



Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date: 30 September 2009

Subject: Leeds Local Development Framework 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

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

1. At Development Plan Panel on 10 June and 2 September 2008, members received reports concerning the LDF Core Strategy (Issues & Alternative Options), Report of Consultation and Next Steps. Following consideration of these reports, technical work has continued to develop the approach of the Core Strategy, as a basis for a further period of informal public consultation Autumn 2009.
2. The above work has been informed by a wide range of policy drivers (including the Vision for Leeds and the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy – 2008), earlier periods of consultation on the Core Strategy, 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.
3. The Core Strategy is being undertaken during an unprecedented period of environmental, economic and social change. Setting a strategic planning and spatial direction during such a period presents a major challenge and opportunity for Leeds. Given the nature of this change, it is important that the Core Strategy is robust, yet flexible in managing the needs of the District. With this in mind the emerging Core Strategy focuses upon the key attributes of a successful city, in seeking to deliver the strategic planning priorities for Leeds. This is achieved through a 'Preferred Approach', setting out a 'spatial vision', strategic objectives and a policy framework set out within 5 interrelated themes

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 At Development Plan Panel on 10 June and 2 September 2008, members received reports concerning the LDF Core Strategy (Issues & Alternative Options), Report of Consultation and Next Steps. Following consideration of these reports, technical work has continued to develop the approach of the Core Strategy, as a basis for a further period of informal public consultation Autumn 2009. The purpose of this report is for Panel members to consider the scope and content of the 'Preferred Approach' (attached as Appendix 1), as a basis for further public consultation in the autumn.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 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).
- 2.2 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 is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered. Locations for strategic development should be indicated on a key diagram; and
 4. clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

Strategic Sites

5. Core strategies may allocate strategic sites for development. These should be those sites considered central to achievement of the strategy. Progress on the core strategy should not be held up by inclusion of non-strategic sites.

Infrastructure

6. 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. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The core strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.

3.0 Main issues

- 3.1 Section 2 above summarises the key requirements of LDF Core Strategies, required by government guidance, which will need to be addressed in Leeds. With this context and in response to 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, a Core Strategy 'Preferred Approach' has been developed and is attached as Appendix 1.

Structure of the 'Preferred Approach'

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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

3.5 Within each Strategic Theme, policy approaches, linked to the above priorities are identified. In giving spatial expression to these priorities (where they can be represented) a map base has been provided, copies of which will be presented to Panel members at the meeting.

Key Issues

3.6 A major challenge and opportunity for the Core Strategy, is to provide strategic direction and overall balance, in seeking to manage a range of sometimes competing priorities. A fundamental issue for the 'Preferred Approach' therefore, is ability to deliver and manage these priorities at the same time, now and in the future. Central to

the overall strategy, is to take an integrated approach, in seeking to meet city's planning requirements and longer term aspirations.

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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

- 3.11 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

- 3.12 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
 - Adoption Spring/Summer 2011.

Consultation Arrangements

- 3.13 As noted above and subject to the consideration of Panel members, it is planned to undertake a period of informal public consultation on the Preferred Approach. Within the context of the City Council’s Statement of Community Involvement, a programme of consultation is being developed. This will incorporate consultation material, exhibitions and the use of the City Council’s web site, to contact a wide range of stakeholders District wide and neighbouring local authorities and Parish Council’s. A copy of a draft programme of consultation arrangements, will be provided to Panel members at the meeting.

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 subsequent implementation of the LDF does raise a number of resourcing issues both for the City Council and external partners and agencies, in supporting the level of infrastructure to deliver the strategy. This will need to be addressed as further work on the Core Strategy and related LDF documents progresses.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report sets out the broad scope of the Core Strategy and the contents of the emerging ‘Preferred Approach’, for informal consultation.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Development Plan Panel is recommended to:

- i). Agree the draft ‘Preferred Approach’ for public consultation

Appendix 1

Leeds LDF Core Strategy – Preferred Approach