

Cabinet Meeting – 13th February 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

The Black Country Joint Core Strategy - Approval of the Preferred Options Document for Consultation

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the Preferred Options Document for consultation, (available in the Member's Room) as part of the formulation of a Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country as stipulated by the Council's Local Development Framework in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. To seek delegated powers for the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration to approve any further minor amendments to the document prior to it's publication for consultation.

Background

3. Under the 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 is to provide the strategic planning basis for all development in the Borough up to 2026 linking in with other Council Strategies and the Community Plan. Following the work carried out between the four Black Country Authorities on the Black Country Study and the subsequent changes approved by The Secretary of State to the Regional Spatial Strategy, (including Brierley Hill becoming the new Strategic Town Centre for the Borough and Dudley being approved as a centre for Tourism and Heritage), joint working is continuing at a more detailed level in the production of a Core Strategy for the whole Black Country. The Government have increasingly encouraged joint working between authorities in the production of such Plans and Documents and this arrangement has been agreed by all four Black Country Authorities and endorsed by Dudley Council Cabinet on 13th September 2006 and by Full Council on 16th October 2006.
4. As part of the joint working process, the four Black Country Authorities have set up a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) made up of the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Planning from each of the four Councils. The JAG meets on a regular basis to endorse the joint approach and provide a steer for the progress of the joint working arrangements. The JAG last met on 17th January 2008 and agreed that the Preferred Options Document could proceed to each of the four Council Cabinets for their approval to consult.

5. The Joint Core Strategy will provide a more detailed planning strategy at the local level, building on the work carried out previously in the Black Country Study which was part of the first review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. For example, the Black Country Study identified that future development in the Black Country would be concentrated in a network of strategic and town centres and the corridors interlinking them. The Joint Core Strategy takes that policy approach forward and provides more detail on how much and what kind of development will go into each centre and corridor. (i.e. how much new housing, how much employment land and so on).
6. 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. The initial stage led to the production of an 'Issues and Options' Paper which was approved by Cabinet for consultation in June 2007. Since then, the four Black Country Authorities have continued to work on the preparation of a 'Preferred Options' Document which is now being put forward for approval to consult. It is proposed that this document will be out to public consultation for six weeks from February 29th 2008 until 11th April 2008. Following this period, a final Submission Document will be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in November 2008. This will then be subject to an Examination in Public, probably in Spring 2009, before it is finally approved towards the end of 2009.
7. In order to reach this stage, public consultation and engagement was carried out following the publication of last year's Issues and Options Paper. In Dudley, a series of public exhibitions took place in the Summer of 2007 in town centres across the Borough and regular consultation has taken place since then with stakeholder groups, government agencies, health and education representatives as well as officers within the Council to help inform the development of the Preferred Options Document which is now put before Cabinet for approval for the next consultation stage.
8. The Preferred Options Document sets out the preferred planning policy areas to be covered but, at this stage, still poses various questions to enable the consultation responses to shape the emerging strategy further. Any responses will help to finalise the Submission Document which is due to be completed and submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of 2008. A summary of this Consultation Document, particularly in terms of its spatial impact on Dudley Borough, is attached as Appendix 1.

Finance

9. 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. The Joint Advisory Group (JAG) is particularly focussing on the shared costs of the Examination in Public which is due to take place in early part of 2009.

Law

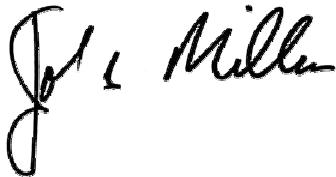
10. The production of a Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
11. In addition, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic or environmental 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 2026. 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.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that the Preferred Options Document be approved as part of the consultation process to assist in the formulation of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy.
11. It is recommended to delegate approval to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration any further minor amendments to the Document prior to its publication for consultation.



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List of Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (ODPM 2004)
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps12>

The Black Country Study and supporting technical documents. See www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?PageRef=10

Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country website including the full Preferred Options Document. <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Preferred Options Document for the Black Country Joint Core Strategy and its spatial implications for Dudley Borough.

**Summary of Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Document and Implications for
Dudley.**

- Spatial planning Strategy up to 2026 for the whole of the Black Country
- Document to be approved for consultation to run from 29th February to 11th April 2008
- It is a strategy to meet sustainable housing growth, future economic prosperity and environmental transformation
- Seeks to ensure that all development is environmentally sustainable to reduce the impact and effects that the sub-region has on climate change
- Seeks to significantly improve the natural and built environment in the Black Country
- Sets the framework for the restructuring of employment land up to 2026 whilst creating the conditions for increased job creation
- Looks to increase the amount of high quality employment land within the Black Country
- Identifies broad areas where future housing growth will be encouraged but does not identify specific sites within those areas
- Builds on the work done for the Black Country Study now adopted and incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy
- Focuses future development in main town centres and regeneration corridors linking them together to increase accessibility and movement
- **It should be remembered that this is a strategic document and issues to deal with specific sites will be dealt with in subsequent planning documents to be produced by Dudley Council.**
- This is a strategy to be applied to all areas of the Black Country. However, sixteen regeneration corridors have also been identified, five of which are within Dudley Borough in the Document and listed below:

Corridor 10 - Pensnett – Kingswinford

Corridor 11 - Dudley – Brierley Hill - Stourbridge

Corridor 13 - Jewellery Railway Line (Cradley Hth. – Stourbridge Jcn)

Corridor 14 - Coombswood – Halesowen

Corridor 16 - Coseley and Princes End