
REPORT TO:	Environmental And Development Services	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	18 November 2010	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director Of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Ian Bowen 01283 595821 ian.bowen@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Work Programme	REF: IB
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS 17

1.0 Recommendations

That Members:

- (i) Note the implications for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks ("LDFs") arising from the shift to the "Big Society" and "localism" including the revocation of the East Midlands Regional Plan and the need for "bottom up" community engagement;
- (ii) Support the indicative revised LDF Core Strategy work programme set out in the table on page 6 of this report, to be approved formally early in 2011, including the proposed technical work and ongoing public engagement as set out in paragraphs 4.8 – 4.12 of this report;
- (iii) Endorse the workshop proposed to be held in January 2011 for all elected members of Derby Housing Market Area councils (including South Derbyshire, Derby, Amber Valley and Derbyshire County Councils).

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider and approve a revised programme and approach for preparing the LDF Core Strategy in response to the Coalition Government's move to the 'Big Society' and localism.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Coalition Government has signalled its intention to fundamentally reform the system for preparing LDFs to reflect the 'Big Society' and the principles of 'localism'. Whilst coherent details are awaited, principally in the forthcoming Localism Bill, Ministers have been swift in revoking all regional strategies including the East Midlands Regional Plan.
- 3.2 The absence of house-building targets means that we may now take a fresh look at the overall scale and location of future growth and a revised programme for the LDF Core Strategy is needed.
- 3.3 The need to maintain a continuing supply of land for housing remains, however. Whilst there is currently no shortage in South Derbyshire, there is a need to ensure a Core Strategy is adopted without delay.
- 3.4 Ministers have made clear that LDFs should continue to be prepared, that rates of house-building should increase and that growth must be incentivised and determined starting from the "bottom up".
- 3.5 Two main areas of work are now therefore proposed:
- 3.6 Firstly, a technical assessment of future housing needs which Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils are jointly able to undertake. Secondly, a series of ongoing community engagement events enabling local people to devise local "visions" and balancing these against "bigger picture" issues.
- 3.8 To support this new approach, a workshop for all elected members across the Derby Housing Market Area (HMA) is proposed to be convened in January 2011.
- 3.9 A proposed indicative timetable, to be considered formally early next year, is set out in the report.

4.0 Detail

BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that extensive consultation was undertaken on the Local Development Framework (“LDF”) Core Strategy Options between January and May this year. The consultation had taken place in the context of the then Regional requirement for an additional 12,000 new homes to be built in South Derbyshire up to 2026.
- 4.2 An overwhelming response was received with over 4,000 individual comments being submitted. Summaries of all comments are available to view on the Council’s website via the LDF on-line consultation pages.
- 4.3 It is evident that there is very strong local feeling about house-building in particular, especially in relation to the prospect of greenfield urban extensions to Derby and Swadincote, but also to development in village locations.
- 4.4 Our intention had been to publish a “Preferred Option” Core Strategy for further public comment in October 2010. However, this has been overtaken by various Ministerial announcements following the election of the Coalition Government in May 2010.
- 4.5 In line with commitments made in the pre-election Conservative Green Paper ‘*Open Source Planning*’, the new Coalition Government has signalled its intention to make radical changes to the planning system particularly in relation to LDFs and plan-making. These changes will support the principles of the ‘Big Society’ and a new shift to ‘localism’.
- 4.6 Some changes have already been introduced. Most notably, Regional Strategies were revoked in July including all district level house-building targets. The revocation of the RSS means that local authorities and communities have been given additional flexibility to look at issues such as the overall amount of development that should be planned for and where that development might be located.
- 4.7 Further details of the changes are expected to be outlined in the forthcoming Localism and Decentralisation Bill later in the Autumn. Whilst no coherent guidance therefore yet exists, it has been made clear by Ministers that:
- LDF Core Strategies (or perhaps “local plans”) will remain the primary mechanism for delivering local visions and objectives. Ministers have made clear that current work should continue avoiding unnecessary delays and it is also clear that local authorities will still need to ensure plans are evidence based, robust and defensible.
 - house-building rates need to increase significantly; and
 - growth must be decided through public engagement at local level. A new “homes bonus” and other incentives are to be introduced to encourage people to accept house-building in their communities.

The Proposed Way Forward

- 4.8 Members will know that strategic planning matters across the Derby Housing Market Area (“HMA”) are considered by the Joint Advisory Board (“JAB”), with South Derbyshire being represented by the Chair of this Committee. In the light of the above, the JAB has re-affirmed its commitment to aligning work on Core Strategies but is keen to review the programme in order to take a fresh look at the strategy for development (particularly the scale and distribution of housing) and to embed the principles of localism and community engagement in the plan-making process.
- 4.9 A revised work programme for preparing the Core Strategy is therefore required. In the meantime, however, the vast majority of pre-election legislation and policy remains in force. In particular, an increase in housing supply remains a national goal together with the need to maintain a rolling 5 year housing land supply.
- 4.10 Whilst the Council currently has a healthy supply of unimplemented housing permissions, with the prospect of further still shortly at the former Drakelow Power Station site, it is vital that a programme for progressing the LDF is put in place without delay to avoid the future risk of “planning by appeal”.
- 4.11 In view of the above, two main areas of work are now therefore being recommended:

1. Technical Work including re-assessing Housing Needs

In the absence of regional growth targets, the Council will need to undertake an assessment of future population change and household growth to ensure local approaches to growth are founded on robust and up-to-date evidence.

As no in-house specialist expertise or modelling is available within district councils, Derbyshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council are jointly proposing to undertake this work. It would involve the use of a model known as ‘POPGROUP’ to examine the components of household growth including migration, economic growth and employment. The model would be built on local ward/parish level data and would therefore be able to provide a “bottom-up” understanding of future demographic change in local areas and communities. It could also be used to support the Council’s wider work and those of its partners including the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Other technical work anticipated includes finalising studies already underway and nearing completion for the LDF including further developing the Area Profiles (published in January 2010).

2. Community Engagement

Ministers have made clear that local planning will need to operate from the “bottom up”, starting with the aspirations of neighbourhoods.

Whilst evidence base and consultation work already undertaken remains relevant and helpful, there is clearly now a need to conduct engagement on the LDF in a

way which embeds the localism principle. Our previous consultation had, in fact, already started to reflect localism through the publication of eleven “Area Profiles”, recording pressures for growth and summarising previous public comment on a community-by-community level, in January 2010.

It is therefore being proposed that we embark on a series of local community engagement events to be conducted on an ongoing basis, but most immediately for the LDF Core Strategy. The events could involve:

- Testing the information we have about local areas
- Asking people if they want to engage in preparing neighbourhood plans
- Talking to people about issues affecting their areas
- Discussing interventions and mitigation e.g. local transport improvements

This approach signals a shift in the culture of plan-making and consultation. It would mean that the local authority, including elected Members, and parish councils would assume a much more pivotal role in talking to people about the issues affecting their areas and building the capacity of local people to devise and agree their own “vision” for their communities.

It will be important to ensure discussions are informed by robust evidence that is understandable and relevant to local people. The Area Profiles can be regularly updated to reflect changing local circumstances and public opinion and can draw on existing sources of information such as Village Plans. A combination of engagement methods could be used, including visioning and mapping exercises. There may also be scope for organisations such as Planning Aid to offer a supporting role and it is understood that Government is to announce a financial support package for such work in the forthcoming Localism Bill. These engagement events would also clearly be helpful and relevant to other Council functions and its partners, for example in reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Through local engagement, it will also be necessary to enable local people to be informed about “bigger picture” and cross-boundary issues such as economic growth and transport.

- 4.12 In recognition of the enhanced role of elected members in this process, it is being recommended that an HMA-wide member workshop be convened in January to enable discussion of the implications of the localism agenda and to contribute ideas about how best to engage local communities.
- 4.13 The following indicative timetable is therefore being proposed:

Table: Indicative revised LDF Core Strategy Programme

Stage	Key Tasks	Timetable
Technical Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of current technical work such as transport modelling, housing land availability, strategic sites study, update of Area Profiles, findings from household projection work, revising Sustainability Appraisal, understanding new Government guidance 	Nov 10 – April 2011
Community Engagement Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-member HMA workshop • General awareness raising, briefing Parish Councils and initial public engagement on issues affecting local areas 	Jan– April 2011
Community engagement phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with local people on priorities and visions • Engagement on local housing needs and future development and growth • Regular engagement with development industry and stakeholders 	May – Sept 2011
Publication, Submission & Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of a draft submission plan, including statutory public consultation 	Jan - Jul 2012
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council formally adopts the plan 	Dec 2012

4.14 It should be noted the timetable can only be indicative at this stage and will need to be subject to further technical consideration about timing and resources and comments arising from the proposed all-member workshop. It is also particularly vulnerable to a number of risks stemming from current ‘unknowns’, in particular the forthcoming Localisation and Decentralisation Bill. It is expected it can be brought for formal approval early in 2011.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 None arising directly from this report although the proposed programme of community engagement will need to be managed having regard to available resources.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 LDF documents, and in particular the Core Strategy, are central to the achievement of key corporate objectives under the theme Sustainable Growth & Opportunity.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 The LDF documents, and in particular the Core Strategy, will continue to be the key mechanism for shaping development and achieving healthier, safer, vibrant and sustainable communities in South Derbyshire.

8.0 Background Papers

None.