

ITEM NO: 12

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
	COUNCIL		
SUBJECT:	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DOCUMENT		
DATE OF DECISION:	17 TH MARCH 2008		
	19 TH MARCH 2008		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION		
AUTHOR:	Name:	Deborah Mobbs	Tel: 023 8083 2549
	E-mail:	Deborah.mobbs@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
NOT APPLICABLE			

SUMMARY

The Submission document is the third stage in the production of the Core Strategy and identifies the policies for the Strategy following on from earlier consultation on the Preferred Options Paper. The Core Strategy contains spatial planning policies and is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The document will be submitted to the Secretary of State and published for public consultation. This version amends a previous version which was approved by Council in September 2007 but following comments from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) it has been revised.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CABINET

- (i) To recommend that Council approve the publication of the revised Core Strategy for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the timetable in the Local Development Scheme;
- (ii) To endorse the emerging Core Strategy as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- (iii) To recommend that Council adopts the resolution as set out in (v) below; and
- (iv) To recommend that Council establish that residential development will be permitted on sites capable of providing 10 or more dwellings, or which exceed 0.5 hectares in size (irrespective of the number of dwellings), provided that the development comprises up to 40% affordable housing. Variations from the 40% provision may be permitted if the developer can demonstrate that this approach would make development unviable, in line with a common viability model which will be used across the PUSH authorities.

COUNCIL

- (i) To endorse the Sustainability Appraisal and the Schedule of Representations on the Core Strategy received at the Preferred Options stage;
- (ii) To approve the publication of the revised Core Strategy for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the timetable in the Local Development Scheme;
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Sustainability, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, to make minor editing changes to the Core Strategy approved by the Council prior to submission to the Secretary of State; provided these do not change the overall direction, shape or emphasis of the document and do not raise any significant new issues;
- (iv) To endorse the emerging Core Strategy as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications;
- (v) To give the Head of Planning and Sustainability, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, the delegated power to prepare “proofs of evidence” presented on behalf of the Council to the Core Strategy Examination which suggest minor changes to that strategy provided these do not change its overall direction, shape and emphasis, or raise significant new issues; and

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve for consultation and submission to Secretary of State the revised submission document for the Southampton Core Strategy (see Document 1 available in the Members Room). The Core Strategy is the main development plan document within the LDF. It is a statutory planning document that sets out the vision, objectives and general policies to guide development in the city to 2026. Council approved the document for submission to the Secretary of State in September 2007 but following comments from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) about the document further changes have been made to it and consequently the revised document needs to be reconsidered by Cabinet and Council.

CONSULTATION

2. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal were published for public consultation between October and December 2006. A total of 173 informal responses were received, primarily from the roadshow events, along with 84 formal representations. The Schedule of Representations, which has been placed in the Members Rooms, sets out the officers’ response to the comments. The representations received informed the production of the submission version of the Core Strategy

3. The draft Core Strategy was considered by the LDF Project Board and by the LDF Members Steering Group in July 2007. Changes were made to the strategy following the comments received.
4. Due to the significant proportion of Core Strategy documents across the country that have either been declared unsound at examination, or not taken forward to an examination, GOSE asked to see the draft Core Strategy before it was formally submitted to the Secretary of State. GOSE had some comments on the document and met with Planning Policy officers in October 2007 to discuss possible changes to the document. Revisions have been made to the Core Strategy to reflect most of GOSE's concerns. Amendments have also been made to the Schedule of Representations to reflect the revisions to the Core Strategy.
5. The revised draft Core Strategy was considered by the Spatial Planning Project Board on 11th January 2008 and by the LDF Members Steering Group on 23rd January 2008. Changes were made to the strategy following the comments received.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. No alternative options have been considered. The production of this document is a statutory requirement of the City Council under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
7. To not take account of GOSE's comments could mean that the Core Strategy could be found 'unsound' following its examination. This would mean restarting the document at the Initial Options stage which could delay the process by two to three years.

DETAIL

8. In September 2007 Council approved the publication of the Core Strategy for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State. It was intended to submit the document at the end of October 2007.
9. GOSE asked to see the draft Core Strategy before it was formally submitted to the Secretary of State. They had some concerns about the document and asked to meet Planning Policy officers to discuss their comments. GOSE's main comments are outlined below together with officers' response. As a number of significant changes are proposed to the document it is considered that the revised Core Strategy needs to be reconsidered by Cabinet and Council before it is approved for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State. It should be noted that most of the changes are to the layout of the text rather than to the policies. Most of the policies are unchanged from the version considered in September 2007. A summary of the main changes are set out in paragraphs 11 – 16 of this report.
10. The revised document has been placed in the Members Rooms together with a sustainability appraisal / strategic environmental assessment / appropriate assessment, a Proposals Map and the Schedule of Representations on the Preferred Options document.

11. **Length / Presentation**

GOSE was particularly concerned about the length and presentation of the Core Strategy. They considered that there was too much detail in the document and that some of this could go into background document/s.

Officer comments

It is considered that it is helpful for readers / users of the Core Strategy to know what the document is about and the justification for the policies. It is also considered confusing to have too many documents for the public to look at. Nevertheless the presentation of the document has been amended and the number of introductory pages has been reduced.

12. **Spatial Vision and Strategy**

GOSE considered that the document needed to more clearly set out the spatial vision and the spatial strategy for the city. They also considered that the strategic objectives needed to be more clearly articulated.

Officer comments

It is agreed that although the vision and the strategy are set out in the document they may not have come across clearly enough. The first sections of the document have been re-organised and the spatial strategy is now separated out from the spatial policies.

13. **Housing**

GOSE asked us to be sure that we could identify enough housing sites for the first 10 years' requirement of the plan with an indication for years 11 and beyond. They also asked if we had done a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which included the above evidence.

GOSE also suggested that the housing delivery policy should be moved to the front of the document as housing is a key spatial issue.

Officer comments

Final guidance on the SHLAA was published in August 2007 after the draft Core Strategy was finalised. A full SHLAA has not been prepared but officers have updated work on housing site availability and consider that, although all the relevant information is not in one document, evidence is available to meet all the requirements of the SHLAA guidance. Officers are confident that there are enough identified housing sites to meet the first 10 years' requirement.

The housing policy has been moved forward in the document.

14. **Affordable Housing**

Questions have been raised about the amount of affordable housing that should be provided in the city. The Core Strategy policy CS 17 proposes that an average of 40% affordable housing be provided on housing sites where 10 or more dwellings are proposed or which exceed 0.5 hectares in size (irrespective of the number of dwellings).

The provision of up to 40% affordable housing and the threshold of 10 or more dwellings are based on background evidence in the Housing Needs and Housing Market studies prepared for the Council by David Couttie Associates and for South Hampshire by DTZ. The policy is in line with that included in the emerging South East Plan and is in accordance with the policy approach put forward by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) for

incorporation into each authority's Core Strategy. Reference to a possible Core Strategy policy with a threshold of 10 dwellings was also included in the Housing Strategy which was approved by Council in March 2007.

When the submission version of the Core Strategy was previously considered by Council in September 2007 Council resolved that up to 40% affordable housing would be provided on sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings or which exceed 0.5 hectares in size (irrespective of the number of dwellings). Variations from the 40% provision may be permitted if the developer could demonstrate that this approach would make development unviable, in line with a common viability model which will be used across the PUSH authorities.

15. **The Major Development Quarter and the Primary Shopping Area**

GOSE requested that the triggers for when retail development in the Major Development Quarter (MDQ) can come forward be identified in the document. They also wanted changes to the text to clarify the retail evidence base.

Officer comments

It is agreed that the text needs to be made clearer and this has been done.

16. **Climate Change policy**

GOSE was concerned that the policy was not Southampton specific but were happy with the principle of the policy.

Officer comments

Welcome support for the principle of the policy; however it is considered that the policy was written to specifically reflect the situation in Southampton.

17. **Other Changes**

GOSE considered that some of the policies seemed to repeat national policy and were not specific enough to Southampton.

They asked whether we had carried out a Transport Assessment and what discussions we had had with the Highways Agency.

Officer comments

The policies relating to the general approach to the natural environment and open space have been combined in order to address GOSE's concerns. The historic environment section has also been made more specific to the city.

Further work on the Transport Assessment had been done recently and the revised Core Strategy has been amended to reflect this work.

18. **Next Steps**

The revised Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State and placed on deposit for public consultation for six weeks. Following this, it will be examined by an independent Inspector who will consider representations on its content and 'soundness'. The Inspector's recommendations arising from the Examination are binding on the Council. Consequently following the receipt of the Inspector's recommendations officers will amend the Core Strategy and present a further report to Cabinet and Council with a recommendation to adopt the final Core Strategy.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

19. The Core Strategy is a spatial planning document. The Core Strategy does not itself commit the Council to capital expenditure.

Revenue

20. The production of the full Core Strategy including examination, printing, consultation and strategic environmental assessment / sustainability appraisal is estimated at a cost of £170,000 and can be covered from existing budgets allocated for the Local Development Framework from budgets, phased £37,000 in 2007/08, £125,000 in 2008/09 and £8,000 in 2009/10. An independent Programme Officer will also be required to manage the processes and procedures of the Examination. The funding for this post will be met from the 2008/09 Local Development Framework revenue budget.

Property

21. There are no immediate property implications arising directly from the Core Strategy.

Other

22. The Core Strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment and the findings have informed the document.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

23. The report is prepared in accordance with section 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and sections 15, 17 and 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Other Legal Implications:

24. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

25. This document is the third stage in the statutory preparation of the Southampton Core Strategy which needs to be prepared under the new Planning legislation. The Core Strategy will become a policy framework document in due course. It is anticipated that it will replace some of the policies in the Local Plan Review 2006, which are 'saved' for a period of three years. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Core Strategy provides the spatial framework for the implementation of the City of Southampton Strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	Submission Paper for the Southampton Core Strategy
2.	Schedule of Responses to Representations on the Preferred Options Paper
3.	Preferred Options Document for the Southampton Core Strategy
4.	Issues and Options Document for the Southampton Core Strategy

Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
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Background documents available for inspection at:

FORWARD PLAN No:	ET02661	KEY DECISION?	Yes
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WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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