



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options

Date: 6th May 2009

Author: Planning Policy Manager on behalf of Head of Strategy and Performance and Head of Planning and Environment

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek Cabinet approval for the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options paper for the purposes of a six week public consultation exercise.

Background

- 2 The Borough Council in conjunction with the councils of Ashfield, Broxtowe, Erewash, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe are working with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils to prepare a new aligned and consistent planning strategy for Greater Nottingham. Greater Nottingham is made up of the administrative areas of the city and district local authorities, with the exception of Ashfield, where only the Hucknall part is included.
- 3 The first stage in preparing this strategy is this Issues and Options consultation. The councils have identified the key issues facing the area and the main options open for addressing those issues, although no decisions have yet been made. It is clear from government guidance that to allow for the fullest possible debate, all options should be considered, however difficult they may be. Not considering these options could result in the Inspectorate determining a Core Strategy "unsound", because there would be no evidence that alternative options had been weighed against the one selected. Views on whether the issues are the right ones and whether any have been missed are to be sought.
- 4 The Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options report consists of four main parts. Section 1 introduces the concept of aligned Core Strategies, Section 2 looks at the character of Greater Nottingham now and in the future, Section 3 sets out the key spatial issues which need to be addressed

across the area as a whole (Part A Issues and Options), and which will require a strategic consistent policy approach if they are to be resolved, and Section 4 sets out, for each council area, those issues which are of more local importance (Part B Issues and Options), and therefore can be resolved within that council's area. A copy of the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options Report can be viewed in Appendix 1. It should be noted that this document will be subject to minor editing and presentation changes and will need to accommodate any changes suggested by the Government Office for the East Midlands.

- 5 The strategy is not a formal Joint Core Strategy, so decisions relating to it will be made by each council. Each council has been advised by the Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board, which is made up of the lead planning and transport councillors from each of the councils. The Joint Board meets regularly, and has overseen the preparation of this Issues and Options report. The Borough Council's Local Development Framework Steering Group has also had a series of meetings to advise on the contents of this aligned Issues and Options report.
- 6 As members will be aware, the Borough Council had previously consulted on Issues and Options and also the following Preferred Options stage, though that draft document was subsequently withdrawn. Comments made to these earlier consultations will also be taken into account.
- 7 The Aligned Core Strategy must take account of the Government's East Midlands Regional Plan which was published in March 2009 and sets out the number of new homes which will have to be built in each council area, together with guidance on how to provide for new jobs and work places, up until 2026. It also includes policies and guidance on how the expected level of growth can occur in a sustainable way, with all the infrastructure, parks and open space, community facilities and so forth that people need in their daily lives.
- 8 This Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options report looks at where the new homes, jobs and infrastructure might go; at how it can be made to be as sustainable as possible; how the growth can benefit our existing communities whilst recognising what is special about Greater Nottingham. This includes its historic environment, its culture and heritage, local distinctiveness between the city centre, the inner and outer suburbs, the other town centres, the Sub Regional Centres of Hucknall and Ilkeston, and the more rural settlements and villages, together with the countryside that surrounds them.

Why are the Councils Working Together?

- 9 It is considered that by working together, planning for the future of the area will be more consistent and ensure that the administrative boundaries of the local authorities will not get in the way of good planning and service delivery.
- 10 The councils are already working together on a number of issues, including closer working on Economic Assessments for the area and as part of the Government's New Growth Point programme to ensure that there is adequate

infrastructure to support new housing growth. By working together to prepare Core Strategies, it is considered that better and more joined up planning outcomes will be achieved, whilst also making best use of resources, by sharing staff, having a linked and more efficient examination of the Core Strategies and being able to access more funding, such as through the Government's Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

- 11 These advantages are recognised in the East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS 8). Policy 17 of the RSS 8 says:-

“...Local Development Frameworks should contain policies to manage the release of housing across both local planning authority areas and the wider Housing Market Area.....To achieve this, in the following Housing Market Areas joint development plan documents will be expected, with the development of joint Core Strategies across Housing Market Areas particularly encouraged.”

The policy specifically mentions Nottingham Core HMA and Hucknall. However, the councils have decided to cooperate on a voluntary partnership basis to align their Core Strategies, rather than prepare a formal single joint Core Strategy, as it is felt an aligned approach best allows for the coordination required while reflecting the local distinctiveness and democratic accountability of the constituent authorities.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 12 Sustainability appraisals are being carried out alongside the aligned Core Strategy as it develops. It is an integral part of the plan making process, which is intended to test and improve the sustainability of the aligned Core Strategy. The first stage is the Sustainability Scoping Report, which will be published alongside the aligned Issues and Options document, and contains the Sustainability Objectives that will be used to appraise the aligned Core Strategy as it develops.

Next Steps

- 13 Following approval by all the councils, each council will publish the aligned Issues and Options for widespread consultation and engagement. Once views have been received, these will be built into a report setting out what the preferred options are considered to be for dealing with each issue. Following further consultation on the Preferred Option, the Proposed Submission draft will be prepared on which further representations can be made. The aligned Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State who will organise a Hearing. The Inspector will then draft a binding report on the councils. A summary of the proposed timetable is set out below:-

June 2009	Issues and Options consultation
January 2010	Preferred Option consultation
September 2010	'Proposed Submission' draft for representations
January 2011	Submission of Aligned Core Strategy to Secretary of State

March 2011	Pre Hearing Meeting
April 2011	Hearing Sessions
October 2011	Inspector's Report received
December 2011	Aligned Core Strategy adopted
March 2012	Publication of Aligned Core Strategy

Recommendations

- 14 That Cabinet resolves to endorse for consultation the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Issues and Options report, incorporating Gedling Borough specific Part B issues and options (which will be subject to minor editing changes including any changes suggested by the Government Office for the East Midlands) as the basis for the continued development of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy for Gedling Borough.