

SUNDERLAND WEST AREA COMMITTEE

25th April 2012

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CITY OF SUNDERLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY REVISED PREFERRED OPTIONS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE PAPERS.

1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1. This report offers Members the opportunity to be consulted on plans and strategies relevant to the area.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Core Strategy lies at the heart of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It will set out the overarching strategic planning framework for the development of the city for the next 20 years and draw from other strategies of the City Council (such as the Sunderland Strategy and Economic Masterplan) and other organisations. Apart from the allocation of "Strategic Sites", the Core Strategy will otherwise not be site specific and will only indicate the broad locations for delivering new development such as housing, employment and transport. Once the Core Strategy is adopted, all other Development Plan Documents (DPD's) (including the Allocations Plan and Hetton Downs Area Action Plan) must conform to the broad requirements of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy, like all statutory documents contained within the LDF must pass through the following statutory and non-statutory stages :

- Issues and Options (consultation completed between November 2005 and February 2006);
- Preferred Options Draft and (consultation completed in between December 2007 and February 2008);
- Publication Draft including public consultation (programmed for November 2012);
- Submission Draft to the Secretary of State (programmed for April 2013);
- Public Examination before an independent Inspector (programmed for July 2013);
- Adoption (programmed for February 2014).

3. THE EMERGING CORE STRATEGY - PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 The first formal Core Strategy stage began with consultation on the Issues and Options between November 2005 and February 2006. The Preferred Options Draft was consulted upon between December 2007 and February 2008. However, given the availability of new evidence, regulatory changes during 2008 and 2009, and the need for transparency that all options have been fully considered, it was deemed prudent to review the Preferred Options draft prior to advancing its next formal stage, the Publication Draft.

- 3.2 During late 2009, the Council developed and consulted upon four realistic alternative approaches regarding the overall spatial distribution of development across the city which included:
- Approach A ~ Focussing Development on the Conurbation
 - Approach B ~ Proportional Distribution of Development
 - Approach C ~ Focus Development within the Current Urban Area
 - Approach D ~ Meeting Sub-Area Spatial Requirements - a Hybrid of Approaches A-C
- 3.3 Ten strategic sites were also identified and proposed for consultation.
- 3.4 Some 150 responses were received showing that Approach D was the preferred option favoured by residents and stakeholders which was corroborated by the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. The number of Strategic Sites was also reduced from ten to two – namely Vaux / Farringdon Row and land to the north of Nissan. These proposals were accepted by Cabinet and Council in March 2010.
- 3.5 The Revised Preferred Options Draft was subsequently approved by Council in March 2010 for consultation purposes. Given the then impending national elections, the formal consultation of the Revised Preferred Options draft was deferred in response to the range of sweeping changes introduced by the new Coalition Government which is discussed.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options requires formal endorsement by Council (in July 2012) prior to its formal publication and consultation. It is therefore proposed that 'informal' consultations / briefings will be made.
- 4.2 Feedback including any further modifications would inform the basis of the Core Strategy to be presented to Cabinet on 22 June and Council on 20 July 2012.
- 4.3 After approval by the Council the Revised Preferred Options, (along with its supplementary reports), will be published, advertised and placed on the Sunderland website for consultation. The consultation will cover the requisite minimum period of 6 weeks during July / August / September 2012 and will be undertaken entirely in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 4.4 Whilst consultation at the Preferred Options stage is no longer a statutory requirement, it was considered prudent to continue with both the preparation and consultation of this Revised Preferred Option Draft of the Core Strategy. The introduction of locally derived information will provide the first formal opportunity for residents and stakeholders to consider the policies and the evidence that underpins the conclusions. In effect, consultation at this stage would be a test bed to agree as far as possible, proposals for locally derived land requirements. This would offer time savings prior to moving to the next statutory stage (the Publication Draft).
- 4.5 Subsequent to the close of consultation, responses will be collated and a summary of the main issues emerging prepared for the agreement of Cabinet. The Core Strategy will be amended as necessary to take account of the results of the consultation and other more up to date information.

4.6 The subsequent statutory versions of the Core Strategy will be delivered as outlined at paragraph 4.2.

5 Recommendation(s)

5.1 Committee is requested to consider the content of the LDF and its related documents.

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