

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 December 2012

Title: North Tyneside Area Action Plans and Core Strategy

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Service: Planning

Directorate: Chief Executive's Office

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report:

- enables the consideration by this Committee of Initial Proposals for AAPs as required by the council's Policy Framework; and
- responds to the referral of the Core Strategy by Council to this Committee for consideration.

2. Recommendations

2.1 In respect of the Area Action Plans, the Committee are recommended to

- consider the content of the Publication Draft Initial Proposals; and
- to forward any recommendations and observations in relation to the content to the Elected Mayor for consideration in accord with the Council's Policy Framework process.

2.2 In respect of the Core Strategy, the Committee are recommended to:

- consider the details of both the policy context and the evidence base behind the Core Strategy and in particular the key issues outlined in paragraph 4.26; and
- report back to the Committee with its findings in due course.

3. Details: Development Plans

3.1 The Council is required to produce documents which set out its policies relating to the development and use of land in its area. The most important of these are Development Plan Documents (DPDs), also known as Local Plans, which include any allocations of land for development and general planning policies. They are the starting point for the determination of planning applications.

- 3.2 Policies of DPDs need to be based on not only wide engagement with the public and organisations, but on a sound and extensive evidence base and cooperation with neighbouring authorities and other bodies on strategic issues. They must provide for any need for sustainable development, and are expected to be consistent with national policy.
- 3.3 The existing Development Plan for North Tyneside is made up of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Government is in the process of abolishing Regional Spatial Strategies. In future the Development Plan for North Tyneside will consist of the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans which together will replace the UDP. These documents are currently under preparation, the latest timetable having been approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 8th October 2012 as part of the [Local Development Scheme](#) (Minute CAB102/10/12 refers).
- 3.3 The Development Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework, and is therefore subject to the related procedure rules. The Council is particularly involved at the Publication Draft stage, which under the terms of the Council's Policy Framework rules includes consideration of initial proposals by Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

4. Details: Area Action Plans

- 4.1 The Area Action Plans for the Coastal area (including Whitley Bay), North Shields, and Wallsend will contain detailed proposals, the coast, the riverside, and town centres. They have now reached the point at which a Publication Draft requires approval for publication. At its meeting of 8th October 2012 Cabinet resolved that the Area Action Plans Publication Draft: Initial Proposals document be approved as the initial step in this process ([Minute CAB100/10/12 refers](#)). Summaries of the content of the document, steps taken to date in its preparation, and the evidence including consultation justifying those proposals, are set out in the report to Cabinet of the 8th Oct 2012 which is attached as Appendix 1. The document itself is attached as Appendix 2. Other papers supporting the report to Cabinet are listed below under Background information.
- 4.2 The next steps in the preparation of the Area Action Plans Publication Draft are:
- Overview and Scrutiny; initial proposals and comments (purpose of present report);
 - Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny comments by the Elected Mayor;
 - Overview and Scrutiny; second scrutiny on way to preparing final proposals;
 - Cabinet: consideration of final proposals prior to submission to full Council;
 - Full Council: consideration of final proposals prior to Publication.
- 4.3 Once the draft AAPs are approved by Full Council there will follow a formal six week consultation, programmed for May 2013. Pending the outcome of this consultation the AAPs will be submitted to the Secretary of State with an examination by an Independent Inspector. Final adoption of the AAPs, programmed for Jun 2014 would then follow providing the Inspector's report permits this.

5. Details: Core Strategy

Nature of Core Strategy:

- 5.1 The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out a vision and spatial strategy for the whole Borough for the next 15 years, covering housing, the economy, the riverside and town centres, the Green Belt, infrastructure, the natural & built

environment, the coast, and climate change. In effect the Core Strategy is the local application of, and response to, national policies and priorities.

Past events

- 5.2 To date the main and recent steps in the preparation of the Core Strategy have been:
- [Issue & Options: Consultation:](#)
 - [Preferred Options: Consultation: summer 2010](#)
 - [Growth Options: Consultation: autumn 2011](#)
 - [Council considers petition and requests withdrawal of Core Strategy to allow further work/consultation: Nov 2011](#) (Minute C85/11/11 refers)
 - [Cabinet refers outcome of Growth Options consultation to Council: Dec 2012](#) (Minute CAB110/12/11 refers)
 - [Cabinet authorises continued work on Core Strategy: Feb 2012](#) (Minute CAB145/02/12 refers)
 - [Council notes Growth Options consultation outcome: Jul 2012](#) (Minute C37/07/12 refers)
 - [Council Motion referring Core Strategy to Overview & Scrutiny: Sept 2012.](#)
- 5.3 The text of the Motion approved by Council at its meeting of 27 Sept 2012 (Minute C64/09/12(ii)) was “This Council is concerned about the time it is taking to produce the Core Strategy. In order to progress the development of the Core Strategy the Council refers to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee a request to bring forward, by no later than 24 January 2013, recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet to assist it to finalise the initial proposals for the Core Strategy”. The intended report to Overview and Scrutiny is in response to the above Motion.

Future process

- 5.4 The future steps in the preparation of the Core Strategy are as approved by Cabinet as part of the [Local Development Scheme 2012](#). They are:

Preparation of Consultation Draft	Oct 2012 to May 2013
Cabinet approval of Consultation Draft	Jun 2013
Publication of Consultation Draft	Jul 2013
Preparation of Publication Draft	Aug 2013 to Nov 2013
Consideration of Publication Draft in accordance with the Council’s Policy Framework rules, resulting in Council approval of Final Proposals	Dec 2013 to Jun 2014
Publication for statutory consultation	Sep 2014
Submission to Secretary of State	Dec 2014
Examination including public hearings	Mar 2015
Inspector’s report	Jun 2015
Adoption by Cabinet	Sep 2015.

- 5.5 The next stage is the opportunity for widespread public involvement and debate given by the publication of the Consultation Draft, which will be a preliminary draft of the whole plan. This addresses issues raised by Council at its meeting of Nov 2011.

Core Strategy content and public response

Preferred Options

- 5.6 The [Core Strategy Preferred Options consultations](#) (summer 2010) indicated a clear majority of respondents supported proposals to:
- Retain the existing Green Belt;
 - Regenerate and maximise development in Wallsend, Whitley Bay, and Wallsend town centres;
 - Regenerate the riverside, especially for marine related activities;
 - Regenerate the coast, whilst respecting its natural and built environment;
 - Reduce the overall amount of amount of employment land available for development, whilst protecting the best of that land including eight key sites from development for other uses;
 - Resist land fill but otherwise make provision for waste management uses;
 - Provide additional comparison shopping focused on town centres, but restrict further convenience shopping (supermarkets etc).
- 5.7 There was however considerable opposition to:
- the amount of housing proposed;
 - the suggested key housing sites, except West Chirton South and Annitsford Farm;
 - any provision for gypsies and travellers; and
 - the general location of waste management uses.
- 5.8 Associated with the housing issues was opposition to the overall vision of a transformed and growing Borough, and no clear view on the suggested proposal to disperse development across the Borough rather than concentrate it in a particular area. As a consequence of the consultation the approach to planning for waste and gypsies and travellers being followed is to simply prepare a criteria based policy against which to assess any future development proposals.
- 5.9 The opposition to some of the housing sites was underpinned by the concern that many were on greenfield sites. Cabinet on the 8th October 2012 approved the initial proposals for the Area Action Plans for Wallsend, North Shields and the Coast. The [AAP's](#) have identified brownfield sites which can make provision for 1085 houses in those areas. This represents an increase on what had previously been identified. In addition, on the 8th October 2012, Cabinet also approved a [development framework](#) for West Chirton Industrial Estate South to facilitate progress on bringing this brownfield site forward for 450 houses and other uses. However, there still remains a need for green field sites of at least the scale of those sites identified in the Core Strategy Preferred Options report to meet housing need.

Growth Options

- 5.10 As a basis for discussion the Growth Options consultation (autumn 2011) referred to three alternative levels of growth as set out in the table below, based on data then available. Because of the scale of growth under Option 1, and the avoidance of the use of green field land for housing under Option 3, both these options would require new green field sites to be identified for existing businesses replaced by housing. A [paper](#) setting out issues that would arise if Option 3 were selected as the basis for the core strategy was circulated to all Councillors prior to its meeting of July 2012.

	1) Increased growth	2) Stable growth	3) Reduced Growth
Additional homes	11000	6000	3600
Population growth	26000	16000	10500
Land for employment development (ha)	208	180	158
Additional jobs (up to)	15,500	14000	11000

5.11 On [consultation](#) a majority of those responding did support either Option 1 or 2. Option 2 was equivalent to the level of growth set out in the earlier Preferred Options document.

Other issues

5.12 The full Core Strategy, first issued as the Consultation Draft will also include policies:

- for the regeneration of the north-west of the Borough;
- for the provision of infrastructure (including transport) and community facilities;
- addressing climate change, eg flooding issues;
- covering the details of development.

Housing growth and housing sites:

5.13 In relation to the overall level of housing growth, work is underway to revise the number of additional homes required for inclusion in the Consultation Draft to take account of:

- Recent building and planning permissions granted ;
- Latest Government population data & forecasts;
- Likely local demand including for affordable housing;
- Housing proposals of Newcastle City and Northumberland Councils (especially in Newcastle, themselves subject of public opposition);
- Need to extend plan period to 2030 (15yrs after adoption).

Present indications are that the net effect of the above will be that the number of additional homes to be provided will need to be increased.

5.14 The Preferred Options document (2010) suggested that the additional homes required (equivalent to Growth Option 2) would have been provided as follows:

- Around 800 in the AAP areas;
- Around 1100 on smaller sites in the rest of the urban area;
- Around 4100 on key sites.

5.15 The present position in relation to the suggested key sites is set out in the table below:

Site	Total homes proposed	No of affordable homes proposed	Status
Station Rd E, Wallsend	650	Around 160	Planning application anticipated shortly
Station Rd W, Wallsend	560	NA	Landowner no longer willing to develop
East Benton Farm	50	NA	Landowner no longer willing to develop
West Chirton South	420	Around 105	Development Framework approved – developer interest
Whitehouse Farm	366	£5.5M for	Planning permission refused &

Site	Total homes proposed	No of affordable homes proposed	Status
		off site provision	inquiry held; decision expected Mar 13
Scaffold Hill	450	113	Planning permission refused; inquiry expected Feb13
Annitsford Fm	400	60%	NTC owned: Master plan under preparation, report re development to Cabinet Dec 12
Shiremoor West (n & s)	590	Around 150	Planning application anticipated soon
Wellfield	200	£3M for off site provision	Planning permission granted on appeal; construction expected to start spring 2013

- 5.16 Of the overall total of around 3,700 homes, around 1400 are on sites that have been refused planning permission or where the landowner no longer wishes to develop. Additional sites will therefore need to be included in the Consultation Draft of the Core Strategy to replace any of those already suggested unlikely to come forward, and to provide for the expected increase in the overall number of homes required, despite the additional capacity that has been identified within the AAP boundaries. Work in progress to identify any potential sites eg through an update of the [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHLAA).

Employment land

- 5.17 The Core Strategy Preferred Options document suggested a limited reduction in the amount of employment land (from around 950 hectares of existing and developable sites to around 900 hectares). This was to be achieved by the reallocation of allocated employment land at West Chirton and Shiremoor West, mostly for housing, and allowing other proposals for new uses of employment land where appropriate. In addition 8 existing allocations were suggested for designation as key sites to be protected from development for other uses
- 5.18 Despite general public support for the employment policies contained in the Core Strategy Preferred Options, there continues to be pressure from the public and developers to release more existing employment sites for other development especially housing. On the other hand Councillors have also expressed concern at the loss of employment land, and accordingly consideration of the availability of employment land has been added to the work programme of the Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee.
- 5.19 The present [Employment Land Review](#) was published in 2009. In response to the above issues, and the changes in the economy, it is considered that the Consultation Draft of the Core Strategy may need to contain different policies and proposals for sites from those suggested in previous consultations. Accordingly at least a partial reappraisal of the Employment Land Review is to be undertaken, to take into account factors such as:
- Likely future numbers of working residents
 - Desired commuting patterns
 - Business needs, including those of existing local businesses
 - Need to support economic growth

- Proposals of neighbouring authorities
- Emerging priorities of the NE Local Economic Partnership
- Building and planning permissions granted since 2009
- Any changes in the quality and role of both existing employment areas and land currently allocated for development

Other issues

- 5.20 Work continues with other local authorities in the area at producing up to date evidence of the need for waste sites, and a similar exercise will be required in respect of provision for Gypsies and travellers. It is expected that policies for these uses will exclude any specific provision, and be limited to criteria to judge any planning applications.
- 5.21 In relation to flood risk, an assessment of the areas of the Borough most at risk from surface water and other flooding is nearing completion. The Council is also working with Northumbrian Water Ltd, the Environment Agency and landowners to ensure the risk of flooding to existing property and infrastructure is reduced through a planned programme of improvement work. Land allocated for development in the Core Strategy will as far as practicable avoid areas most at risk from flooding, and policies will ensure new developments incorporate measures to minimise additional flood risk.
- 5.22 In cooperation with adjoining local authorities and the relevant official bodies, the impact of the proposed scale of development on infrastructure, including transport and sewerage systems, is being examined. Some of the costs of this infrastructure will be met by developers through S106 contributions, or more widely through the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is programmed for introduction in parallel with the Core Strategy

Key issues

- 5.23 In summary therefore the key issues to be resolved in the course of the preparation of the Core Strategy include:
- The overall scale and location of development required to meet housing need;
 - The amount and type of employment land required to provide jobs and training for residents, and to provide for business needs; and
 - The impact of development on the environment and infrastructure, including transport, drainage, and community facilities.
- 5.24 On the basis of present information, and the response to consultations carried out to date, the approach to be followed in the Core Strategy on the following issues has been resolved:
- Protection of the Green Belt;
 - Regeneration and development of town centres;
 - Protection and regeneration of the riverside for economic development
 - Regeneration of the coast and the north west of the Borough

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Report to Cabinet of 8th Oct 2012 on Area Action Plans

Appendix 2: Area Action Plans: Publication Draft Initial Proposals

6. **Background Information**

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author:

[Area Action Plan Boundary Maps](#)

[Area Action Plans Preferred Options: Report of Consultation](#)

[Area Action Plans Major Proposed Changes: Final Response Schedule](#)