

Report to: Full Council

Date: 25th April 2012

Subject: Gedling Borough Aligned Core Strategy – Publication Draft

Author: Service Manager – Planning and Economic Development

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the latest position on the progress being made towards preparation of the Council's Aligned Core Strategy in relation to the Publication Draft document and seeks approval of this document for public representation. It should be noted that the Publication Draft document takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework published on 27th March 2012.

2. Background

- 2.1 Planning legislation requires Gedling Borough Council to produce a 'Local Development Framework'. The Aligned Core Strategy is part of this framework and provides the strategic vision for development across the Borough of Gedling and the three partner local authority areas until 2028. Prior to its adoption, the document must go through a number of formal and informal consultation stages. Publication represents the first formal stage of preparation, and follows extensive informal consultation on the Issues and Options (2009) and the Option for Consultation (2010). Following publication of the plan for a formal period of representation, the Council will submit it to the Secretary of State for examination.
- 2.2 Gedling Borough Council, together with Broxtowe, Erewash, Rushcliffe and Nottingham City Councils published the "Option for Consultation" draft of their Aligned Core Strategies in February 2010. The Report of Responses for the Option for Consultation, Background Paper 1, is available on request from the Planning Policy Team. Following the election of the Coalition Government and their announcement in May 2010 that Regional Strategies were to be abolished, all the Councils commissioned further evidence to determine whether the level of housing provision set out in the Regional Strategy and

included in the Aligned Core Strategies continued to be appropriate. Following a consultation exercise over the summer of 2011, the five Councils have agreed that the evidence indicates that the levels of housing provision included in the Option for Consultation document continue to be appropriate. Background Papers 2 and 3 are the reports on the summer consultation and are available on request from the Planning Policy Team.

- 2.3 However, Rushcliffe Borough Council has decided to take a different approach, and has determined a housing provision different from the Option for Consultation document. Accordingly, they are now preparing a separate Core Strategy, albeit aligned in most other respects.
- 2.4 The Duty to Cooperate, introduced through the Localism Act, requires councils to work with their neighbours to address planning matters of cross boundary significance. Continuing to work closely with Nottingham City and the Boroughs of Broxtowe, Erewash (and with Rushcliffe on matters apart from housing provision and with Ashfield on cross border issues in particular) addresses this Duty.

Aligned Core Strategy

- 2.5 The Aligned Core Strategy is a strategic spatial planning document covering the period from 2011 to 2028. It contains a shared 'Vision' setting out what the plan area will look like once the Aligned Core Strategy has been delivered, together with Spatial Objectives which indicate how the vision will be implemented. Detailed policies then set out a Delivery Strategy to achieve the vision. The Aligned Core Strategy is attached as **Appendix A** and is also available to view via the 'Councillors and Meetings' page of the Council's website www.gedling.gov.uk
- 2.6 The document covers the council areas of Broxtowe Borough, Gedling Borough and Nottingham City, but formal approval of Full Council is only required for matters relating to the Gedling Borough Council area (and therefore some detail which relates only to the other districts is not included in the version of the document prepared for Full Council). As other councils are going through their own approval processes, parts of the plan relating to their areas may be subject to change, and there may also be a need to make further minor editing changes to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- 2.7 Should one or more of the partner councils fail to agree their part of the Aligned Core Strategies, consideration of how to proceed will be required, which may necessitate redrafting the Aligned Core Strategy to reflect this, possibly preparing a document to cover Gedling Borough matters only. It is likely that Erewash Borough Council will publish a separate Core Strategy for various reasons, including timing issues, and the Aligned Core Strategy will need to be redrafted to reflect this. It is proposed that any changes to the Aligned Core Strategy to remove references to a partner council be delegated to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee. It is emphasised that this will not affect the content of the Aligned Core Strategy as it relates to Gedling Borough.

- 2.8 The 19 policies address the following strategic spatial planning issues:
- Climate Change
 - The Spatial Strategy
 - The Nottingham-Derby Green Belt
 - Employment Provision and Economic Development
 - Nottingham City Centre
 - Role of Town and Local Centres
 - Regeneration
 - Housing Mix and Choice
 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People
 - Design and Enhancing Local Identity
 - The Historic Environment
 - Local Services and Healthy Lifestyles
 - Culture, Tourism and Sport
 - Managing Travel Demand
 - Transport Infrastructure Priorities
 - Green Infrastructure, Parks and Open Spaces
 - Biodiversity
 - Infrastructure
 - Developer Contributions
- 2.9 Since the Option for Consultation draft, the policies have been subject to some amendment as a result of consultation responses, Sustainability Appraisal outcomes, other statutory appraisal processes (including equalities impact assessment), and to ensure they continue to reflect government planning policy. In most cases these changes are minor, but Policy 1 'Climate Change', Policy 2 'The Spatial Strategy' and Policy 4 'Employment Provision And Economic Development' have been more substantially redrafted. New policies covering the Green Belt (due to the Regional Strategy being abolished) and the Historic Environment (at the request of consultees, including English Heritage) have also been added.
- 2.10 Policy 1 'Climate Change' has been redrafted to introduce the concept of the 'Energy Hierarchy' (firstly making the fabric of new buildings more efficient, secondly reducing the energy use within the development, and thirdly to maximise the use of low and zero carbon energy generation). This provides a more comprehensive approach to carbon dioxide reduction on which more local delivery policies (such as the current requirement for major development to include low or zero carbon energy generation) can be developed through future development plan documents.
- 2.11 Policy 2 'The Spatial Strategy' sets out the strategic sites prepared by the Borough Councils. Key elements of this policy for Gedling Borough Council include the provision of 7,250 new homes between 2011 and 2028, equating to 426 new homes (net) per annum. Whilst challenging in terms of recent levels of completions in the Borough since the economic downturn, it is considered to be achievable over the plan period. Although the locations of some new housing development will be set out in a future Site Allocations

Development Plan Document, the Core Strategy identifies locations for new housing development as follows:-

- North of Papplewick Lane (land allocated for 600 dwellings) – previously identified as safeguarded land in the Local Plan
- Top Wighay Farm (land allocated for 1000 dwellings) – an increase in size of the Local Plan allocation for 500 dwellings
- Bestwood village (up to 500¹ dwellings) – sites to be allocated through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- Calverton (up to 1300 dwellings) – sites to be allocated through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- Ravenshead (up to 330 dwellings) - sites to be allocated through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- The Site Allocations Development Plan document will also identify housing provision to be met through development in other villages solely to meet local needs
- The Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm site is safeguarded for possible future development but, given the lack of certainty regarding funding, the lack of robust evidence regarding deliverability is such that it is not allocated for development in the Aligned Core Strategy.

2.12 Background Paper 4 on Housing provides the background to the approach taken for Gedling Borough in Policy 2 and is available by request from the Planning Policy Team.

2.13 Policy 4 ‘Employment Provision and Economic Development’ has been redrafted to quantify future office and other employment land requirements. It promotes Nottingham City Centre as the primary location for new office development, but also promotes office development of a lesser scale in Arnold town centre. Significant new economic development will be promoted as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension at Top Wighay Farm and development of a lesser scale will be promoted within major development schemes to ensure a sustainable mix of uses, as set out in Development Plan Documents.

2.14 As a public body Gedling Borough Council is required to be in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Section 49 of the Act sets out the general equality duty for public bodies. The Equality Duty requires that in exercising their functions ‘due regard’ is given to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.15 To accord with the Duty, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared. A two stage approach to the Equality Impact Assessment has been taken.

¹ The figures for Bestwood, Calverton and Ravenshead are for new dwellings in order to meet the housing requirement set by the Aligned Core Strategy, and are in addition to those dwellings that are already in the planning system (unimplemented planning permissions and Local Plan allocations).

Firstly the policies in the Aligned Core Strategies have been assessed for their relevancy to the characteristics protected by the Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex and sexual orientation). The assessment found that a number of policies were either of high or medium relevance to one or more of the protected characteristics. The second stage of the process has taken these relevant policies and assessed the positive or negative impacts of them on the characteristics. This stage also involved recommending changes to remove the negative impact or increase the positive impact or ultimately if the policy needed to be removed. Overall a number of recommendations were made regarding the relevant policies and these have been considered alongside a number of other issues and where the recommendations have not been adopted the reasons for this have been set out.

- 2.16 A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment, Background Paper 5, is available by request from the Planning Policy Team.
- 2.17 Sustainability Appraisals have been carried out alongside the Aligned Core Strategies as they developed and Background Paper 6 (Part 1 Report and Part 2 Appendices) is available by request from the Planning Policy Team.

What Happens Next?

- 2.18 Subject to approval by all the partner councils, the Aligned Core Strategy will be published as soon as practical for a formal statutory public representation period (likely to commence in June 2012).
- 2.19 The representations will be considered and detailed drafting changes may be proposed if any factual or other minor inaccuracies emerge. Such minor drafting changes will not require a further consultation stage. If the councils wish to make any substantial changes to the draft in response to the representations or other key factors, then it is likely that these will need to be subject to further consultation before a new draft is then put before councillors for approval and a further period of public representation takes place. This would result in delays.

The Examination

- 2.20 The draft Aligned Core Strategy, along with all representations received will then be submitted to Government to allow an independent Examination by an Inspector. The Inspector will examine the whole plan for its 'soundness', irrespective of whether or not any representations are received. The Examination is likely to include a public hearing session, when parties making representation may, at the Inspector's discretion, present their views in person.

Adoption

2.21 The Inspector will issue a report that will either declare the Core Strategy sound or unsound. If sound, the Council can adopt the strategy. If the strategy is unsound, then it cannot be adopted.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Aligned Core Strategy has been prepared in partnership with Broxtowe, Erewash and Nottingham City Councils, and sets out a coherent and consistent strategic planning framework across the four local authority areas. Although Rushcliffe Borough Council has decided to prepare a separate Core Strategy, there has been continuing close working between all authorities.

3.2 The draft Aligned Core Strategy sets a strategic planning framework for Gedling Borough to 2028, including the broad scale and location of housing and economic growth over that period, together with supporting infrastructure and how environmental matters will be considered.

3.3 Core Strategies are part of the statutory Development Plan that all local planning authorities must prepare by law.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves the Aligned Core Strategy in so far as it relates to Gedling Borough Council to allow a period of public representations;
2. Authorises the Corporate Director in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee to approve any drafting or other minor editing changes; and
3. Authorises the Corporate Director in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee to approve any changes to the Aligned Core Strategy to remove references to a partner council in the event that a partner council fails to proceed with the Aligned Core Strategy.