
Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL WEST

Date: Thursday 26th November

Subject: CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED APPROACH

Electoral Wards Affected:

☐ All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity ☐

Community Cohesion ☐

Narrowing the Gap ☐

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. At Development Plan Panel on 30 September 2008, Members considered the Core Strategy Preferred Approach for informal public consultation.
2. The Preferred Approach sets out a 'spatial vision', strategic objectives and a policy framework within 5 interrelated themes: Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Communities, Managing the Needs of a Growing City, Managing Environmental Resources and A Well Connected City.

RECOMMENDATION:

To receive a presentation on the content of the Core Strategy Preferred Approach and to make comments as part of the consultation process

PURPOSE

- .1 This report and accompanying presentation are intended to brief Members of the Plans Panel on the content of the Core Strategy Preferred Approach and provide opportunity for Members to make immediate comments. In addition, the briefing should equip Members to be able to make further considered written comments during the consultation period if they so wish.

BACKGROUND

- .1 The Core Strategy is the 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 In describing Core Strategies, PPS 12 (Section 4), indicates that they need to provide the following:
 1. an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop
 2. strategic objectives for the area focusing on the key issues to be addressed
 3. a delivery strategy for achieving these objectives. This should set out how much development, where, when, and how it will be delivered.
 4. a “key diagram” setting out the strategy in spatial terms
 5. clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

Strategic Sites

 6. Core strategies may allocate strategic sites for development. These should be those sites considered central to achievement of the strategy.

Infrastructure

 7. The core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution.

MAIN ISSUES

- .1 Section 2 above summarises the key requirements of government guidance, which will need to be addressed in Leeds. These key requirements will also have to be considered in the context of a wide range of policy drivers (included the Vision for Leeds and the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy – 2008), earlier periods of Core Strategy consultation, technical studies as part of the LDF evidence base e.g. Strategic Food Risk Assessment and key strategic priorities of the City Council, including urban renaissance and regeneration, climate change and economic development.
- .2

Structure

A key focus of the emerging Core Strategy is upon the delivery of the Vision for Leeds and related City Council priorities, as a basis to ensure that Leeds continues to develop its role as a successful European city, at the heart of the Leeds City

Region, whilst tackling key issues of deprivation and the need for continued regeneration. Consequently, an important aspect of the Core Strategy, is the need to give strategic planning and spatial expression to these priorities, as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach.

- .3 A starting point for this within the 'Preferred Approach' (Section 4., Vision for Leeds), is therefore to identify the key attributes of a 'successful and thriving city', as a basis to underpin subsequent policy approaches. These attributes are:

- A competitive economy with a skilled labour force
- A healthy and socially inclusive population
- Quality of place and environment
- Innovation and resource efficiency
- Adaptation to climate change
- Resilience to unforeseen impacts
- The delivery of physical and community infrastructure.

- .4 In taking these attributes forward as part of the Core Strategy the following spatial vision is identified, based upon the principles of sustainable development

"For Leeds to be a distinctive, competitive, inclusive and successful city, for the benefit of its communities, now and in the future."

This is then followed by a series of Spatial Objectives, set within 5 interlinked Strategic Themes, grouped as follows:

Leeds A Distinctive Place

- Green Infrastructure
- Sustainable Communities

Shaping the Future

- Managing the Needs of A Growing City
- Managing Environmental Resources
- A Well Connected City

Key Issues

- .5 A central component of the strategy is the desire to give sufficient recognition of the distinctive 'open' and built environment characteristics of the District and the need to manage opportunities for regeneration – through 'place making and 'place shaping' and the needs and phasing of longer term growth. Such objectives also need to be achieved, concurrent with the necessary levels of infrastructure and with a focus upon resilience, in managing the consequences of climate change.
- .6 A major challenge for the Core Strategy, is managing the physical consequences of a successful city. A key focus of the 'Preferred Approach', is to therefore direct the majority of future housing growth and economic development, to previously developed land within the main urban area and major settlements, in key strategic locations including the City Centre and major regeneration areas including Aire Valley Leeds.
- .7 Central to these challenges is the need for the Core Strategy to plan for the city's current and future housing needs. The current condition of the housing market and the economy (and the subsequent rate of recovery) make this especially demanding. The adopted RSS figures for housing growth were set prior to the

economic downturn and prevailing conditions. However, notwithstanding these circumstances, a requirement of the Core Strategy is that it should be in general conformity with the RSS. In seeking to reconcile these difficulties, the emerging Core Strategy sets out (contained within the Housing Challenge section of the Managing the Needs of a Growing City theme), a longer term strategy for the regeneration of the main urban area and major settlements, combined with an approach to manage land release and future phasing. This includes the primary focus upon the main urban areas and major settlements but for longer term need to be met, subject to a plan, monitor and manage approach, through selective use of Protected Areas of Search and Green Belt review, where these are consistent with the overall approach of the Core Strategy and RSS.

- .8 Within the context of the current policy framework, this approach is considered to be realistic and flexible in seeking to deliver regeneration and growth, within priority areas, whilst providing a longer term framework to manage future growth. It should be emphasised within this context, that it is not the role of the Core Strategy to make detailed site specific allocations for housing growth but to set out an overall strategic direction. Detailed allocations for housing and other uses including employment land and greenspace, will be considered through the preparation of a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, following the adoption of the Core Strategy. In the mean time, current Development Plan allocations, have been 'saved' under the transitional arrangements.
- .9 Whilst the Core Strategy Preferred Approach makes provision to meet the housing requirements of the adopted RSS, it should be acknowledge how dramatic the increase in the RSS requirement has been. The requirement for Leeds of the former RSS was 1930 dwellings p.a.; the RSS Draft (Dec 2005) proposed stepping-up figures of 2260 p.a. (2004-16) and 2950 p.a. (2016-21). If Leeds had to plan to meet the latter requirement (45,320 for 2009-26), it could do so comfortably without needing to use any PAS land or review the Green Belt.

Delivery

- .10 An important dimension of the Core Strategy and a developing priority of the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), is the need to prepare an Infrastructure Plan to support delivery. The 'Preferred Approach' makes a number of cross references to delivery but whilst detailed delivery plans for a number of regeneration areas including Aire Valley Leeds are being developed, the preparation of a specific "Infrastructure Plan" for the Core Strategy is at an early stage. The preparation of such a plan is complex (likely to incorporate the requirements and operation of the "Community Infrastructure Levy") and will in turn be influenced by the consultation response to the 'Preferred Approach', together with ongoing infrastructure planning work at a sub regional and city regional level. In taking the Infrastructure Plan forward, the City Council is currently in discussion with CLG for additional resource to support this process.

Timetable

- .11 The overall timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy is as follows:
- Informal consultation on emerging 'Preferred Approach' - October – November 2009
 - Publication and Submission, Autumn 2010
 - Examination Spring 2011
 - Adoption late 2011.

Consultation

- .12 Within the context of the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement, a programme of consultation has been developed. This includes the creation of consultation and display material, the hosting of exhibitions and "drop-in-sessions", outreach contact with minority groups and the use of the City Council's web site. We are also notifying a wide range of stakeholders, neighbouring local authorities and Parish Councils. All City Council Ward Members were emailed prior to commencement of the consultation period on 26th October with details of where to find the core strategy documents on the website.

Background Documents

- .13 The Core Strategy Preferred Approach comprises the following:
- Main Document
 - Map Book
 - Summary

RECOMMENDATION

- .14 To receive a presentation on the content of the Core Strategy Preferred Approach and to make comments as part of the consultation process