



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to seek Cabinet approval for the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Preferred Options paper for the purposes of a six week public consultation exercise.

Background

This Preferred Options report is a consultation document and the second stage in the development of the final Core Strategy document. The Core Strategy will set out the strategic policy direction for future spatial development in Gedling Borough and will be one of a series of documents that together will form the LDF. The LDF will become the comprehensive spatial planning guide for Gedling and will eventually supersede the Replacement Gedling Local Plan that was adopted in 2005. Until that time the policies in the Replacement Local Plan will remain in force. The life of the Core Strategy will be at least ten years from the date of adoption.

The Preferred Options paper builds upon the Issues and Options consultation undertaken between April and June 2006. The Preferred Options document takes account, therefore, of the views of a wide range of organisations and individuals expressed at the Issues and Options stage.

While seeking to be a locally distinctive document, the Core Strategy must be guided by an existing national, regional and local planning policy framework, which constrains the options open to the Council. Key guidance and policy set by other bodies includes national planning advice in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs); the emerging East Midlands Regional Plan (due for adoption in 2008); and the Joint Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Structure Plan (JSP), adopted in February 2006, which will be operative until the Regional Plan is adopted. We have also taken account of the Gedling Borough Replacement Local Plan (July 2005), the policies in which have been saved for three years or until reviewed by another LDF document. The LDF must also be a key component in the delivery of the Community Strategy, setting out its spatial aspects where appropriate.

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared in conjunction with this document, to establish how its economic, social and environmental effects might reflect the objectives of sustainable development.

Density

It is understood that members are pressing for a review of housing densities and the LDF provides an opportunity to do this. The Core Strategy Preferred Options document recognises the need to make the most efficient use of land in accordance with PPS3: Housing (published December 2006). The details of this approach will be worked up into a criteria based policy through the Generic Development Control Policies document (on which initial work has commenced and which is due to be adopted in mid 2009). These policies will also undergo extensive consultation.

Next Steps

Submission Stage: All comments raised with regard to the Preferred Options document will be taken into consideration and used to inform decisions about the next stage of Core Strategy process. This will be the production of a final Submission document and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report. Once the final document is 'submitted' a six week formal consultation period for the document and its final SA report will take place, within which any comments can be made. The Borough Council may then discuss individual representations further to consider whether any agreement or compromise can be reached. In some instances, however, the representations will be recorded for an Inspector to consider within the next formal stage.

Independent Examination: Any representations that are made at the submission stage and not resolved will be considered by an Independent Planning Inspector, either in writing, at informal or formal hearings or through 'round table' discussions. A report will then be prepared by the Independent Planning Inspector, which will identify any changes that are to be made. The Borough Council will then be obliged to make these changes, as the Inspector's Report will be binding on the Borough Council.

Adoption: This is a formal process for Gedling Borough Council to adopt the Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy, Adoption Statement and Sustainability Appraisal will be made available for inspection during normal office hours at the Civic Centre and local libraries. The Adoption Statement will be published on the Council's website and notice given by local advertisement. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy document will be finally adopted in mid 2008.

Recommendation

That Cabinet resolves to endorse for consultation the Preferred Options report, as the basis for the continued development of the LDF Core Strategy.