

## **CITY COUNCIL - 14 JULY 2008**

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD REGENERATION**

#### **NOTTINGHAM'S FUTURE: A CORE STRATEGY GREEN PAPER**

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Core Strategy is the most important document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF being the portfolio of documents which will replace the Local Plan as the statutory development plan for Nottingham. The LDF is a key corporate tool in helping to deliver the government's place-shaping agenda. The Core Strategy sets out the general spatial vision and objectives for delivery of the LDF. It includes policies for delivering the vision and objectives and a key diagram to show strategic sites and spatial development principles.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy policies will relate to the development and use of land and outline the City Council's strategy for delivering strategic development needs, including housing, leisure and retail. The first stage of consultation (the Issues and Options consultation) is due to take place later this year.
- 1.3 The aim of this report is to provide members with an early opportunity to debate and note the main types of issues that will be included in the Core Strategy and to provide information on how to engage in the formal consultation process.
- 1.4 The appendix to this report, which has been circulated separately with the agenda, provides details on the main spatial issues that will need to be covered in the Core Strategy and includes a set of key questions on each of the spatial issues that members are requested to consider and give their views on.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that City Council:-

- (1) note the key planning issues that will need to be addressed in the City-wide Core Strategy;

- (2) note the opportunity for making formal representations at the Issues and Options Consultation stage of the Core Strategy (to be held later this year);
- (3) provide their early views on the main issues that need to be developed during the consultation.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

#### **A new planning system**

- 3.1 The new system of **Local Development Frameworks** (LDFs) and **spatial planning** is very different from the previous Local Plan system. The new system includes complex new procedures and significant changes in how we think about planning and go about it.
- 3.2 A key feature of the new system is the emphasis it puts on setting out in the **Core Strategy** in some detail the vision for the future of the area (developed from the corporate vision and that of the **Sustainable Community Strategy**), the objectives which flow from it, and the strategy for how they will be achieved. Other Development Plan Documents, within the LDF, should then function as delivery tools.
- 3.3 These features require a change in thinking about the purpose of planning. It is moving from regulation and control of development towards promoting and enabling desirable development and working with others to ensure delivery. This makes it necessary to challenge current policy to ask whether it is truly effective in delivering the vision and objectives of the authority. Moreover, the Government has made it clear that its ambition is that the LDF should become an important vehicle for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
- 3.4 In summary, the key features of the new Local Development Frameworks are:
  - Spatial planning brings a wider scope to planning, with a strong focus on the vision, key objectives and strategy for the area. Spatial planning is intended to integrate planning policy with corporate strategy and the programmes of partners and other agencies, and show how they fit together across the area.

- There is an expectation that LDF documents will be much shorter and that they will focus on the distinctive issues of the area.
- The LDF will be a significant contributor to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- The LDF should explicitly consider and evaluate alternatives to arrive at the best strategy.
- An authority should adopt engagement which seeks to maximise consensus between it and stakeholders.
- Community engagement should be focused on the earlier stages of plan preparation so that communities and stakeholders can influence decisions before they become firm.
- Sustainability Appraisal should be undertaken throughout the preparation process, and be a major influence on decision making.
- An examination into soundness takes the place of the previous local inquiry, and leads to a binding inspector's report.

### **Preparing the Core Strategy**

3.5 The Core Strategy is the next document to be produced within the LDF, this report and accompanying appendix aim to highlight some of the key issues and policy areas that will need to be considered in the Core Strategy.

3.6 Overall the time taken to prepare and adopt the Core Strategy takes around three years to produce and comprises three consultation periods in total and also a formal examination process.

3.7 One of the key requirements for the Core Strategy is that it must be underpinned by a robust evidence base to ensure that the policies within it are found 'sound' at examination. Developing the evidence base is a critical stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy. The evidence required can be grouped into four broad areas; statistics; other plans, policies and programmes; studies and surveys and community/stakeholder involvement. To date the Policy and Information Team has undertaken and completed the following studies:

- Nottingham City-Region Employment Land Study;

- Greater Nottingham Retail Study;
- Nottingham Core Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Central Nottingham Housing Market Analysis;
- City Centre Living Survey;
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities;
- River Leen and Day Brook Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

In addition, the following studies are currently underway, but are not yet complete:

- Open and Green Space Audit and Assessment and Breathing Space Open and Green Space Strategy;
- Nottingham City Strategic Housing Land Availability Study;
- Greater Nottingham Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Supplementary Work to Appraise Sustainable Urban Extensions;
- Nottingham Core Affordable Housing Viability Assessment;
- Greater Nottingham Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

3.8 Many of the studies above have been jointly procured with the district authorities (and where relevant the County Council) so that information is gathered comprehensively, and in partnership, on a conurbation basis. It is intended that the Nottingham City Core Strategy is aligned with the other Core Strategies written by the Greater Nottingham authorities to ensure that policy issues can be addressed consistently across the conurbation.

3.9 Whilst the evidence gathered so far has informed the key issues in this report, the City Council's Policy and Information Team will continue to gather further important evidence throughout the Core Strategy preparation process and is continuing to work with the Partnerships and Policy Team to ensure that the evidence bases for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy are shared.

3.10 Now that the majority of evidence is in place, it is proposed that the key issues identified from the evidence base, and set out in this report, will form the basis of the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Strategy.

## Issues and Options consultation

3.11 The Issues and Options consultation is the first consultation stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy. It is meant to be an 'informal and ongoing' process. The aim of the Issues and Options consultation is to identify the key issues facing the City and what the options for addressing these issues are. The list of issues and options should be consulted upon with local people so that they can shape the future development of the City. In drawing up this list of Issues and Options, we have been working with colleagues in Partnerships and Policy who are writing the **Sustainable Community Strategy** as government requires that the Sustainable Community Strategy and Core Strategy are closely linked. If possible the consultation periods for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy will be synchronised.

3.12 As well as synchronising the consultation process with the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation, it is also proposed to align the City's Issues and Options consultation with those of the Greater Nottingham authorities. It is anticipated therefore that the Issues and Options consultation process will take place in the winter of this year. The detailed consultation process will be designed with help from the Area Committees (and in accordance with the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement for Planning) and will provide Members with an opportunity to comment formally on the Issues and Options set out.

## 4 PROPOSALS

4.1 The key issues set out in this report, and accompanying appendix, are intended to form the basis of the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will be part of a series of documents contained in the Local Development Framework (which will replace the Nottingham City Local Plan as the statutory development plan for the City).

4.2 The Issues and Options consultation comprises the first consultation stage in the Core Strategy preparation process and it is intended that this process be carried out later this year and will be aligned with the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation and consultations on the Greater Nottingham authorities' Core Strategy Issues and Options consultations.

**5 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None.

**6 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- Nottingham City Council, Statement of Community Involvement for Planning, adopted June 2007.

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