

APPENDIX J

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 SEPTEMBER 2008

EXECUTIVE - 7 OCTOBER 2008

Title:

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - UPDATE

[Portfolio Holder for Planning: Cllr Mrs Carole Cockburn]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update ELOS on the progress of the Local Development Framework (LDF) The LDF will contain a suite of planning policy documents which, over time, will replace the existing Waverley Borough Local Plan. The report sets out the background to the LDF, progress to date and the next steps.

Environmental implications:

The planning policy documents in the LDF will play a key role at the local level in setting out the policies that will control, guide and facilitate the development and use of land for a number of years to come. It will balance the environmental, social and economic implications of new development against both national and local needs. It will be a key tool against which decisions on planning issues will be made.

Social / community implications:

One of the key features of the LDF is the opportunity for community engagement at various stages in the process, to help shape local choices in managing future development.

E-Government implications:

The web site and email facilities will be widely used in the communication with stakeholders, the local community etc.

Resource/Value for Money and Legal implications:

In setting out the programme for the LDF, it will be necessary to take account of the resource implications. This is to ensure that work is prioritised and that the proposed programme of LDF work can be delivered within the available resources. The Core Strategy work is anticipated to be resource hungry, occupying much of the time of the Policy Team over the next 18-24 months.

Introduction

1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new system for the development of planning policy at the regional and local level. At the regional level, the regional planning body (in our case SEERA) is responsible for producing the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS for this area will be the South East Plan. Local authorities such as Waverley will be responsible for producing the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will contain a suite of planning policy documents which, over time, will replace the planning policies in the current Waverley Borough Local Plan. The documents that form the LDF are known as Local Development Documents (LDDs). They will fall into two categories:
 - Development Plan Documents (DPDs); and
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
2. DPDs are the documents dealing with the major and important issues. Some LDF documents have to be DPDs. The principal difference between a DPD and an SPD is that the DPD is subject to independent examination and cannot be adopted by the Council until it has received the report from the appointed Inspector (which is a binding report). The main purpose of an SPD is to amplify or expand on the policy and guidance in a DPD in relation to a particular issue.

Main differences between the LDF system and the old system of Local Plans

3. The new LDF system differs from the old system of local plans in many ways:-
 - Planning policies will be contained in a number of separate documents.
 - There is an emphasis of “frontloading” work such as the stakeholder and community engagement.
 - There is a requirement that Sustainability Appraisal (SA) be embedded throughout the preparation of LDF documents.
 - LDFs should not simply repeat national policy, but should deal with local issues reflecting the local distinctiveness of the area.
 - The focus should be on delivery.
 - The LDF should go beyond traditional land use policies and should take into account the relevant strategies of other key service providers.
 - It is important to acknowledge and develop links between the Council’s LDF and the local Community Strategy.
4. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the production of these LDF documents. The most important LDF document is the Core Strategy. This, as the title suggests, will set out the Council’s planning delivery strategy for the next 15 years. It will also set out a number of high level planning policies dealing with the key issues facing Waverley, including the strategy for delivering the required amount of housing and the Council’s strategy for delivering affordable housing.

5. As stated above, the main focus of the LDF will still be on the Core Strategy. This is also the focus of the current LDF work in the Department. There are various key stages in the production of a Core Strategy. These commence with the production of a **Spatial Portrait**. This provides a picture of Waverley as it is now. It draws on various sources of factual evidence and sets out the key social, environmental and economic characteristics that make Waverley distinctive. Attached as Annexe 1 to this report is the proposed Spatial Portrait for consideration by Members.
6. The Spatial Portrait should be a key source in the identification of the main **issues** that the Core Strategy should address. It will be noted, for example, that the draft Spatial Portrait identifies issues such as the substantial need for affordable housing; the ageing population; the relatively high levels of traffic in Surrey; and the limited accessibility to services, particularly in rural areas and for those without access to a car. Attached as Annexe 2 is the list of issues for the Core Strategy. This has been derived from the Spatial Portrait, together with a range of other relevant sources. These include relevant national and regional planning policies, the Council's Corporate Plan and the Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy. It also draws on issues emerging from the consultations that have been taking place with the local community and other stakeholders and the evidence base (see below). It is possible that as the evidence continues to be compiled and consultations continue, there may be some revisions/additions to the list. At this stage, however, Members are invited to comment on the issues identified.
7. The next stage is the development of the **Spatial Vision** for the Core Strategy and the identification of the Core Strategy **Objectives**. Again, these will be derived from the evidence and the issues identified. As explained below, it is also important to align the LDF Core Strategy with the community strategy for the area. Therefore, the proposed Vision will also be informed by the vision for the Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy and Waverley's Sustainability Community Strategy and the outcome of the recent event for the Planning Policy Special Interest Group and the Waverley Local Strategic partnership (LSP) (see below). Officers are still working up the draft Vision for the Core Strategy with a view to an oral report being made at the meeting.
8. Following on from the Vision will be the Objectives for the Core Strategy and again, officers are currently in the process of compiling these and an oral report will, therefore, be made at the meeting.
9. Although the Core Strategy is very much an evolving document, officers have identified the broad scope in terms of the subjects that it is likely to address:-
 - a spatial settlement strategy;
 - housing land provision;
 - affordable housing and other housing needs, including needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showmen;
 - employment;
 - town centres;
 - infrastructure;
 - open space, leisure and recreation,

- the role of the rural areas (including the rural economy);
 - biodiversity and climate change; and
 - sustainable development and design.
7. In addition, there are already some other specific issues that we know will have to be addressed as part of the Core Strategy and other LDF documents. These include the implications for the LDF of development proposals for Dunsfold Aerodrome; and the implications of the A3 scheme at Hindhead and the related work being carried out by “Hindhead Together”.
8. The focus of the work to date on the Local Development Framework (LDF) has been on evidence gathering and community/stakeholder engagement. In relation to the Core Strategy we are at the “Issues and Options” stage. Our aim is to ensure that we have identified all the key issues for Waverley that can be dealt with through the LDF Core Strategy, and to start to identify the options for dealing with these. As explained above, two of the primary sources for this information are the evidence gathering and the early input from the local community and other key stakeholders.

Evidence Gathering

9. A number of key studies are underway, in order to provide the robust evidence base needed to support the Core Strategy. The current status of these studies is as follows:
- **Housing Market Assessment (HMA)** (jointly commissioned with Guildford BC and Woking BC) – This will assess the future needs and demands for different types of housing, including subsidised affordable housing. The stakeholder consultation on the draft report has raised some issues that need to be addressed by the consultants before the HMA can be finalised. As it stands at the moment, we are awaiting the consultant’s response to these representations and comments that we made linked to these.
 - **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**. This has been carried out in two phases. The first phase involved the identification of sites with potential within the main settlements and the villages with identified settlement boundaries in the Local Plan. The second phase, involves considering the potential on sites outside but adjoining the main settlements, including the larger villages. The consultants carrying out that study recently issued a “call for sites” inviting landowners, developers and others to put forward sites for consideration in this second phase. The second phase will also include assessing potential on significant brownfield sites outside settlements (for example Milford Hospital). The current expectation is that the whole study should be completed in the autumn.
 - **Employment Land Review (ELR)**. – This involves assessing the current supply of employment land and the likely future needs for employment land over the plan period. The first draft report has been

received and is being assessed by officers. Officers may also wish to test the emerging findings from the ELR with key business stakeholders, such as the Waverley Business Forum, before the study is finalised.

- **Town Centre Retail Study** – This will assess retail needs in the four main centres over the plan period. Officers have assessed the draft report and the consultants involved made a presentation on the emerging findings to the last meeting of the Planning Policy Special Interest Group (SIG) in June. The study is now nearing completion.
 - **Affordable Housing viability Study** – This involves an assessment of the implications for development viability arising from a range of options for new policies on affordable housing. For example, the implications of increasing the percentage of affordable housing on qualifying sites or lowering the thresholds for requiring affordable housing. A first draft of the study is currently being assessed by officers.
10. In addition to these studies, officers are gathering evidence on local services and facilities to build up a picture of the “settlement hierarchy” in Waverley. One of the primary aims of establishing a settlement hierarchy is to promote sustainable communities by bringing housing, employment opportunities and services closer together in an attempt to reduce the need for travel, particularly by private vehicle. The settlement hierarchy helps to achieve this by providing a framework which will feed into the Core Strategy DPD for concentrating housing growth and other forms of development in those settlements that have a range of services and employment opportunities, and limiting growth in those that do not.
 11. It should be noted that whilst the final hierarchy should indicate the most sustainable locations for development, it does not follow that levels of development would be equal amongst settlements at each level within the hierarchy. Decisions about the location and amount of development will also be affected other factors, such as the strategic policy direction, suitable sites being available and other development constraints such as flooding. However, the settlement hierarchy will help to guide the search for sites when specific allocations are considered, and provide guidance for ‘windfall’ schemes (i.e. development proposals on unallocated sites).
 12. Officers will also be gathering evidence on transportation and flood risk issues, but this work is likely to take place later in the programme, once we have seen the findings of the SHLAA. It will also be necessary to provide supporting evidence on infrastructure. Some of this is already underway in the form of 1 to 1 interviews with key infrastructure and service providers. Work on the settlement hierarchy will also be relevant as will the countywide assessment of infrastructure that is being led by the Surrey County Council.
 13. It may also be necessary to provide evidence on issues such as open space and townscape/landscape assessments. At this stage, officers are assessing

what evidence is already available on these matters. For example in some of the village plans, health checks and village design statements.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

14. Another key aspect of the new planning policy system is consultation and community engagement. At this Issues and Options stage, consultation arrangements are not prescriptive. The intention is to have an on-going and two-way dialogue, particularly with the key stakeholders, in order to ensure that the key issues that the LDF Core Strategy must deal with have been identified and to develop realistic options to address these.
15. Officers are currently working through an extensive programme of stakeholder and community engagement activities. These include:-
 - Interviews with key infrastructure and service providers – The aim is to identify any key issues or constraints that the Council will need to consider in developing its Core Strategy.
 - Meetings with representatives from adjoining local authorities – The purpose is to identify any key cross-boundary issues that will need to be considered in the Core Strategy.
 - Forum for town and parish councils – This took place at the end of one of the joint meetings with town and parish councils. At the Forum, three broad topics were discussed – The options for locating new housing development; what is good and what could be better in the local areas (such as access to services etc.); and how the towns and parishes could be involved further in the LDF process.
 - Cluster meetings with town and parish councils – The decision to hold these meetings was partly a response to comments at the Forum for towns and parishes. Four meetings have taken place at local venues with representatives from the town and parish councils. (These clusters were based on the Area Planning Committee boundaries). Again, the focus at these meetings was to discuss further the three broad topics covered at the Forum.
 - An online poll and survey on the “Big Debate” – This provided the opportunity for local residents and other interested parties to complete an online poll and/or a more detailed survey on the broad options for the location of new housing. The poll and survey both finished on 1st August and officers are currently analysing the outcomes.
 - Waverley Business Forum – Officers recently attended a meeting of the Waverley Business Forum where they gave an introduction to the LDF process and stressed the need for business to get involved. We are also planning to hold a meeting with key business representatives and organisations in the near future. Feedback from the Forum indicated that they are particularly interested in employment land and affordable housing.
 - Waverley Youth Day Young People were asked for their views about Waverley.

Linking the LDF Core Strategy with the Waverley Community Strategy

16. It is essential that there is a link between the local Community Strategy and the LDF, particularly the Core Strategy. The LDF should provide the spatial application of the issues coming out of the local Community Strategy.
17. In addition, on 9th July, there was a joint event involving members of the Planning Policy SIG and representatives from the Waverley Local Strategic Partnership. The aim of the event was to further develop links between the LDF Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy, with a view to identifying the key issues for the LDF and developing a vision relevant to both the LDF and the Community Strategy.

Next Steps

18. The next steps will include concluding the key evidence studies and the targeted consultations with stakeholders, with a view to identifying, where appropriate, the options for dealing with the key issues. These are then developed into the preferred strategy with the overall aim of having the Core Strategy ready for the formal pre-submission consultation by the end of 2009/start of 2010. In the meantime, there will be further public consultation on the Core Strategy as it evolves. Having regard to the recent changes to relevant national planning guidance and Regulations, officers are still working on the arrangements for the further public consultation on the Core Strategy.
19. Annexe 3 includes some supplementary information circulated at the meeting and the comments made by the Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive endorses the direction of travel on the LDF, and confirms the Spatial Portrait, the list of Issues, the proposed Vision and the Core Strategy Objectives.

Background Papers (CSP)

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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