

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
22 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Whilst the last report on the Local Development Framework (LDF) was presented to the Panel in January of this year, this report has been prepared on the basis that the Panel is well aware of the process for preparing planning policy documents under the LDF process and therefore the report can simply make reference to the relevant, and related, documents contained in the latest Local Development Scheme (three year work programme and timetable) and the implications thereof.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Panel simply note the content of this report as the preparation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and the necessary documents that result and the relevant work programmes have been the subject of examination by several Local Development Framework Steering Group meetings prior to consideration by Executive. The Government Office for the South east, which must Approve the LDS on behalf of the Secretary of State, has been informed of the emerging content of the LDS and has raised no objections to date.

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Plan preparation under the LDF system comprises one of the criteria under which the Council is now examined and receives Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG replaces Planning Delivery Grant). The Council received almost £660,000 under this grant for 2007/08, one of the top 10 awards in the country.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

- 3.2 At the time of preparing the LDF report for the January Panel meeting, the AMR for the financial year 2006/07 was in preparation. The AMR was submitted to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) by the end of December in order to meet the necessary milestone which will be reflected in future CPA scoring and was taken account of in assessing H&PDG. The AMR for the financial year 2007/08 is presently in preparation and should be ready for submission in December 2008. By the date of the preparation of this report (10 September 2008), no major issues have arisen from the emerging AMR which impact on the preparation of the documents which make up the Local Development Framework.

“Saved Policies”

- 3.3 On 26 June 2008, GOSE informed the Council of those policies in the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 which had been “saved” until superseded by subsequent policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan). All the policies promoted by the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities as worthy of being “saved” were accepted by the Secretary of State.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 3.4 A sixth LDS was reported to executive on 16 September 2008 with a recommendation that it be accepted for submission to, and Approval by, GOSE. Several changes (discussed below under the relevant document) are proposed to the LDS as a result of matters such as the introduction of new Regulations governing the preparation of LDF documents and the publication of the Government's Proposed Changes to the South East Plan wherein an increase is proposed in the Council's housing allocation for the period 2006 – 2026 (from 11000 dwellings to 13000 dwellings) along with the promotion of an "initial-interim estimate" of "a minimum 79300 additional jobs created by 2016" for the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region.
- 3.5 The remainder of this report focuses on the documents which are set out in the LDS reported to Executive on 16 September 2008, divided between Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

B Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

Core Strategy

- 3.6 Following consideration of the LDF Inspector's Report by Council on 30 January 2008, the Core Strategy was formally Adopted on 7 February 2008 in accordance with the timescale set out in the former LDS, thereby with no adverse effect on CPA scoring whilst forming a major element of the H&PDG award.

Development Management DPDs

- 3.7 The first Development Management Development Plan Document (DMDPD) will cover the issues of housing, employment and commerce. Work began on evidence gathering in May 2007 leading to an Issues and Options consultation in February and March 2008. The second will cover environmental issues, recreation and transport and preparation will begin in May 2010 (previously January 2010 due to staff resources) with adoption probably in February 2013 (previously January 2013).
- 3.8 1739 comments were received on the Issues and Options DMDPD. Consideration of the issues raised have been used to inform preparation of a Public Participation (replaces Preferred Options) version of the DMDPD which will be published for comment in February/March 2009 (delayed from October/November 2008 to allow consideration of the new Regulations and the Proposed Changes to the SEP and to accommodate recent staffing changes). A draft Submission DMDPD will be published in October/November 2009 with Submission in April 2010; Examination in July/August 2010 and Adoption in July 2011 (previously September 2012).

Area Action Plans (AAPs)

- 3.9 The LDS continues to detail the Council's commitment to prepare the Amen Corner AAP which will provide detailed policies and proposals to guide and deliver future development in this locality during the period 2011 to 2016. A Preferred Options report was published for consultation in May/June 2008 and a Pre-Submission version will be published in February 2009 (previously January 2009 but delayed due to consideration of the new Regulations) leading to Submission in May 2009, Examination in September/October 2009 and Adoption in May 2010 (previously February 2010 but delayed to take account of new stages in the Regulations).

- 3.10 The LDS also details the preparation of an AAP for the area to the north of Whitegrove and Quelm Park, Warfield which will provide detailed policies and proposals to guide and deliver future mixed use development during the period 2016 to 2026, should it be included for such in the Adopted Core Strategy document following Examination. Further evidence gathering, building on the Site Allocations preparatory work, will commence in October 2008 (previously October 2009 due to the publication of the Proposed Changes to the SEP particularly the increased housing allocation) with Public Participation in June/July 2010; Draft Submission in January/February 2010; Submission May 2010; Examination (September/October 2010) and Adoption in 2011).

C Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 3.11 The LDS indicates that the Sustainable Resource Management SPD, providing guidance on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and sustainable building practices, will be Adopted in October 2009 (on track).
- 3.12 A Streetscene SPD, to replace the Berkshire Highways Design Standards and combine issues of urban and highway design, Adoptions, road safety, landscape and trees, has recently been commenced; will be consulted upon in May/June 2009 and Adopted in October 2009.
- 3.13 A third Limiting the Impact of Development (LID) SPD (setting out the Council's revised requirement for infrastructure and community facilities to be sought in association with new development) will be commenced this month with consultation programmed for November/December 2010 and Adoption in July 2011.
- 3.14 The LDS also shows that a new Character Area SPD will be commenced in January 2009, consulted upon in June/July 2009 and Adopted in December 2010.

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The preparation of each of the documents is governed by Regulations which describe a formal procedure to be followed. The need to undertake continuing sustainability appraisal of each document and to relate the documents to other national and local plans and strategies in order to pass the tests of soundness (examination of the procedure followed is as important now as the content of the documents) means that impact assessment in its widest sense is intrinsic in the preparation process leading to the Adoption of each of the documents which make up the Local Development Framework.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 This is the most ambitious LDS work programme to be prepared by the Council. In the case of the DPDs, recent Government pronouncements require them to be prepared in good time or locally planning proposals will more often be decided by appeal. Fortunately, at no one time will more than three DPDs be in the process of preparation. With regard to the SPDs, most are founded on evidence and research will have already been undertaken or on provisions that require review. Again, at no one time will more than three SPDs be in preparation.
- 4.2 The Local Development Schemes includes a risk assessment of the programming of the various documents to be prepared during its three year time period. This assessment highlights potential timetabling delays resulting from matters such as

changes in legislation and government guidance, staffing and resources and specific issues such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

- 4.3 The new planning system has turned out to be more staffing and financial resource intensive than Government guidance indicated. Any change in resourcing, and several key Officers in the Spatial Policy section have left/are leaving the authority over the next couple of months, will lead to reduced capacity to progress documents in the shorter term. Vacant posts are being filled and the work allocated to a wider group of Officers to ensure no unnecessary delays.
- 4.4 Delay in meeting milestones in the LDS for the preparation of the Local Development Framework will result in an out of date Development Plan for the Borough which will adversely affect the determination of planning applications (the Development Control function) and the defence of planning appeals. Missing milestones will also result in the Council failing to meet Best Value Performance Indicators in respect of plan making which will detract from its CPA score and the calculation of Planning Delivery Grant.

Background Papers

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2008
Planning Policy Statement 12, Local Development Frameworks, 2004, ODPM
Creating Local Development Frameworks, November 2004, ODPM
Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Scheme, April 2007
Bracknell Forest Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document, November 2006

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