

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LDF WORKING GROUP MEETING

19th JULY 2007

CORE STRATEGY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs J Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond, Head of Planning & Environment Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of progress on the issues/options stage of the core strategy process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Members note the contents of this report and attached newsletter as the basis for consultation on new issues/options shaping the Bromsgrove core strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 A key part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) planning system is the requirement for the Council to produce a Core Strategy.

3.2 A central part of the process of producing the Core Strategy is the identification of issues affecting the District and the generation of options in which to address such issues. These options are then tested by public consultation/engagement and preferred options selected.

3.3 The Issues and Options Report was first published in June 2005 and was subject to full public consultation. This work was however carried out prior to the production of Government Guidance on key areas, such as PPS1 Planning and Climate Change, PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and the production of revisions to the Regional Spatial Strategy.

3.4 The Issues and Options stage is viewed as a continuous process and it is vital that all eventual preferred options have been consulted upon. Furthermore, it is essential that the Core Strategy is as up to date as possible and is consistent with current Government/Regional Guidance. If the process does not meet these requirements, the Core Strategy may risk

failing the tests of soundness a number of councils have recently has their core strategies found to be unsound and as a consequence considerable amounts of time and money wasted.

3.5 PPS1 Planning and Climate Change demonstrates that the issue of climate change is at the top of the Government's agenda in relation to sustainable development. The Government believes that climate change is the greatest long term challenge facing the world today. Issues such as reducing carbon emissions, increasing the production of renewable energy, promoting recycling and awareness of flood risk are all matters which the Government expects Regional and Local Authorities to address as part of their spatial plan making processes.

3.6 A further influence is the revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The Core Strategy must be in conformity with this document if it is to achieve a sound rating. Housing figures were released in January which indicate options for the amount of housing provision required in the future in Bromsgrove, which will have varying locational implications. The implications of these housing figures could also mean an expansion of Redditch into surrounding districts one of which potentially being Bromsgrove.

3.7 Consultation on these issues must therefore take place in order to inform the production of the Preferred Option Core Strategy document.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 It is therefore proposed to carry out an additional stage of consultation in order to relaunch the issues and options already consulted upon in 2005 and introduce new issues for consideration. A copy of the consultation newsletter has been attached to this report.

4.2 A Local Strategic Partnership was held on the 11th July 2007 in connection with The Sustainable Community Strategy. At this event the opportunity was taken to launch this additional stage of consultation on the issues and options. "Piggy backing" this event, offers added value, not only in carrying out the necessary consultation for the core strategy's new issues/options but also aligning the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF processes, in accordance with test of soundness 5.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The key Government objectives are that the LDF process is transparent, responsive and iterative. As the process of adoption may take approximately a year from submission to adoption, it is vital that the submitted preferred option document is as up to date as possible. Every opportunity should therefore be taken to ensure that current and emerging

guidance are taken on board as part of the process before the submission stage.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No direct funding implications have been identified as a result of this proposal.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

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