

**Cabinet Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**The Black Country Joint Core Strategy - Approval of a Proposed Spatial Options Paper for Initial Consultation**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To approve proposed Spatial Options for initial consultation to assist in formulating a Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country as stipulated by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Background**

2. Under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, each Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to produce a Core Strategy Development Plan Document as part of its Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy provides the strategic planning basis for all development in the Borough linking in with other Council Strategies and the Community Plan. In the preparation of a Core Strategy, it is necessary to follow a required set of stages as stipulated in the legislation, all of which require community involvement and consultation. This initial stage is the 'Issues and Options stage' and will be followed by a 'Preferred Option' stage and finally submission to the Secretary of State to go through an Examination in Public and subsequent approval.
3. It was agreed by the four Black Country Councils (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) that it would be advantageous to produce a Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country rather than four individual strategies. This was in order to take forward and plan for the proposals and recommendations set out in The Black Country Study submission and consequent revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy as well as take further advantage of the successful joint working already carried out as part of this process. This proposal was endorsed by Dudley Council Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and by Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006.
4. The final adopted version of the Joint Core Strategy will provide more detailed planning guidance and strategy at the local level compared to the strategy set out in the Black Country Study which is part of the Regional Spatial Strategy. For example, the Black Country Study specifies that future development and growth in the Black Country would be concentrated in a network of strategic and town

centres and the corridors interlinking them. The Joint Core Strategy will take that policy and provide more details on what kind of development will go in which centres and corridors as well as the proportions of each kind of development in those areas. (i.e. what proportion of housing, what proportion of employment uses and so on).

5. The preparation work for the joint Core Strategy commenced with a Launch event at the Hawthorns football ground in December 2006 and has culminated in a series of spatial options reflecting issues which need to be addressed by the Joint Core Strategy. These have been set out in an Issues and Spatial Options Paper (available in the Member's Room) which is now put before Cabinet for approval prior to consultation. The consultation responses to the Paper will then inform the formulation of the *preferred option* later this year which, in effect, will be the first version of the Joint Core Strategy. The Spatial Options Paper therefore does not contain any proposals at this stage. The Joint Advisory Group, which includes Lead Members from each Authority, acts as a project steering board for delivery and will assess any resource issues which cannot be met and Members will be notified accordingly.

## **Finance**

6. The joint Core Strategy itself will be produced using existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents. Whereas it is intended that any additional work arising will be funded from existing budgets, if these prove insufficient to deliver the Joint Core Strategy, Members will be notified accordingly.

## **Law**

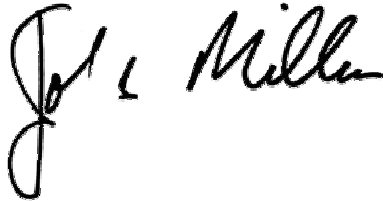
7. The production of a Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
8. In addition, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic or environmental well-being of the area.

## **Equality Impact**

9. The joint Core Strategy will set the planning framework for the development of the Borough, as well as the rest of the Black Country up to 2021. The Core Strategy will seek to ensure that sufficient homes, shops and employment, social, educational and recreational facilities are planned and provided for in that time to meet the needs of all communities and everyone within those communities. This will include meeting the needs of children and young people seeking to provide sufficient facilities within the Borough for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations.

## **Recommendation**

10. It is recommended that the Spatial Options Paper for the Black Country Joint Core Strategy be approved for consultation purposes to assist in the formulation of a preferred option.



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## **List of Background Papers**

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (ODPM 2004)  
[www.communities.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_planning/documents/downloadable/odpm\\_plan\\_030922.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/downloadable/odpm_plan_030922.pdf)

The Black Country Study and supporting technical documents. See  
[www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?PageRef=10](http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?PageRef=10)