



Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date: 4 November 2008

Subject: Leeds Local Development Framework Core Strategy - 'Towards Preferred Options' – Update Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

1. At Development Plan Panel on 2 September 2008, members received a report and presentations regarding next steps in the preparation of the LDF Core Strategy ('Preferred Options'). In the development of the Core Strategy, a number of key work streams were identified, as a basis to move the thinking on the Core Strategy forward. These areas include: the preparation of a 'Towards Preferred Options' discussion paper, the definition, identification and mapping of Green Infrastructure, the quantification of spatial patterns of development within the 'Scenarios' and the progression of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). These are major areas of work, which in turn will need to be reviewed and integrated. The purpose of this report is to update members on progress and to highlight next steps.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 At Development Plan Panel on 2 September 2008, members received a report and presentations regarding next steps in the preparation of the LDF Core Strategy ('Preferred Options'). In the development of the Core Strategy, a number of key work streams were identified, as a basis to move the thinking on the Core Strategy forward. These areas include: the preparation of a 'Towards Preferred Options' discussion paper, the definition, identification and mapping of Green Infrastructure, the quantification of spatial patterns of development within the 'Scenarios' and the progression of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). These are major areas of work, which in turn will need to be reviewed and integrated. The purpose of this report is to update members on progress and to highlight next steps.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 As described in previous reports to Panel, the Core Strategy is an overarching and central document of the LDF process. Recently revised Government guidance (Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning) has reaffirmed and elevated the role of the Core Strategy, both as part of the LDF and as an element of the overall strategic planning across a local authority area (including the need to more explicitly link to the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements).
- 2.2 In reflecting on the conclusions of the Issues & Alternative Options consultation, the Adopted Regional Spatial Strategy and planning policy requirements, a number of key work streams have been identified and are being undertaken, as a basis to develop a 'Towards Preferred Options' discussion paper. Each of these key areas is set out below.

3.0 Main issues

'Towards Preferred Options' – Draft Structure

- 3.1 Following the preparation of the Issues & Alternative Options consultation document, initial work has been undertaken to develop an initial structure and content for the Preferred Options document. This is a working structure, which will need to be refined and adjusted as further technical work progresses. A copy of the draft structure has been included as Appendix 1 to this report. This structure sets out as series of chapter headings (based around a number of core themes), together with a potential section on 'Area Spatial Policies' (although there may be scope for such issues to be covered as part of the thematic sections to avoid duplication), with further sections covering "Delivery Plan" and "Implementation". For completeness, key areas of work which will contribute to the wider evidence base for the Core Strategy are also identified.
- 3.2 It should be emphasised, that following revisions to national planning guidance in June 2008 (Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning), a Core Strategy is yet to be adopted under the new guidance. Consequently, the approach in Leeds will need to have regard to emerging practice and Core Strategies elsewhere once they have been adopted. However, the Leeds LDF Core Strategy needs to plan for and be 'fit for purpose' to meet prevailing circumstances and future spatial planning challenges and opportunities across the City.
- 3.3 Within this context also, the Core Strategy for Leeds needs to be focused in its policy content and presentation upon key strategic issues and within an overall

direction, have sufficient flexibility to manage change. In terms of next steps, further work is to be undertaken to further scope and draft each of the Chapter sections, with a view to these being consolidated as part of the 'Towards Preferred Options' discussion paper.

Green Infrastructure

- 3.4 The Leeds District is unusual, in that although it is a major metropolitan district, it is also two-thirds rural and contains both freestanding towns and villages outside the main urban area and a diverse range of distinctive landscapes. The main urban area also contains renowned city parks and a network of connecting green links. In seeking to direct long term spatial patterns of regeneration and new development, the Core Strategy should embrace this special Leeds character and ensure that it is respected and enriched in meeting the challenges of a growing city. The Green Infrastructure is therefore a critical factor in shaping the future pattern of growth in Leeds.

The TCPA definition of Green Infrastructure states:

'Green Infrastructure is the sub-regional network of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces, and greenway linkages. The linkages include river corridors and flood plains, migration routes and features of the landscape, which are of importance as wildlife corridors. Green infrastructure should provide for multi-functional uses i.e., wildlife, recreational and cultural experience, as well as delivering ecological services, such as flood protection and microclimate control. It should also operate at all spatial scales from urban centres through to open countryside'.

- 3.5 This definition is useful because it highlights that lots of different uses take place in Green Infrastructure (GI) and that it is the green backdrop against which all other activities take place. It also acknowledges that GI is not just about the 'honey pot' areas like National Parks and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) but that it also has an important place in our cities. Creating a 'sustainable city' involves the effective interaction of spatial planning, the environment, transportation, economic development, and a number of other policy interventions. Green Infrastructure can be viewed as providing a cross cutting theme enabling this wide range of outcomes to be achieved.
- 3.6 The Leeds UDP was seen as innovative at the time when it first introduced the concept of Green Corridors. This approach is now being developed and promoted at a national level and Green Infrastructure is now seen as part of the critical infrastructure required for a successful community.

Policy YH8 of the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy requires us to develop a Green Infrastructure in our LDF. It also emphasises the many functions that GI can provide, such as:

- Provision of wildlife habitats and corridors leading to a richer biodiversity.
- Better adaptation to climate change, for example better management of the heat island effect, reduced surface water run off and absorption of CO2 emissions and pollution,
- Space for flood water storage to minimise the effects of flood risk.
- More space for recreation encouraging more physical activity and social gatherings.
- Reduced stress and improved mental well-being.
- Provision of a quality environment that helps attract business investment.

- 3.7 The Core Strategy can help to provide a policy framework to cover such elements. Leeds has to decide how much Green Infrastructure is the right amount in the context of the housing targets we are charged with delivering and find innovative ways to deliver it. There is a particular need to improve people's access to a district-wide network of greenspaces in order to improve their overall health and sense of well-being.
- 3.8 The first stage in this process is to map the existing GI. This does not mean mapping every little bit of greenspace. In order to be meaningful, the GI needs to look at broad strategic patterns. There is also a hierarchy of strategic and more local GI. The strategic GI links with the GI of the wider Leeds City Region and other adjoining local authorities.

It includes:

- The river valleys of the Aire and Wharfe and associated functional floodplain.
- Major urban parks and country parks.
- The limestone ridge that runs to the east of the District that gives rise to a distinctive landscape, settlements with a particular character and a predominance of woodlands.

The local GI is primarily within the Leeds District and includes:

- Tributaries along the Wyke Beck Valley, Meanwood Beck, Gledhow Valley and Tong Cockersdale Valley and the associated functional floodplain.
- Areas of woodland, both public and private, of 2ha or more in size.
- The Kirkstall Valley and Upper Aire, including the West Leeds Country Park and Kirkstall Valley Park and major city parks.

- 3.9 This provides a basic framework for the GI. The next step is to look at identifying opportunities for creating linkages between the GI structures to enable a more robust and effective GI to be developed.

The Core Strategy will need to state what the policy context is for those areas that are defined as GI, as well as areas for housing growth. This in turn may identify areas where housing growth and GI overlap and in those areas it will need to give policy guidance on how the housing growth can be delivered in such a way as to respect and enhance the GI.

Scenario Quantification

- 3.10 The Issues and Alternative Options consultation in October 2007 put forward 3 scenarios illustrating how Leeds might develop and accommodate growth in the future. These were summarised as:
- The compact city
 - Dispersed development
 - New urban neighbourhoods
- 3.11 Whilst the scenarios were based upon a spatial assessment of a variety of constraints and factors including public transport, Green Infrastructure, flood risk etc, due to uncertainty about specific requirements (the RSS was not adopted until May 2008), they did not fully assess the ability to accommodate the quantum of employment and housing land requirements.
- 3.12 Officers are currently developing a means of quantifying the scenarios. The quantity of land needed for employment stems primarily from the Employment Land Review

which suggests that 390ha of land for non-office employment is needed. The quantity of housing required is set by the Regional Spatial Strategy at 4300 dwellings (net) per annum (approx 85,000 (gross) to 2026). Other uses will not generate sufficient demands on land take to warrant quantification in the same way. Where possible, uses such as offices, shops & leisure facilities are intended to be focussed in the city centre and town centres.

Work is ongoing to:

- Quantify the existing UDP allocations & PAS sites
- Understand the distribution of existing employment land & outstanding permissions
- Identify further urban previously developed land
- Assess the stock of housing schemes permitted but not yet commenced
- Undertake the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Develop an appropriate hierarchy of settlement to help appraise the options

- 3.13 Early results of the SHLAA (see below) and the other strands of work can be brought together to develop a picture of how much additional land may be needed. If additional land is required, a steer on preferable locations will need to be formed having regard to the results of last year's consultation on the Scenarios, ongoing work on Green Infrastructure, public transport options and availability of local services.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 3.14 Essentially, a SHLAA is a technical exercise to identify potential future land for housing development. At the last meeting officers reported on the need to undertake a SHLAA for Leeds.

Progress is being made:

- A "Partnership" has been established involving a mix of external interests in housing and chaired by Cllr Barry Anderson. Its role is to ratify the methodology for undertaking the SHLAA and appraise the City Council's conclusions on the suitability, availability and achievability of identified sites,
- A "call for sites" was issued at the end of September inviting the outside world to suggest land opportunities,
- A trial of the Partnership assessment process was staged at a meeting on 10th October,
- The first main batch of sites has been processed by officers and is to be presented to the Partnership meeting of 1st December.

Two further Partnership meetings are scheduled for February and March 2009 to complete the assessment of sites. A report of the final conclusions on all of the sites will provide evidence to inform the Core Strategy and future 'Allocations Plan' (which is currently programmed to commence in 2009).

- 3.15 To date, some 400 sites have been identified as potential development sites by the Council and a further 170 submitted by developers. They are currently being added to a SHLAA database and their development potential analysed.

4.0 Implications for council policy and governance

4.1 None

5.0 Legal and resource implications

5.1 The preparation of the LDF is a statutory requirement for the City Council. The preparation of the LDF does raise a number of resourcing issues both for the City Council and external partners and agencies, which will need to be addressed as further work on the Core Strategy and related LDF documents progresses.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This update report sets out the current stage of preparation of the LDF Core Strategy and the key work streams being undertaken. This work will need to be consolidated in the preparation of a 'Towards Preferred Options' for further consideration. Following this, formal Preferred Options for public consultation will need to be prepared, which will need to be considered by Development Plan Panel and Executive Board prior to consultation. Subject to the completion and consolidation of the work streams identified and consideration of the 'Preferred Options' paper, further public consultation will commence early in the new year.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Development Plan Panel is recommended to:

- i). Note the contents of this report.

Appendix 1

Leeds LDF Core Strategy – ‘Towards Preferred Options’

Chapter	Section*	Evidence base & Technical work to complete
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: A Core Strategy for Leeds • Policy Context (Summary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ European ○ National Regional (City Region/RSS) ○ Local context (UDP, Community Strategy – Vision for Leeds, Local Area Agreement, Leeds Council Plan, ‘Renaissance Leeds’, Economy Strategy etc.) ○ The LDF in Leeds (& ‘package of LDD’s) ○ Sustainable Development Context & principles) • Spatial Vision & Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key Leeds Attributes – emphasising ‘people’ and ‘place’ ○ Building linked & sustainable communities • Strategic Objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging ‘Agenda for Economic Development’. • Emerging work on Vision for Leeds 3 • City Region Development
2. City Wide Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptation & mitigation ○ Quality of Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural Environment ▪ Green Infrastructure ▪ Greenspace & provision ▪ Built Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Design & construction • Conservation & ‘Place making’ (distinctiveness) ○ Natural Resources & Waste Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renewable energy & carbon reduction • The Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Growth & competition ○ Jobs & Training ○ Land & Premises (including scale & spatial distribution of employment land) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Strategy • Strategic Flood Risk Assessment/PPS25 Sequential Test/Flood Alleviation Scheme • EASEL Drainage Study • PPG 17 Audit • Green Infrastructure Mapping • Conservation Area Character Assessments • Sustainable Design & Construction SPD • Aire Valley ‘growth point’ & viability studies • Employment Land Review • Easel & Aire Valley Retail Study

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Rural Economy ○ The role of the City Centre, ○ Out of town centre provision ● Housing Strategy & provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting Housing Needs ○ Housing for All – mixed communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable Housing ▪ Low Cost Market Housing ○ Housing Size, Quality & Type ○ Housing distribution & phasing ● Providing for Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Safety & Cohesion ○ Cultural and Leisure Facilities ○ Health & Education ○ Town & District Centres & Local Centres and Neighbourhood shopping provision) ● A Well Connected City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport & accessibility ○ Access to homes & jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reducing the need to Travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SHLAA ● Recently adopted ‘informal housing policy’ ● Emerging Affordable Housing SPD ● Pending housing planning appeals ● 5 Year supply calculations ● Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment ● West Yorkshire Gypsy & Travellers Accommodation Assessment ● PCT/Teaching Hospital etc requirements ● Review of Education Requirements ● Higher Education requirements ● TIF Funding Bids / Local Transport Plan ● On going studies (EASEL, City Centre Loop)
<p>3. Area Spatial Policies The scope of this will need to be reviewed within the context of the development of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Main urban area & settlement pattern</i> ● <i>City Centre (& Town & District & Local Centres)</i> ● <i>Regeneration Areas</i> ● <i>Green Infrastructure</i> ● <i>Flood Risk & Management</i> ● <i>Key ‘gateways’ & ‘corridors’</i> ● <i>Key employment & economic activity areas</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further “Rim Study” ● Flood Alleviation Scheme ● ‘Quantification’ & spatial distribution of development options (Housing & Employment Land)

<i>the thematic chapters.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Housing Phasing & distribution</i> • <i>Strategic transport & communications infrastructure</i> 	
4. Delivery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer contributions (Section 106/CIL) • Infrastructure requirements 	
5.Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets • Indicators • Delivery Agency • Programme timetable. 	

*The specific scope & content of each section will be informed by the following:

- *Conclusions arising from the Core Strategy Issues & Alternative Options Consultation (October – December 2008)*
- *Issues arising from consultations on AAPs & NR&WDPD (i.e. the need to include 'strategic' policies within the CS rather than AAP)*
- *Conclusions emerging from the LDF evidence base (i.e. Employment Land Review, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, PPG 17 Audit, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment etc).*
- *The requirements & interpretation of the adopted RSS (May 2008)*
- *The 'direction of travel' established by existing Council policies & commitments (City region development, Council Plan, LAA, outcome of consultation on Climate Change Strategy etc.)*
- *A review of UDP Saved Policies (i.e. where does the intent of criteria & area based policies need to be reflected in the CS – to supersede UDP policy, or covered in other LDF documents).*