Gateshead largely operates within different housing market areas.

8.0 Employment Land

- 8.1 The RSS allocates some 124 hectares of employment land in Gateshead to meet the regional annual growth rate of 2.8%. However, the Issues and Options document suggests that there is scope to exceed this target. Additional employment land could be allocated to reflect its role within the Tyne and Wear city region.
- 8.2 Members may be aware that Sunderland City Council, Gateshead Council and South Tyneside Council worked jointly to deliver TyneWear Park, through the then emerging RSS. This was on the

basis that there was a shortfall of employment land in the three authorities until 2021. However, TyneWear Park has subsequently been deleted from the adopted RSS.

- 8.3 Gateshead, as mentioned above, is part of the main conurbation in the Tyne and Wear city-region, and the conurbation should be the main location for housing and employment provision.
- 8.4 Therefore in relation to issue 10, what level of economic growth should Gateshead plan for over the next 20 years, Option “B”, an increased level of economic growth to meet the employment and business needs of the wider Tyne and Wear city- region, is supported.

9.0 NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Subject to Committee endorsement, Gateshead Council will be notified that the officer comment previously forwarded constitutes the formal response of the City Council as a statutory consultee.

10.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 10.1 The decision will enable the views of the City Council to be included in the preparation of the Gateshead Council LDF.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 11.1 As a statutory consultee and through appropriate comments, City of Sunderland Council is able to ensure that emerging LDF proposals of neighbouring Councils have a positive effect on the socio-economic sustainability of Sunderland.
- 11.2 If no comments are submitted the ability to ensure positive impacts are limited and consequently no alternative options can be recommended.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Committee is requested to:
- i) Endorse the officer comments as detailed within this report and make any additional comments considered appropriate;
 - ii) Authorise officers to forward a copy of this report to Gateshead Council as the City Council’s formal response to the Gateshead Local Development Issues and Options Core Strategy.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Gateshead Council Core Strategy Issues and Options.

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