

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

**13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

### **THE CORE STRATEGY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report summarises the responses to the Issues and Options consultations on the Core Strategy.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the contents of the attached report entitled Executive Summary: Issues and Options be noted and that the responses from this consultation process are used to develop preferred options for the Core Strategy.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 'Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks' was published in 2004 and states that local authorities should develop a core strategy that will form an essential part of the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy should set out the long term spatial vision for the district of Bromsgrove and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision.
- 3.2 In summer 2005 the Council went through a first stage of consultation on a variety of key issues for the district of Bromsgrove that would form part of the Core Strategy. The responses received combined with policy changes at a regional and national level led to a number of new issues arising. A second period of consultation then took place over the summer of 2007. The consultation employed a variety of methods including use of the internet, targeted letters, questionnaires, workshops, "piggy backing" LSP events and the popular summer street theatre. This document contains a summary of the consultation responses from both consultation periods that address the key issues within the district of Bromsgrove.
- 3.3 Housing is one the most contentious and important issues within the district. Concerns have been raised with regard to the rising cost of housing that is accentuating issues of affordability within the district. The level of affordable housing needs to increase in order to meet demand but this needs to be balanced against the current situation in relation to market housing. As identified with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Bromsgrove is located outside of the Major Urban Area (MUA) therefore growth should be limited

to meeting local needs. This is reflected in the allocation of 2100 for the district between 2006 and 2026 within the RSS Phase 2 Revision. This low level of allocation creates major challenges in delivering increased levels of affordable housing. The responses identified that any growth should be located within the most sustainable locations within the district and a focus on using primarily brownfield sites in the first instance.

- 3.4 The importance of Green Belt policy has been reiterated throughout the consultation process. Future policies should continue to be developed in line with Government advice contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 - Green Belts and inappropriate development should only be granted within the Green Belt when very special circumstances have been demonstrated that override the harm by definition. The Green Belt has an important role to play in preventing the outward expansion of the West Midlands conurbation and assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 3.5 Developing future employment opportunities is essential in the district if the local economy is to strengthen and grow. Concerns have been raised over the increasing number of people who migrate outwardly on a daily basis to work within the MUA. It is important in sustainability terms to develop opportunities across a wide range of employment sectors to create jobs for local people. Primarily the focus of such development will be in urban areas such as Bromsgrove town, the Central Technology Belt (A38 corridor) and the former MG Rover site at Longbridge.
- 3.6 There has been notable support for the modest expansion of Bromsgrove Town Centre. This would help to meet the needs of residents of Bromsgrove Town and the surrounding villages. Whilst Bromsgrove may not be able to compete with major retail centres such as Birmingham, Worcester and Merry Hill, it is important that the town centre provides a variety of shops and services to cater for local needs and reduce the need for local people to travel elsewhere. Furthermore, in order to encourage regeneration and the vibrancy of the Town Centre, it is important that a mixture of uses, including leisure and residential be encouraged. To maintain the vitality and viability of small centres and villages it essential that all uses and other community facilities are maintained and protected.
- 3.7 To ensure that Bromsgrove continues to be an attractive and pleasant place to live protecting the environment is crucial and there has been notable support for this from local residents. The Core Strategy can help to achieve this on a number of levels. It is necessary to ensure that future developments do not cause significant harm to biodiversity and wherever possible provide benefits to the natural environment.
- 3.8 In recognition of the need to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects, greater efforts need to be put into encouraging new developments to obtain some energy from renewable sources and promote and provide opportunities for increasing recycling on new developments.

- 3.9 The transport network has a key role in delivering sustainable development in the district. There is support for protecting local shops and services that reduce the need to travel across the district. Developing greater employment opportunities would potentially reduce the number people who commute to the MUA on a daily basis. There needs to a focus on reducing the reliance on cars. This requires improvements to be made to public transport.
- 3.10 Bromsgrove has a long and complex history which has shaped the town and smaller settlements within the district. Responses through the consultation process has supported the continued protection of the districts 10 conservation areas and many listed buildings and development should only be permitted where it either enhances or maintains the appearance of conservation areas or listed buildings. To help preserve the historic environment policies should encourage the viable reuse of locally important buildings wherever possible.

#### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications of endorsing the issues and option stage of the core strategy.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

#### 6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Regeneration (CO1)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	A thriving market town (CP1)
<b>Impacts</b>			
The Core Strategy identifies the long term spatial vision for the district this includes key areas such as the regeneration of the town centre.			

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Customer service (CP2)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Customer service (CP2)
<b>Impacts</b>			
The issues and options process has involved detailed consultation with the general public and the completed core strategy will be a publicly available document that identifies the spatial vision for the district.			

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Sense of Community and Well Being (CO3)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Sense of community (CP3)
<b>Impacts</b>			
The core strategy sets out the long term spatial vision for the district and the strategic policies required in delivering that vision. The core strategy goes beyond identify land uses and attempts to tackle social and economic issues that effect make by the implementation of various policies.			

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Environment (CO4)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Housing (CP4)
<b>Impacts</b>			
Policies within the core strategy will be used to help create the Affordable Housing SPD and therefore control the future housing provision within the district.			

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Non legally compliant Strategic planning service

These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment  
 Key Objective Ref No: 6  
 Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Endorsing the responses of the issues and options of the core strategy will have no direct implications on the council’s customers.

**9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no implications for equality and diversity.

**10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None

Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The core strategy forms an essential part of the LDF and the policies contained within the core strategy will shape future development.
Environmental	Core strategy will contain policies in relation to the environment.

## 11. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	<b>No</b>
Chief Executive	<b>No</b>
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>No</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>No</b>
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>No</b>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<b>No</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>No</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>No</b>

## 12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Executive summary of the Issues and Options Consultation

## 13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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