
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	29 JANUARY 2009	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN EXLEY (Ext 8717)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) – CORE STRATEGY FURTHER CONSULTATION	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS

1.0 Recommendations

That:

- The content of the North West Leicestershire LDF Core Strategy consultation be noted;
- No objection be raised at this stage;
- The Council's intention to keep under review developments at Albert Village be welcomed, to ensure any development is properly co-ordinated with policies for the regeneration of the Woodville area to be promoted through the South Derbyshire LDF Core Strategy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To formulate a response on proposals set out in the emerging Core Strategy consultation document published by North West Leicestershire District Council.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 North West Leicestershire is currently preparing its Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- 3.2 This consultation sets out a number of initial ideas for bringing forward new development in North West Leicestershire and is part of an ongoing and iterative series of consultations, with earlier documents being prepared and consulted upon in November 2005, and in summer 2007. With each iteration, the Council's aims are becoming more refined and within this consultation NWLDC have tried to set out what it presently considers to be reasonable options for future development. Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Group lounges and the Members' Room.
- 3.3 In preparing its Core Strategy, NWLDC is seeking to tease out initial 'preferred options' and identify possible policies for inclusion in the final plan in advance of preparing a full range of studies which will form part of the LDF evidence base, or ahead of undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the broad options identified in the

emerging plan. As such there remains the potential for the ideas and policies presented in this current paper to change notably in later consultations.

- 3.4 A further round of consultation is proposed Autumn 2009, following the completion of further baseline studies and research and at this stage the Council will be able to identify its 'preferred options' for growth with greater certainty. Following this consultation the Council has stated its intention to submit the Draft Core Strategy to the Secretary of State at the close of 2009. Adoption of the Core Strategy is currently programmed for early 2011.
- 3.5 The key issues dealt with within this consultation document are as follows:
- The proposed overarching Development Strategy
 - Issues associated with how much development should be planned for and where it could take place
 - The green wedge in Coalville
 - A number of other housing issues including affordable housing and gypsies and travellers
 - East Midlands Airport and Donington Race track
 - Town centres and shopping
- 3.6 Clearly many of these matters are of local significance for North West Leicestershire and of no significance to this Authority. However a small number of issues could have impacts on South Derbyshire. These are considered in turn.

The Development Strategy for North West Leicestershire

- 3.7 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) sets a housing requirement for NWLDC of 12,200 dwellings in the period 2001 - 2026. One of the functions of the Core Strategy will be to set out NWLDC's proposals for accommodating that development during the plan period. Put simply, it will specify how much, in what location and at what time new housing and employment land should be bought forward. The consultation document identifies four broad options for strategic growth, all of which favour locating the majority of new development at Coalville, (consistent with policy set out in the draft RSS which favours major new growth within Principal Urban Areas such as Derby City or Sub Regional Centres such as Coalville). Where these four options vary is the amount of new development, which could be accommodated in the next tier of settlements referred to by the consultation document as 'Rural Towns', which includes settlements such as Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington and Measham.
- 3.8 Away from Coalville and the 'Rural Towns' new housing provision is proposed to be restricted to 'sustainable villages', which have a core of local services capable of meeting the day to day needs of residents. The 'sustainable villages' are identified in the Council's consultation document. Within these villages new housing will be restricted to infill development of less than 1 ha, (unless other circumstances or local need justify the need to release larger sites). In respect of employment in such locations this will be restricted to the modest expansion of local businesses.
- 3.9 However during previous consultation events the potential for significant new development at Albert Village has been raised, despite this settlement not being identified as a 'sustainable village' (and hence is highlighted as having a lack of local facilities capable of meeting its residents day to day needs). The justification for allowing new development around Albert Village stems from the fact that the site is located close to the built up area of Swadlincote, which is itself classed a Sub Regional Centre and is hence a focus for new development. The consultation paper then goes on to note that 'the consideration of any development that could take place

in North West Leicestershire is very much linked to the approach to be taken by South Derbyshire District Council...but at this stage we do not propose to include Albert Village within the development Strategy as a suitable location for new housing development but will keep this matter under review'.

Officer Comments

- 3.10 The approach proposed by NWLDC in respect of Albert Village is noted as is the commitment by the authority to keep the 'matter of Albert Village' under review pending this authority's own work to take forward its Local Development Framework.
- 3.11 Whilst there may be opportunities to co-ordinate development at this location with regeneration proposals in the Woodville area (to be developed through the South Derbyshire Core Strategy), it should be recognised that Albert Village has very few services capable of meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents and businesses. Therefore, the allocation of development, without significant improvements in local infrastructure provision, could result in an unsustainable pattern of development and could be detrimental to existing communities in South Derbyshire. NWLDC's intention to keep this matter under review can therefore be supported.

Meeting Regional and Sub Regional Economic Needs

- 3.12 A key objective of the North West Leicestershire Core Strategy is to 'continue to diversify the District's economic base and meet the existing and future business needs of the District, including to identify sufficient land for employment purposes'. The consultation further notes that in considering how this can be achieved a key issue will be the role, if any, of the District in meeting regional or sub regional economic needs.
- 3.13 At present draft RSS8 does not include any specific requirements for regionally significant employment development in any District. Following the proposed changes to the RSS published in July 2008 the emerging Plan does, however, include a specific policy (Policy 21) on Strategic Distribution. This policy highlights a number of broad locations (or areas of search) where sites should be bought forward for strategic distribution uses. One such location is within the Housing Market Area for Leicester and Leicestershire, which includes North West Leicestershire.
- 3.14 Without a clear steer from the RSS on the specific location for such sites, it is nonetheless considered within the consultation paper that North West Leicestershire could represent a suitable location for such development given its unique location within the Region and Sub Region. In outlining its favoured approach, which is to plan for one strategic distribution use, the Council indicates that a 110 hectare site to the west of Junction 24 of the M1, north of East Midlands Airports is its present preferred location for such a development. Alternative sites at Sawley Crossroads (near Castle Donington), and land to the East of Ashby de la Zouch have also been identified, although these sites are not, at present, considered to perform as well against criteria set out in Policy 21 the emerging RSS8.
- 3.15 It is highlighted in the consultation that if the Authority does not make provision for a strategic distribution site through the Core Strategy it is likely to be faced with various planning applications, and potentially appeals, which could result in a site being 'forced' upon the District.

Officer Comments

- 3.16 It is important to recognise that Policy 21 of the Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy does not require that a potential site, or sites be identified in each of the areas of search listed. However, it does require sites be bought forward through

partnership working between public and private sector agencies. The purpose of this is to ensure that the sites best suited to meeting the Regional need are identified having regard to the criteria listed Policy 21. North West Leicestershire should therefore work in close partnership with the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), the sub regional partnerships, the Highways Agency and Network Rail in order to ensure that any allocation can be fully justified on the basis of appropriate evidence.

- 3.17 Clearly in bringing forward any specific proposals through the Local Development Framework it would be best if more detailed guidance and evidence was available to help identify specific needs, and whilst it is noted that NWLDC will seek further guidance on this issue, , in the absence of a more detailed guidance and information there will be a need for North West Leicestershire to ensure that sufficient evidence is gathered to justify the release of any site.

Transport (East Midlands Airport and the National Forest Line)

- 3.18 The consultation document states that 'East Midlands Airport is recognised in the Regional Spatial Strategy as being of regional significance'. It is also noted, however that the airport has environmental implications of global and local significance, (climate change, noise, air quality, traffic generation).
- 3.19 The airport operators have published a Master Plan, which illustrates how it expects the airport to develop to 2030. This addresses not just the potential physical needs of the airport but considers issues such as noise and surface access.
- 3.20 The Council's Core Strategy, once adopted, will set out North West Leicestershire District Council's strategy for the Airport. However, ahead of this, the consultation document has identified two options for controlling development at the airport. The first option highlighted is to maximise the potential for development at and around the airport including for airport related uses. The second option outlined is to restrict development to within the boundaries of the airport to operational development. This option would also see NWLDCs Core Strategy resist noise sensitive development beyond the airport where it can be demonstrated that noise levels associated with the airport would be detrimental to occupiers or users of any such development.
- 3.21 Of the two approaches identified, NWLDC's favoured approach is to restrict further growth to operational development within the confines of the airport boundary. It is considered that this option would allow balanced growth capable of ensuring that the regional significance of the airport is maintained, whilst safeguarding the environment and local communities from significant new growth outside of the existing airport boundary.
- 3.22 In respect of the National Forest Line the consultation paper sets out NWLDCs intention to 'continue to work with partners such as the County Council and the National Forest to seek to secure the reopening of the National Forest railway line to passenger traffic through the District'

Officer Comments

- 3.23 In reality the Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8), through policy 55 (Regional Priorities for Air Transport) is clear that Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans should provide for further operational expansion of EMA within its boundaries and access improvements, subject to rigorous assessment of the full range of impacts.
- 3.24 Therefore Option 1 is not likely to conform to RSS policy and given that there is a need for Local Development Frameworks to be in 'general conformity' with the RSS the Core Strategy for North West Leicestershire is likely to strongly reflect regional planning policy and will restrict new development at the airport site to that which can take place within the existing airport boundary and that which is needed in direct support of the provision of air travel services.
- 3.25 With regard to the National Forest Line, modal shift away from the private car continues to be a key government aim and the reopening of the railway line could provide opportunities to reduce congestion on key east-west routes between Burton on Trent and Leicester including the A511.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The proposed development has potential implications for the following Key Aims of the Council's Corporate Plan:
- "Safer, Healthier Communities" insofar as noise disturbance and air pollution associated with increased development within North West Leicestershire could have health implications to residents within South Derbyshire.
 - "High Quality Services" as increased development on the fringes of Swadlincote, if pursued, could lead to greater demand for services in South Derbyshire.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The proposal has potential implications for the following themes of the South Derbyshire Community Strategy:
- "Healthy Communities" insofar as noise disturbance and air pollution can present health implications
 - "A Vibrant Economy" in that the proposal presents economic implications for South Derbyshire
 - "A Sustainable Environment" in that the proposal presents potential environmental implications

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 As set out in section 4.

8.0 Background Papers

Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) Secretary of States Proposed Changes (July 2008), East Midlands Regional Assembly.