

**Report of Director of City Development**

**Report to East Inner Area Committee**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 February - April cycle (within the consultation period)**

**Subject: LDF Core Strategy – Publication Document**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No All
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Following consideration by Executive Board on 10<sup>th</sup> February, the City Council's Local Development Framework (Publication Draft) has been approved for public consultation. The consultation period is 28<sup>th</sup> February – 12<sup>th</sup> April (5:00pm) and the purpose of this report is to make Area Committees aware of the consultation, the broad scope and to direct any subsequent comments to the Comments Form for completion. The Core Strategy document (and background material) is available via the City Council's web site, together with a copy of the Comments Form.
2. In aspiring to be the 'best city in the UK' (the Vision for Leeds), the Core Strategy reflects the spatial and land use aspects of this ambition, as part of an overall approach to manage opportunities for regeneration and longer term growth. A key responsibility for the Core Strategy, is to provide strategic overview for the preparation of a future Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and Neighbourhood Plans. It is not therefore the role of the Core Strategy to identify specific allocations of land for development (this will be the role of the Site Allocations DPD, informed by the Neighbourhood Planning process) but to provide an overall 'steer' and policy framework for overall scale and distribution of development. The Site Allocations DPD is at a very early stage of production and will but subject to the first stages of public consultation anticipated in Autumn 2012.
3. The Core Strategy takes a district wide approach to plan for the homes and jobs the communities need in a sustainable manner. Integral therefore to the strategy, is the need to respect local character, distinctiveness and to achieve environmental management requirements, in support of regeneration and growth. Linked to this also, is the identification of a network of "Green Infrastructure" (linking areas of open space and nature conservation interest) across Leeds. This overall approach is therefore

relevant to each of the Area Committees. An underlying approach of the Core Strategy is to identify types of settlements/places across the district, together with a hierarchy of City and Town Centres, as a focus for development. Consequently, where these settlements and 'centres' have been defined and are located, will be of relevance to individual Area Committees (further details, of the area based aspects of the Core Strategy, are summarised in paras. 3.2 – 3.4 and Appendix 2 of this report).

4. Initial work on the Core Strategy commenced in late 2006 and the emerging document has therefore been subject to several periods of both formal and informal consultation work. The current (Publication) stage of engagement, is the final formal stage of public consultation, prior to submission for independent examination by an Inspector. It should be emphasised also, that, this stage of consultation is specifically concerned with the "soundness" of the plan (rather than inviting more general comments and changes). Consequently, the purpose of the Comments Form is to seek comments on the soundness of the document (i.e. is it Justified, is it Effective and is it Consistent with national policy and to give specific reasons why it may not be sound (and the changes necessary to make it sound). The Comments Form can also be used to capture responses, which to support the soundness of the plan.

## **Recommendations**

5. Area Committees are requested to consider this report and to make any comments, as appropriate on the soundness of the document, on a Core Strategy Comments Form (s), (attached as Appendix 1).

# 1 Purpose of this report

1.1 In reflecting the priorities and ambitions for Leeds (as set out as part of the Vision for Leeds), the Core Strategy sets out the broad spatial and land use planning framework for the district (to 2028). Central to its preparation has been the desire to plan for the people and places of Leeds, in the development of an approach, which seeks to manage growth in a sustainable way. This approach seeks to balance the overall needs of a growing population in the delivery of an appropriate scale, distribution and phasing of development, taking into account local character and distinctiveness.

1.2 In playing its part, (and linked to a range of a range of strategic initiatives and programmes), for Leeds to become 'the best city in the UK', the Core Strategy provides a framework to deliver a range of key priorities. These include:

- responding to forecasts that the population of Leeds is set to grow and the opportunities and challenges associated with this including, greater numbers of children and young people, more people 75 and over and more people from black, ethnic minority and mixed race backgrounds,
- arising from the spatial pressures of population growth, the need to develop a longer term strategy to create more and affordable homes, whilst seeking to respect and enhance, the character and distinctiveness of local communities and settlements,
- the promotion of urban regeneration, through the recycling of brownfield land and the development of land in sustainable locations, as a basis to minimise the impact upon greenfield and Green Belt land,
- harnessing the 'housing growth principles' agreed through public consultation, as a basis to meet housing needs and delivery in appropriate locations through a phased approach,
- planning for job creation and economic growth by promoting key economic sectors (including financial & business services, low carbon manufacturing, retail, housing and construction as identified within, the Leeds Growth Strategy), key strategic locations for development (including the City Centre and the Aire Valley – Urban Eco-Settlement/Enterprise Zone), together with a portfolio of opportunities for employment development & job growth and regeneration,
- delivering quality of place, high standards of urban design, conservation & construction, the protection and enhancement of the environment and ease of movement (through walking & cycling), in support of a sustainable, child friendly and healthy city,
- mitigating the consequences of climate change by managing flood risk, enabling sustainable design and construction and support for low carbon energy.

1.3 Following consideration by Executive Board, the Core Strategy has been approved for public consultation (Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended (the LDF Regs)).

Following this stage of consultation and consideration of representations made, the City Council may then proceed to formal Submission of the document to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.

## **2 Background information**

### Overview

- 2.1 In seeking to address the priorities set out as part of the Vision for Leeds, responding to major changes in the economy and national guidance, there is considerable urgency to progress the Core Strategy. Central to this is the need to plan for the implications of a growing and changing population. Based upon the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), it is anticipated that the population of Leeds will rise from 755,136 in 2010 to 859,583 in 2028 (Employment led, fixed headship scenario, extrapolated to 2028). Associated with this growth, are greater numbers of children and young people, more people 75 and over and more people from black, ethnic minority and mixed race backgrounds. Meeting the challenges and opportunities linked to these changes, is therefore a key issues for Leeds as a whole and in taking forward the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 Within the context of national planning guidance (including PPS12 and the emerging National Planning Policy Framework), the Localism Act (and the need to provide a direction and planning framework for the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD and Neighbourhood Plans) City Council priorities (including the delivery of City Priority Plans & the Leeds Growth Strategy), the Core Strategy is the key spatial and land use planning document for Leeds. Once adopted, substantive parts of the Core Strategy will replace the existing Development Plan (the Leeds UDP 2006).
- 2.3 Following early technical work and stakeholder engagement in 2006, wider public consultation on an Issues & Alternative Options document (October – December 2007) and a further 6 week period of public consultation (October – December 2009) on a 'Preferred Approach' document, a Publication draft document has now been prepared. This document has been developed in the light of the consultation work described above and also informed by supporting technical work and evidence base material. This material includes the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the housing growth consultation with key stakeholders (summer 2011), the PPG 17 Needs & Opportunities Assessment for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment, Retail & Town Centres Study and Employment Land Review.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The Core Strategy has been prepared during a major period of change. This includes significant and emerging changes to national and regional planning policy, culminating in the preparation of the draft National Planning Policy Framework, the impending abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies and the introduction of the Localism Act. These changes have been against a background of a global economic downturn and restructuring, a reduction in public funding and national (regional and local) priorities to stimulate economic recovery and growth. Within this context, it is important that the Core Strategy has regard to these circumstances in the short term but seeks to be ambitious in the longer term (the plan period and beyond) to plan for places, communities and infrastructure, in

aspiring to be the ‘best city in the UK’. The performance against these objectives will need to be monitored, to ensure that the plan remains ‘fit for purpose’. In seeking to meet these objectives, the document is subdivided into two key policy sections the Spatial Development Strategy (supported by the Key Diagram) and Strategic Themes & Policies. The main issues, arising from these sections are summarised below.

### Implications for Area Committees

- 3.2 The following sections below (Places, Shopping & supporting the needs of communities, Local distinctiveness, sustainability & environmental quality, Economic growth & prosperity, Meeting housing needs, Regeneration, Transport and Environment) provide a detailed summary of each of the key sections of the document for consultation.
- 3.3 The broad approach of the document is to consider district wide issues and to provide an overall policy approach, for the preparation of a more detailed Site Allocations document (informed by Neighbourhood Plans) to follow. As a basis to develop this overall approach, the Core Strategy (Table 1 below) sets out the settlement types across the district. This helps to provide a focus for the policies of the plan and the scale and distribution of opportunities for regeneration and growth (and the identification of designating Town & local centres).

Table 1 – Identification of Settlement Types

<b>Settlement Type</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Main Urban Area</b>	Leeds City Centre and the surrounding communities and neighbourhoods forming the main urban and suburban areas of the City
<b>Major Settlements</b>	Garforth Guiseley/Yeadon/Rawdon Morley Otley Rothwell Wetherby
<b>Smaller Settlements</b>	Allerton Bywater Bardsey Barwick-in-Elmet Boston Spa Bramham Bramhope Calverley Collingham Drighlington East Ardsley Gildersome Kippax Lofthouse/Robin Hood Micklefield Mickletown Methley Pool-in-Wharfedale Scholes Swillington Tingley/West Ardsley
<b>Villages/Rural</b>	All other settlements and locations

## Summary of Policy areas relevant to Committee areas

- 3.4 For ease of reference the Core Strategy Key Diagram, incorporating the Area Committee boundaries, has been appended to this report. This in turn illustrates the key policies relating to different areas across the district and the application of the approaches summarised below.

### Places

- 3.5 A fundamental strand of the Core Strategy is the importance of the character and distinctiveness of Leeds, as a context for securing opportunities for regeneration and longer term growth. Particular characteristics of Leeds MD, are the extensive areas of greenspace and open land surrounding and linking through urban areas via green corridors and river valleys. Leeds is distinctive also, as a consequence of the wide collection of individual towns and villages across the District, in addition to the main urban area (which also includes the city centre). Leeds is therefore unlike many other cities and it is important therefore, that an appropriate balance is struck between the needs of economic and housing growth, quality of life and in maintaining and enhancing this special character. Within this context, the publication draft Core Strategy provides a policy framework to facilitate and enable, the delivery of development proposals in a sustainable manner, as a basis for 'Place making'. Consequently, emphasis is given to Regeneration Priority Programme Areas (Spatial Policy 4), identifying and supporting the role of the places and settlements across the District, a 'centres' based approach to the need to enhance the role of the City Centre, Town and Local Centres, as a basis to provide the range of services required by the community in accessible and sustainable locations (Spatial Policies 2 and 3). Policies are also contained within other sections (see para. 3.5 below) regarding the importance of design and conservation.

### Shopping & supporting the needs of Communities

- 3.6 In supporting the current and future needs of local communities, the document, seeks to support and strengthen the role of the City Centre and Town Centres across the district. Spatial Policies 2 & 3 therefore support a 'centres first', approach regarding the use and expansion of such areas. Policies P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6, set out the approach in planning for shopping development (including the creation of new centres, in appropriate circumstances, linked to regeneration and longer term opportunities for growth). Integral to this overall approach, is the desire to safeguard, enhance and develop the role of Leeds City Centre as the primary destination for major retail, commercial, leisure and cultural development. This also recognises its key role at the heart of the strategic transport hub (including Leeds City station and interchange facilities). Within this context, it is critically important to ensure that major investment opportunities (including major retail development at Eastgate) within the City Centre, are secured as a priority.
- 3.7 In supporting the needs of communities (including schools) across Leeds, the Core Strategy also places emphasis upon the provision of Community Facilities and Services (Policy P8). In complementing the overall strategic approach to the need to respect local character and distinctiveness, policies for Design, Conservation and Landscape are also set out, to ensure that development proposals are appropriate.

### Local Distinctiveness, sustainability & environmental quality

- 3.8 Population increase, climate change and the global economy are all huge challenges facing Leeds. In seeking to meet these challenges and the benefits of longer term economic prosperity, environmental quality, local identity and distinctiveness, the Core Strategy sets out the spatial planning framework for the District. Fundamental to this approach, is the need to plan for the homes and jobs the city needs in a sustainable way, in balancing the overall, scale, location, distribution and phasing of development. Consequently, emphasis is made throughout the publication document to the need to deliver sustainable forms of development and policy outcomes, whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality. This should be achieved by respecting local distinctiveness, for example through a focus of development upon the role of settlements and Town & Local Centres (Spatial Policies 1 & 2), the identification of strategic Green Infrastructure (Spatial Policy 13) and detailed policies for Conservation, Sustainable Design and Construction (Policies P9, P10 & EN2).

### Economic growth & prosperity

- 3.9 The Leeds Growth Strategy focuses upon seven key employment sectors including Health and Medical, Low Carbon Manufacturing and Housing & Construction. In helping to support and facilitate this strategy, the approach of the Core Strategy is to support and enable job retention, opportunities for training and the creation of new opportunities. Spatial Policies 8 and 9, set out criteria in support of a competitive local economy, offices, industry and warehouse development. Emphasis has also been given to the important strategic economic role of the City Centre (Spatial Policy 3) and Aire Valley Leeds (Urban Eco-Settlement & Enterprise Zone) in providing opportunities for economic development (Spatial Policy 5). In support of promoting job opportunities, detailed policies are also set out for General Employment Land, Office Development and for Safeguarding Existing Employment Land and Industrial Areas (EC1, EC2, EC3).

### Meeting Housing Needs & planning for longer term growth

- 3.10 Planning for housing needs and delivering housing development in appropriate locations, is a major opportunity and challenge for the District. This is made especially difficult by the current nature of the housing market and current rates of housing delivery. As noted above, it is anticipated that the population of Leeds will rise significantly over the plan period. Meeting the complex demographic needs of the existing population, together with the implications of an ageing and growing population, are therefore key considerations for the Core Strategy. Consequently, planning for such growth is therefore integral to the overall approach. The Core Strategy therefore, seeks to plan not just for a sufficient housing land supply in appropriate locations but also the quality, type and affordability of homes in meeting local needs. As emphasised throughout this report, a key dimension of this approach is to manage growth in a sustainable way, whilst maintaining local character, distinctiveness and environmental quality.
- 3.11 In developing an appropriate policy approach to these issues, the Core Strategy has been informed by a number of elements including the conclusions of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011), work in relation to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Scrutiny Board Inquiry into Housing Growth and the informal consultation and debate (summer 2011)

regarding housing growth in Leeds (including representatives of the development industry, Members and community groups). Based on this evidence and informed by the conclusions of the Scrutiny Board Inquiry and housing growth informal consultation, the Core Strategy identifies a series of housing growth principles (see below).

### Housing Growth Principles

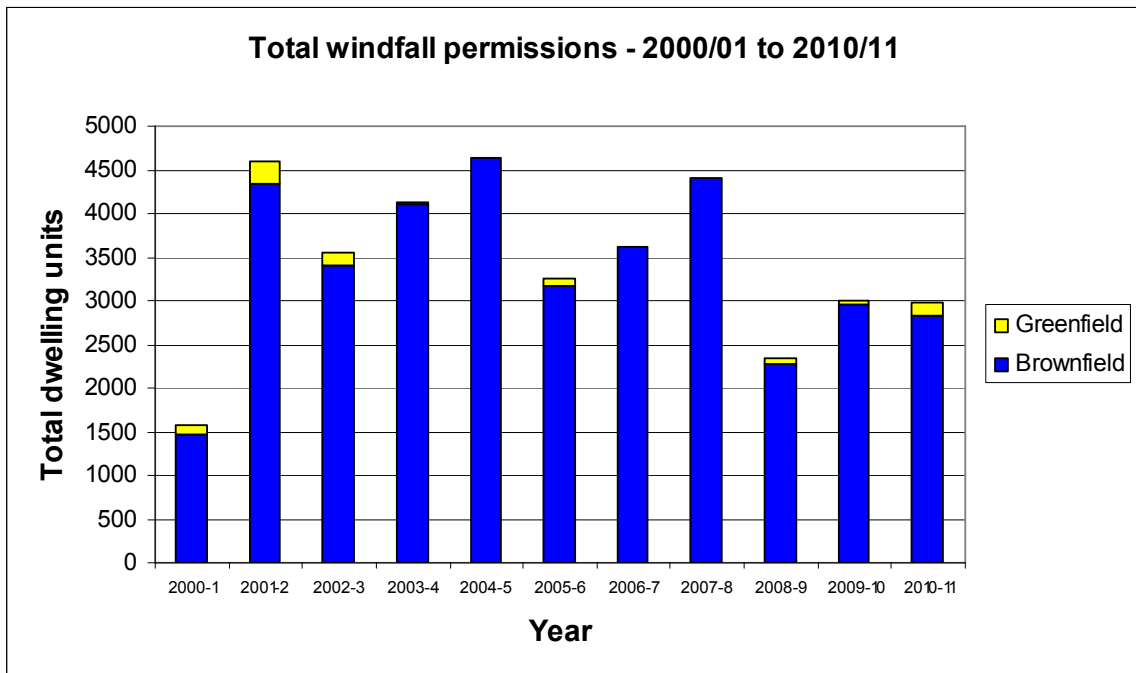
- Ensure housing growth is linked to the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods throughout the city (see SP1),
- Set a realistic and phased target for the delivery of new homes (see SP6),
- Ensure housing growth targets reflect local housing needs, now and in the future, in terms of tenure, type and size, (see SP6 and H4),
- Enhance the distinctiveness of existing neighbourhoods and quality of life of local communities through the design and standard of new homes, (P10 & EN2),
- Facilitate the development of brownfield and regeneration sites, (see SP1, SP3, SP4 and SP6),
- Agree a range of mechanisms to deliver additional affordable homes, (see H5),
- Work in partnership to find ways to facilitate housing growth (see Section 6 Implementation & Delivery).

3.12 In taking into account the above considerations and a range of factors including, demographic requirements, current housing market conditions, the desire to meet a range of housing needs, the City Council's longstanding commitment to the regeneration of brownfield land and historical past performance in the successful delivery of windfall development, Spatial Policies (6 & 7) set out the approach to the Housing Land Requirement, Allocation and Distribution of Housing Land.

3.13 As a large post industrial city and through an on going process of urban regeneration and renaissance, Leeds has continued to evolve in terms of its economic diversity and formats for housing delivery. A major aspect of these changes has been the recycling of brownfield (previously developed land – PDL), for windfall housing and other uses. Leeds has a long and well recorded history of windfall housing being delivered, which has been monitored continuously by the City Council since the 1980s, as a key source of land for development.

3.14 Based upon past performance (see the Table below) and the continued urban renewal and regeneration of Leeds, windfall will continue to play an important role in housing delivery. This is due in part to the scale of the District in respect of the extent of the Main Urban Area of Leeds and large collection of settlements across the District (including Major and Small Settlements identified as part of the Settlement Hierarchy – see Table 1: Identification of Settlement Types). Consequently, the role of windfall and the identification of a windfall allowance, is integral to the overall housing strategy set out in this Plan.





3.15 Within this overall context, Spatial Policy 6 sets out a housing requirement of 70,000 dwellings (net) over the plan period. In recognition of the conditions of the current housing market, it is proposed that this is phased over two periods, 3,660 p.a. (2012/13 – 2016/17: 18,300 dwellings) and 4,700 p.a (2017/18 – 2028: 51,700 dwellings). In meeting this requirement (and based upon past performance) a ‘windfall’ allowance for has been made for 500 dwellings p.a on small and unidentified sites. The 66,000 units remaining (following the discounting of the windfall allowance), are comprised of current, undelivered allocations (7,500 units), extant planning permissions (20,000 units) and other additional sites (including infill development within existing urban areas and suitable urban extensions) deemed appropriate for housing delivery, against the criteria set out in Spatial Policy 6. This will entail the need to use Protected Areas of Search (PAS) sites and to carry out a selective review of the Green Belt.

**SPATIAL POLICY 6: - THE HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND ALLOCATION OF HOUSING LAND**

70,000 (net) new dwellings net between 2012 and 2028 will be accommodated at a rate of:

- 3,660 per annum from 2012/13 to the end of 2016/17 (18,300)
- 4,700 per annum from 2017/18 (51,700)

Delivery of 500 dwellings per annum (8,000 over the plan period) is anticipated on small and unidentified sites.

Guided by the Settlement Hierarchy, the Council will identify 66,000 dwellings gross (62,000 net) to achieve the distribution in tables H2 and H3 in SP7 using the following considerations:

- (i) Sustainable locations (which meet standards of public transport accessibility -see the Well Connected City chapter), supported by existing or access to new local facilities and services,
- (ii) Preference for brownfield and regeneration sites,
- (iii) The least impact on Green Belt purposes,
- (iv) Opportunities to enhance the distinctiveness of existing neighbourhoods and quality of life of local communities through the design and standard of new homes,

- (v) The need for realistic lead-in-times and build-out-rates for housing construction,
- (vi) The least negative and most positive impacts on green infrastructure, green corridors, green space and nature conservation,
- (vii) Generally avoiding or mitigating areas of flood risk.

3.16 In reflecting the overall strategy approach of the Core Strategy and as a basis to provide a framework for the future Site Allocations DPD and the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, Spatial Policy 7, sets out tables indicating the overall magnitude and distribution of housing land by Settlement Hierarchy and by Housing Market Characteristic Area (see below).

Spatial Policy 7 – Table 3

<b>Housing Market Characteristic Area</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Aireborough	2,300	3%
City Centre	10,200	15.5%
East Leeds	11,400	17%
Inner Area	10,000	15%
North Leeds	6,000	9%
Outer North East	5,000	8%
Outer North West	2,000	3%
Outer South	2,600	4%
Outer South East	4,600	7%
Outer South West	7,200	11%
Outer West	4,700	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

3.17 In seeking to meet the complex housing needs of a growing population and as a basis for a qualitative approach to housing delivery, a series of detailed policies are also set out to cover a range of housing issues. These include the Managed Release of Sites (H1), Housing Density (H3), Housing Mix (H4), criteria for the allocation of Gypsy and Traveller Sites (H7) and Housing for Independent Living (H8). These policies underpin the overall strategic approach and a basis to consider housing need issues at a local level.

3.18 Current housing market conditions, wider economic uncertainties and the need to plan for the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support growth are major issues for the delivery of the Core Strategy. Within this context a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared (see Background documents) as a basis for on going dialogue to securing infrastructure improvements and longer term requirements to support growth. Housing delivery and output, will therefore need to be closely monitored against the above requirements (and a monitoring framework is therefore being developed as part of the Core Strategy). Notwithstanding these difficulties however, in seeking to meet the housing needs and requirements as set out over the plan period, the delivery of housing growth will result in the need for a selective Green Belt review (as a basis to identify sites for future housing/employment development as necessary and also Protected Areas of Search for future development beyond the plan period). Within this context, Spatial Policy 10 sets out the overall approach. It needs to be emphasised however that the precise extent and detailed boundaries will need to be identified through the Site Allocations DPD process, as a basis to deliver the

housing growth principles and location of development criteria identified as part of the Core Strategy.

### Regeneration Priority Areas

- 3.14 In meeting local needs, including opportunities for homes and jobs, the Core Strategy reflects the City Council's long standing priorities for major urban regeneration. Spatial Policy 4 therefore identifies East Leeds, Aire Valley Leeds, the Leeds Bradford Corridor (incorporating the West Leeds Gateway) and South Leeds, as Regeneration Priority Programme Areas. In seeking to meet local aspirations within these areas and to plan for the effective use of land, the Core Strategy provides a framework to facilitate housing renewal and provision and local environmental improvements (improvements to greenspace quality through suitable remodelling) within such areas. Within this overall context, as noted in para. 3.6 above, Spatial Policy 5 sets out a strategic policy for Aire Valley Leeds, in underpinning the significance of this area to the District's growth aspirations.

### Transport & Accessibility)

- 3.15 Planning for Transport Infrastructure and Investment priorities, is a key priority for the Core Strategy. Within this context, the Plan reflects District wide priorities incorporated as part of the Local Transport Plan and ongoing work at a City Region level. Consequently, Core Strategy Spatial Policy 11, provides an overarching framework to help direct and bid for infrastructure provision to support the city's priorities. These include enhancements to Leeds City Station, opportunities to create new rail stations and the delivery of Park and Ride facilities. In recognising the important strategic and economic role of the Airport, Spatial Policy 12, sets out an approach to support managed growth, linked to the provision of infrastructure improvements and the consideration of related environmental issues. In support of this strategic approach, Policies T1 and T2 provide a basis to consider Transport Management and Accessibility requirements associated with development proposals.

### Managing Environmental Resources

- 3.16 Leeds has a reputation for innovation, effective environmental management and a commitment to mitigating the consequences of climate change. In taking these commitments forward and in contributing to the environmental sustainability of the District, the Core Strategy sets out a broad policy framework to cover the Management of Environmental Resources. The desire to help 'future proof' the city in respect of climate change (including mitigation) and planning for a low carbon economy (to support job growth as well as the protection and enhancement of the environment) are integral to this approach. Detail Policies are therefore provided to protect and enhance the 'green environment', including Green Infrastructure (Spatial Policy 13 and G1, Increasing Tree Cover (G2), Greenspace provision (G3, G4, G5 & G6), Biodiversity (G7 & G8) and planning for Energy and Natural Resources, including, Carbon Reduction & Low Carbon Energy (EN1 & EN3), Sustainable Design & Construction (EN2) and Managing Flood Risk (EN5). Policies are also included for Waste Management and Minerals (EN6 & EN7), in providing a Core Strategy context for related and expanded policies in the Natural Resources and Waste DPD.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Consistent with the City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Core Strategy (see paragraph 2.5 above) has been subject to several formal and informal phases of public consultation and engagement. Following consideration by Executive Board of the Publication document, a further formal 6 week period of public consultation (consistent with the LDF Regulations), is being undertaken. Following consideration of any representations made, the next stage will be the formal submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination, prior to Adoption. The decision to submit the Core Strategy to examination and subsequently to adopt the document are decisions reserved to full Council.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 Due regard has been given to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration issues in the formulation of the Core Strategy. This has included meeting the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which has meant that the Core Strategy has been subject to the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of this Appraisal is to assess (and where appropriate strengthen) the document's policies, in relation to a series of social, environmental and economic objectives. As part of this process, issues of Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration, are embedded as part of the Appraisal's objectives. In complementing the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal, a Health Impact Assessment exercise, has also been undertaken (See Health Topic Paper – Background documents) in the preparation of the emerging Core Strategy Publication document, the conclusions of which have also been embedded within the document.

4.2.2 Given this approach, considerations of equality of opportunity and good relations have been integrated into the formulation of the Core Strategy and an assessment of the impact of the policies on the advancement of equality and good relations has been carried out. This is evidenced in the comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment Screening document, which is available as a Background paper.

4.2.3 The EIA Screening document describes the overall scope of the Core Strategy and the many stages of public consultation which have been completed to date. The planning and delivery of this consultation has been consistent with the City Council's adopted LDF Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation process, within available resources, has been extensive and has sought to engage with a wide range of communities and groups across the District, including, people of all ages, people with disabilities, gender and black, ethnic minority groups. In the preparation of the Core Strategy, a fundamental consideration has been to recognise that the population of Leeds is growing, resulting in demographic changes across the District and in spatial pressures in particular areas. Consequently, the Plan seeks to provide a strategic planning framework to address these issues, which in turn is to be monitored for effectiveness. The implications of Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration, will again be considered in the production of the Site Allocations DPD which will take forward the policy requirements of the Core Strategy.

- 4.2.4 Within the EIA Screening document examples of the community groups contacted at each stage of consultation have been provided, together with the range of issues highlighted for discussion.
- 4.2.5 In providing an overall analysis and review of the Core Strategy in relation to equality issues, the EIA Screening document provides a summary of the impact of individual policy areas. These include Transport, Retail, Housing, the City Centre, Employment, Environmental Resources and Green Infrastructure. Consistent with the overall objectives of the Core Strategy, these policy areas aim to promote equality, respect diversity and seek to improve cohesion and integration. The conclusions highlighted in the EIA Screening, are that in some policy areas the Core Strategy is neutral in its effects upon these issues (such as gender discrimination in relation to Transport policy) but in the majority of cases, the Core Strategy has a positive effect (for example seeking to meet a range of housing needs and the provision of affordable housing). In addition the identification of Regeneration Priority Programme Areas and the provisions of proposed employment Policies, were regarded as having a positive effect in terms of their impact upon all ages, people with disabilities, gender and black, ethnic minority.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 As highlighted in this report, the Core Strategy, plays a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of the Vision for Leeds and the aspiration to the 'the best city in the UK'. Related to this overarching approach and in meeting a host of social, environmental and economic objectives, where relevant the Core Strategy also seeks to support and advance the implementation of a range of other key City Council and wider partnership documents. These include the Leeds Growth Strategy, the City Priority Plan, the Council Business Plan and the desire to be a 'child friendly city'.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The preparation of statutory Development Planning documents is an essential but a very resource intensive process. This is due to the time and cost of document preparation (relating to public consultation and engagement), the preparation and monitoring of an extensive evidence base, legal advice and Independent Examination.
- 4.4.2 These challenges are compounded currently by the financial constraints upon the public sector and reduced staffing levels, concurrent with new technical and planning policy pressures arising from new legislation (including the Community Infrastructure Levy and Localism Act). There are considerable demands therefore in taking forward the Core Strategy and related work, including the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD, which is due to quickly follow on.
- 4.4.3 A key component of the Core Strategy document itself, relates to the provision of infrastructure. National guidance (PPS12), sets out requirements for the preparation of Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP) to support the phased implementation of Core Strategy priorities. This guidance was written before the current economic slow down and constraints upon public sector finance. Whilst opportunities are being vigorously pursued to secure infrastructure funding, there are uncertainties regarding the level and timing of resources. Work is also ongoing within the City Council to work up in more detail the approach to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

4.4.4 Notwithstanding these challenges and difficulties, a draft IDP has been prepared in support of the Core Strategy. This provides a framework to identify infrastructure requirements and an on going basis to engage with infrastructure providers, communities and developers, to help meet requirements.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 The DPD is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations and statutory requirements. The DPD is a Budgetary and Policy Framework document, due to this, and also because this matter is a Council function of the Area Committee, then this report is exempt from call-in by Scrutiny.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 As emphasised in this report, there is considerable urgency to take the Core Strategy forward. The absence of such an up to date strategy would leave a vacuum in strategic and land use planning in being able to respond to the priorities set out in the Vision for Leeds and a range of other key documents (including the emerging Site Allocations DPD and Neighbourhood Plans).

4.6.2 The preparation of the Core Strategy document has been a complex process and the Publication stage is necessary prior to formal submission and Independent Examination. Given the range of issues covered, the City Council will need to continue to take appropriate advice, in order to respond to issues which may arise and in order to keep the momentum behind the process.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Core Strategy is at a critical stage in its production and as detailed in this report, needs to be taken forward as a matter of urgency. In aspiring to be the 'best city in the UK', the Core Strategy takes forward the spatial and land use aspects of this ambition, as part of an overall strategy. As a basis to address these priorities and in order to provide a strategic framework for the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD and Neighbourhood Plans.

5.2 Central to this approach, is the desire to plan for the homes and jobs the District needs in a sustainable manner. Consequently, integral to the strategy is the need to respect local character, distinctiveness and environmental management requirements

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 i) Area Committees are requested to consider this report and to make any comments, as appropriate on the soundness of the document, on a Core Strategy Comments Form (s), (attached as Appendix 1).

### **7 Consultation and background material**

7.1 The following consultation and background material is available on the City Council's web site, together with a representations form. There are also links from this web page to supporting technical material which has been used to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy. These including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Employment Land Review and Leeds Needs & Opportunities Assessment for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.

## **8 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

Core Strategy Publication Draft

Key Diagram

Sustainability Appraisal

Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Draft Core Strategy Monitoring Framework

Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

Health Topic Paper

Draft National Planning Policy Framework & Leeds City Council's response (approved at Executive Board 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.