

**CORE STRATEGY DPD AND STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT – SUBMISSION FOR CONSULTATION
AND REVISION TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
(Report by Planning Policy Manager)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report describes the background and consultation involved in the production of the Core Strategy, the Proposals Map and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Leading to the final version of the documents (see attached) to be submitted to the Secretary of State. Members are asked to consider these documents and recommend to Council that they be approved for submission. As a consequence of a change in the timetable for the production of the Core Strategy and the knock on affect it will have on other documents. Members are also asked to approve changes to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

2 CORE STRATEGY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Core Strategy is the first policy document that the Council has produced as part of the new system of plan production. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 placed a duty upon local planning authorities to prepare new types of 'Development Plan Document' (DPD), replacing the existing Local and Structure Plans. In addition to the Core Strategy DPD, the Council also intends to produce a number of other DPD's, including a Development Proposals DPD – containing allocations of land for housing and other uses that is programmed to be submitted in 2007.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (as part of the supporting material) and will be accompanied by a Proposal Map that shows the physical extent of the Core Strategy Policies. Together with the Statement of Community Involvement they will be submitted to the Secretary of State in April.

3 PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 On the 25 May 2005 the Council gave approval for public consultation on the Preferred Options Core Strategy Document. In accordance with the regulations the six-week public consultation period started on the 27 June.
- 3.2 The Council received over 700 formal responses specifically regarding the content of the Core Strategy, of which 273 were in support or support with conditions, 173 were observations and 268 were objections. The representations and responses are included in Appendix A.

- 3.3 Areas that were particularly supported related to the overall vision, settlement hierarchy and areas of strategic green space enhancement. The areas that received the most objections were the settlement boundaries, settlement hierarchy, location of housing development, housing mix and infrastructure requirements.

4 SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 There have been a number of comments from consultees, which have led to the inclusion of either new policies or a change to an existing policy.
- 4.2 The first significant change relates to affordable housing. Although the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report included a definition of affordable housing, it did not set any targets or thresholds of the scale of development where affordable housing would be sought. The intention was to set targets and thresholds in a separate Planning Obligations Development Plan Document.
- 4.3 Advice on planning obligations was previously contained in Circular 1/97. This has now been superseded by Circular 05/2005 on Planning Obligations. The guidance contained in this new circular and advice received from Go-East indicates that if the Council's targets and thresholds for affordable housing are included in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document then all other planning obligations matters can be included within a Supplementary Planning Document rather than a Development Plan Document. The Supplementary Planning Document would involve less onerous statutory procedures and could be produced more quickly and at lower cost.
- 4.4 On the 7 December 2005 the Council gave approval for public consultation on the Affordable Housing Targets and Thresholds Preferred Option in identical fashion to the approach used with the Preferred Options: Core Strategy Report in July/ August.
- 4.5 The Council received 153 representations, of which 9 were in support or support with conditions, 20 were observations and 124 were objections.
- 4.6 The representations on the Affordable Housing Targets and Thresholds have been considered and changes have been incorporated into the Core Strategy DPD. Details of the representations and response are included in Appendix A.
- 4.7 The second significant change relates to biodiversity. Although the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report included references to biodiversity, it did not include a specific policy on the matter. There were a number of objections concerned that there was no policy requiring development to plan for biodiversity and nature in the early stages of the development process. Although PPS9 contains guidance to ensure that new development takes account of the role and value of biodiversity, it does not indicate how this should be applied at the local level, therefore for clarity and in order to incorporate local biodiversity targets, an additional policy has been included within the Core Strategy.

- 4.9 The third significant change relates to water resources. A comment was received regarding the lack of consideration of water resources in the Core Strategy. Water resources are considered to be an essential pre-requisite to determining whether and where further development is feasible, and what water efficiency measures must be incorporated into new-build. Policy B5: Energy Use has been expanded to include water use. It states that new developments should aim to minimise water consumption through the incorporation of water efficiency measures

5 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 5.1 At each stage of the process in developing the Core Strategy a sustainability appraisal has been carried out. The Council received 31 responses to the Sustainability Appraisal on the Preferred Options Core Strategy Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and are included in Appendix B.
- 5.2 Most comments received sought to include additional indicators or objectives. However it is recommended that respondents be informed that the objectives and indicators that have been selected are the most appropriate, and that it is not necessary to include an exhaustive list of all possible indicators, as these should really just be the key indicators for Huntingdonshire.
- 5.3 In terms of responses to the Scoping Report, most comments received sought to add objectives that were beyond the scope of planning and no changes have been made as a result of these representations. A few comments sought to update the name of plans included in the document. It is suggested that these comments be accepted.
- 5.4 A final 'Sustainability Appraisal' of the policies as now produced has been undertaken jointly by the Council and consultants and is also included in Appendix B.

6 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - BACKGROUND

- 6.1 A key objective of the new planning system is to strengthen community involvement in planning processes. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's standards for involving local residents and other stakeholders at relevant points during the preparation, alteration and revision of LDF documents and in the course of dealing with planning applications.
- 6.2 There are many techniques that can potentially be used to involve local residents and other key stakeholders. As a minimum the Council must comply with the regulations contained in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and advice contained in Circular 15/92: Publicity for Planning Applications. However, it is desirable to do more than what is set out in the Regulations, especially in relation to plan production to ensure that community involvement is effective.

- 6.3 On the 28th September 2005 Council gave approval for public consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement. In accordance with the regulations the six-week public consultation period started on the 17 October.
- 6.4 The Council received 88 representations to the Draft SCI of which 21 were in support or support with conditions, 63 were observations and 4 were objections. The representations and responses are included in the Appendix C.
- 6.5 The representations received on the SCI were generally very supportive. However, a few suggestions were made that have been incorporated into the final version. These include:
- Further details on how the SCI effectiveness will be monitored and an indication of what may trigger a review of the document;
 - Details of community involvement at the pre-examination stage and the adoption stage for DPD production;
 - Examples of organisations that are included within the definition of general consultation bodies; and
 - A more positive statement of what types of consultation the Council will undertake on different DPD's and SPD at the various production stages.
- 6.6 The SCI aims to strike a balance between using additional appropriate techniques for involving people in the planning process and the potential resource implications of doing so. Chapter 3 sets out the methods that would be used to involve residents and other key stakeholders in plan production and chapter 4 sets out the methods that would be used to involve them in the course of dealing with planning applications.

7 CORE STRATEGY - NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The Core Strategy and Statement of Community Involvement will be considered by a special meeting of Council on 20 March, and subject to its approval it will be submitted to the Secretary of State. Following its submission there will be a statutory six-week period for public consultation during April, May and June. Subsequently, the representations received will be considered by the person appointed to hold the independent examination (the Inspector). After the examination, the Inspector will produce a report with recommendations which will be binding upon the authority.
- 7.2 The availability of the Core Strategy itself, together with supporting material such as the Sustainability Appraisal, will be publicised widely – through District Wide Magazine, a press release, newspaper advertisements and the Council's web site. The latter will also be used to host an 'interactive' version of the DPD which enables comments on individual policies or paragraphs to be submitted electronically.

8 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME BACKGROUND

- 8.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It sets out the range of statutory planning documents which the Council will produce under the new system. As well as informing the community and other stakeholders of what to expect, the LDS is designed to assist with project management.
- 8.2 At its meeting on 17 March 2005 Cabinet approved the first Local Development Scheme (LDS) for Huntingdonshire for submission to the Government. In April Go-East confirmed it had no objections to the scheme. A first amendment to the LDS was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 1st September 2005 to allow for the preparation and adoption of Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Wind Power. This amendment was also agreed by GO-East.
- 8.3 On the 2nd February 2006, a second amendment was considered. This related to Planning Contributions, which in the September 2005 version of the LDS, was put forward as a Development Plan Document (DPD). The proposal is to replace this with two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). One would deal with Developer Contributions towards Affordable Housing, and the second one with other Planning Contributions for social and physical infrastructure, such as open space and community facilities.
- 8.4 Cabinet approved the second amendment, but the details have not been submitted to Go East as the proposed publication of the SPD on Developer Contribution towards Affordable Housing will have to be altered in view of the delay in finalising the review of the Housing Needs Study. A further report on the timetable will be presented to the Cabinet.

9 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME

- 9.1 It was recognised when the first LDS was produced that regular reviews would be required because of the many factors that can affect the need and timetable for producing planning documents (the principal risks are listed at paragraph 5.4 of the LDS).
- 9.2 The current proposed amendments follow advice given by the Planning Inspectorate suggesting that the time allowed between submission of the Core Strategy and the preparation for the examination is optimistic. Their suggestion is a delay of three months for the date of the examination. The impact of this will knock onto the production of the Planning Proposals DPD. The revised timetable for the production of these documents is set out in Appendix D.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
Recommends to Council that the Core Strategy, the Proposals Map and the Statement of Community Involvement be approved for submission together with any supporting documents to the Secretary of State;
- 10.2 Agrees the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme attached in Appendix D for submission to the Secretary of State.

Background Papers:

ODPM, 2004, *Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks*

Report to Council, 25 May 2005, and Minutes, *Core Policies DPD – Preferred Options for Consultation*

Report to Council, 7 December 2005, and Minutes, *Core Policies DPD – Affordable Housing Targets Preferred Option for Consultation*

Report to Cabinet, 24 November 2005, and Minutes, *Core Policies DPD – Affordable Housing Targets Preferred Option for Consultation*

HDC, 2005, *Sustainability Appraisal: Scoping Report*

Scott Wilson, 2005, *Sustainability Appraisal of the Initial Options for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document*

Report to Council, 28 September 2005, and Minutes, *Draft Statement of Community Involvement*

Report to Cabinet, 17 March 2005, and Minutes, *Local Development Scheme*

Report to Cabinet, 1 September 2005, and Minutes: *Local Development Scheme*

Report to Cabinet, 2 February 2006, and Minutes: *Local Development Scheme*

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager on 01480 388430.

Appendix D

PLANNING PROPOSALS DPD

Overview	
Is this a Development Plan Document?	Yes
What is it for?	Contains site-specific proposals for different forms of development up to 2021, plus policies relating to the overall scale and timing of growth.
What area will it cover?	All of Huntingdonshire
What documents will it conform with?	Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy.
Is SEA required?	Yes

Proposed timetable	
Survey work commences	April 2003
Public participation on Preferred Options	June 2007
Submission to Secretary of State	January 2008
Pre-examination meeting	March 2008
Independent examination	July 2008
Receipt of Inspector's report	November 2008
Modify submitted plan & adoption	January 2009

How will it be produced?	
Organisational lead	Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy.
Who will produce the document?	The Development Plans Section of the District Council.
Who will approve it?	The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State.
How will the community be involved?	Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the emerging Statement of Community Involvement.

Monitoring & review	
Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report.	

CORE STRATEGY DPD

Overview	
Is this a Development Plan Document?	Yes
What is it for?	Sets out the spatial vision, objectives and policies for managing development in the area.
What area will it cover?	All of Huntingdonshire
What documents will it conform with?	Consistent with national planning guidance and in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
Is SEA required?	Yes

Proposed timetable	
Survey work commences	April 2003
Public participation on Preferred Options	June-July 2005
Submission to Secretary of State	April 2006
Pre-examination meeting	July 2006
Independent examination	January 2007
Receipt of Inspector's report	April 2007
Modify submitted plan & adoption	June 2007

How will it be produced?	
Organisational lead	Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy.
Who will produce the document?	The Development Plans Section of the District Council.
Who will approve it?	The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State.
How will the community be involved?	Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations ³ , and the proposals contained in the emerging Statement of Community Involvement.

Monitoring & review	
Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report.	

³ This reference and those that follow refer to The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004