

Stourbridge Area Committee – 12th March 2007

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Public Consultation on the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Stourbridge Area Committee on the preparation and progress of the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country including the local consultation events undertaken in Dudley borough.

Background

2. The context for this is set by the new planning process of which many members will already be aware. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into force on 28th September 2004 and requires the production of a series of local development documents which together make up the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework will gradually replace the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (2005) as the statutory development plan for Dudley Borough.
3. The Core Strategy is one of the first local development documents that must be produced and once adopted Dudley's subsequent local development documents will have to be consistent with it.
4. On 16th October 2006, Council confirmed Dudley Council's commitment to working with Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils on the production of a Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country. This will need to be compatible with the Regional Spatial Strategy as revised, and will draw on the extensive work carried out for the Black Country Study.
5. The planning regulations require the Core Strategy to be prepared in stages, the first of which is to invite public views on the issues to be addressed. Again, the Black Country Study provides an important reference point for this stage. A launch event was successfully held on 6th December 2006 by the four Black Country local authorities at which Councillor Caunt gave the keynote presentation. Local consultation now has to take place in each of the four Black Country local authorities.

6. This consultation invites people to express their views on the future of the Black Country to 2021 and beyond and identify any further issues that should be addressed by the Joint Core Strategy. The consultation is open to all and comments should be submitted in writing to one of the planning policy teams in any of the Black Country local authorities before the end of March 2007.
7. To further promote the consultation and seek the views of local people within Dudley, endorsement was sought from Cabinet on 12th February 2007 to undertake a programme of publicity and consultation including six manned exhibitions, held between 10am and 4pm at:
 - The Churchill Centre in Dudley on 15th February 2007
 - The Cornbow Centre in Halesowen on 20th February 2007
 - The Ryemarket in Stourbridge on 22nd February 2007
 - Merry Hill in Brierley Hill on 27th February 2007
 - Signpost on Brierley Hill High Street on 28th February 2007
 - Ladies Walk Centre in Sedgley on 6th March 2007
8. The results from this consultation and the consultation in the other Black Country local authorities will be considered alongside the various technical evidence to identify the issues in the Black Country and the strategies that could be used to address those issues. A Black Country Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' document will then be produced which sets out those different strategies. This will be presented to Cabinet in summer 2007 for approval for further public consultation.
9. Further information about the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country and contact details for submitting comments during the consultation can be found on the website at:
<http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>

Finance

10. The Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country will be funded jointly between the four Black Country local authorities. Dudley Council's proportion of the costs will be sourced from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

Law

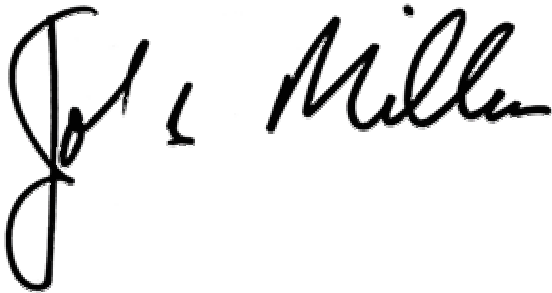
11. The production of a Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
12. In addition, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic or environmental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

Equality Impact

13. The Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country will set the planning framework for the development of the Borough, as well as the rest of the Black Country at least 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 by seeking to provide sufficient facilities for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations.

Recommendation

14. That the Committee notes the contents of this report.



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List of Background Papers

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm>