

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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DECISION MAKER:	CABINET
DATE:	10 OCTOBER 2012
SUBJECT:	BURY LOCAL PLAN – CORE STRATEGY: SECOND DRAFT PUBLICATION
REPORT FROM:	CABINET MEMBER – NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
CONTACT OFFICER:	PAUL ALLEN – HEAD OF PLANNING POLICY AND PROJECTS
TYPE OF DECISION:	CABINET (KEY DECISION)
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain
SUMMARY:	<p>Following consultation on an initial draft of the Publication Core Strategy between November 2011 and January 2012 and as a result of updated evidence, the Core Strategy has been significantly amended.</p> <p>Members are being asked to approve the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy for a six week period of consultation in order to establish stakeholder views on its content. Following on from this consultation, any necessary revisions will be incorporated into a final Publication version of the Core Strategy which will again be made available for comments in relation to the 'soundness' of the document before it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.</p> <p>It is important, therefore, that Members are satisfied with the content of the Core Strategy at this stage as this document will guide the future development of the Borough up to 2029 and, after this stage, there is only limited scope to make amendments to the document.</p> <p>The Second Draft Publication Core Strategy, together with other supporting documentation, is available at the Members' Information Point and has been made available in electronic format to all Members. The documentation is also available on the Council's website at www.bury.gov.uk.</p>

<p>OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION</p>	<p>Option 1 (Recommended option)</p> <p>That Members approve the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy, and the supporting documentation, together with the proposed measures outlined in this report to receive representations.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>That Members seek revisions to the proposed content of the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy prior to further consultations and participation and/or Members seek revisions to the proposed measures for undertaking consultation and participation – Members to specify the nature of any revisions to be sought.</p> <p>Reasons</p> <p>The approval of the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy is an important stage in the production of the Core Strategy for Bury’s Local Plan and it is necessary to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to play a part in this process. The preparation of and consultation on a draft version of the document will enable any necessary changes to be made prior to proceeding to a final Publication version at which stage there is limited scope for making changes.</p>
<p>IMPLICATIONS:</p>	
<p>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</p>	<p>Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes</p> <p>The existing Bury UDP forms part of the Council’s Policy Framework (being one of the statutory plans listed under Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution) and will be replaced eventually by Development Plan Documents to be produced under the arrangements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and statutory instruments and guidance resulting there from.</p>
<p>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</p>	<p>The Core Strategy will be a fundamental part of the planning policy framework which will form the basis for guiding growth and development within the Borough to 2029. Approval of the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy for consultation and revision in response to stakeholder views will reduce the risk of challenge when it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.</p>
<p>Statement by Executive Director of Resources:</p>	<p>The continuing work involved in progressing the Core Strategy towards its adoption will continue to require significant commitment of</p>

	<p>staff resources, particularly from the Planning Policy and Projects Section. The Examination in Public will also require significant financial resources.</p> <p>The costs of previous work have been met from existing revenue budgets, and contributions have been made from the Development Plan Reserve which can be used as necessary to fund one-off costs. At 31st March 2012 the balance available on the Reserve was £161,281 and it is proposed that the Inspector costs for the Examination in Public and costs associated with the publication and adoption of the Core Strategy, be met from this amount.</p>
Equality/Diversity implications:	<p>No</p> <p>An initial screening has been undertaken (see attached assessment) and as there were no negative impacts identified for affected groups, there is no requirement to proceed to a Full Impact Assessment.</p>
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the proposals set out in this report are consistent with the statutory requirements placed on the Council as Local Planning Authority, within the Council's Policy Framework and within the legal powers of the Council.</p>
Wards Affected:	All
Scrutiny Interest:	

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR: K G Atkinson - EDS

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Committee	Committee	Council	
Local Plan Members' Group			

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Core Strategy is a key part of Bury's Local Plan and will form the basis for guiding growth and development within the Borough to 2029.
- 1.2 Members will also be aware that following the withdrawal of the previous Core Strategy an initial revised draft Publication Core Strategy was prepared and consultation was undertaken on this document between November 2011 and January 2012.
- 1.3 As a result of comments received, the release of the National Planning Policy Framework and updated supporting evidence, the Core Strategy has been significantly updated and restructured.
- 1.4 The extent of the changes mean that it is considered necessary to undertake a further period of consultation on the **Second Draft Publication Core Strategy** before a final Publication version is prepared.

2.0 ISSUES

Structure and Content of the Core Strategy

- 2.1 As stated above, comments received on the first draft, the release of the National Planning Policy Framework and updated supporting evidence have led to significant revisions to the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 The **Second Draft Publication Core Strategy** remains a lengthy document but its restructure is considered to significantly improve its legibility. The first draft was largely structured around separate Spatial and Development Management chapters, each containing policies on sometimes similar issues. However, the second draft, has now integrated these chapters into a single chapter, removed areas of duplication and presents the various spatial and development management policies on a topic basis covering the following five themes:
 - **Delivering High Quality Development in Sustainable Locations;**
 - **Delivering a Competitive and Diverse Local Economy;**
 - **Promoting Strong, Vibrant and Healthy Communities;**
 - **Improving and Managing the Borough's Environment; and**
 - **Improving Transport and Connectivity.**
- 2.3 These five themes run throughout the Core Strategy which allows the user to follow the process of policy development from the initial issues through to the subsequent vision and objectives and finally through to specific policies and Township Frameworks. The document is also structured in a way that demonstrates a natural progression from where the Borough is today, to how it is intended to see it develop in the future.
- 2.4 The initial sections of the document – **Bury: The Place** and **Bury: The Vision** seek to paint a spatial portrait of the Borough highlighting the key characteristics and issues which have shaped the Core Strategy, and set out the vision and objectives for how the Core Strategy will address the issues and what we hope the Borough will be like as a result by the end of the Plan period in 2029.

2.5 The central chapter within the document is **Bury: The Strategy** which sets out the approach towards the scale and location of future growth and development, areas of the Borough where built development will be restrained and how the Council will manage development when dealing with planning applications. The Strategy advocates a more pro-active approach to guiding and controlling development in the future based on the five themes set out below:

§ **Delivering High Quality Development in Sustainable Locations** – which includes policies that seek to:

- Establish the broad spatial framework designed to ensure sustainable development and achieve a network of thriving townships and communities across the Borough (Policy SF1); and
- Deliver high standards of design and layout in new development (Policy CP1).

§ **Delivering a Competitive and Diverse Local Economy** – which includes policies that seek to:

- Protect existing employment land and premises, where appropriate, and make provision for additional employment land to meet future needs (Policies EC1, EC2 and EC3);
- Create thriving and competitive centres (Policies EC4, EC7 and EC8);
- Manage the location and scale of town centre uses, such as retail, leisure and offices (Policy EC5);
- Accommodate future needs for new retail development (Policy EC6); and
- Develop attractive tourism and cultural assets (Policy EC9).

§ **Promoting Strong, Vibrant and Healthy Communities** – which includes policies that seek to:

- Include a target of 400 dwellings per year (Policy CO1);
- Provide affordable housing (Policy CO5);
- Meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople (Policy CO6);
- Address the needs of the Borough's Regeneration Areas (Policy CO7); and
- Support healthy and inclusive communities (Policies CO8, CO9, CO10 and CO11).

§ **Improving and Managing the Borough's Environment** - which includes policies that seek to:

- Manage development in the Green Belt (Policies EN1 and EN2);
- Create, protect and enhance a network of Green Infrastructure (Policies EN3 and EN4);
- Conserve an ecological network and promote ecological enhancement (Policies EN5 and EN6);
- Manage flood risk (Policies EN7, EN8 and EN9);
- Assist in the move towards a zero carbon Borough (Policies EN10, EN11 and EN12);
- Conserve, protect and enhance built heritage assets and landscape character (Policies EN13 and EN14);
- Deal with contaminated and unstable land (Policy EN15);
- Manage minerals and waste (Policies EN16 and EN17); and
- Control pollution (Policy EN18).

§ **Improving Transport and Connectivity** - which includes policies that seek to:

- Ensure better connections between places and improved accessibility (Policy T1); and
- Set out the transport requirements for new development (Policy T2).

- 2.6 What the Spatial Strategy will mean on the ground is explored in the chapter entitled **Bury: How it will Look**. This chapter includes a Borough-wide **Key Diagram** and a series of six more detailed **Township Frameworks** which seek to develop a neighbourhood-focused 'place-shaping' dimension to the Core Strategy, setting out, in a diagrammatic and bullet point format, what the Core Strategy is seeking to achieve in each of the Borough's Townships.
- 2.7 Finally, chapters relating to **Delivering Bury's Strategy** and **Monitoring Bury's Strategy** focus on how the strategy will be delivered and kept under review, the partners that will be involved in the delivery and the infrastructure that will be needed to allow development to come forward in an acceptable manner. Key to the provision of infrastructure is **Policy DEL1 – Delivering Sustainable Development** which looks at the future role of Planning Obligations in supporting development and makes provision for the introduction of standard charging regimes in future, possibly under the provisions for a Community Infrastructure Levy, so that infrastructure costs can be spread across a wider range of developments.

Main Areas of Change between the First and Second Drafts

- 2.8 Although the Core Strategy has been restructured, much of the vision, objectives and policy content remain as was presented in the first draft of the document. However, the following points set out the key areas of change to policy areas that have occurred between the first and second drafts and explains the reasons for these changes.

Spatial Framework

- 2.9 In March 2012, the Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out how the planning system can contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development by performing economic, social and environmental roles.
- 2.10 The Spatial Framework set out in Policy SF1 of the Core Strategy replaces the previous Spatial Development Strategy and has been designed to better reflect the approach set out in the NPPF and its drive towards promoting sustainable development. The new Spatial Framework has also been developed to reflect the five themes that run throughout the Core Strategy (as set out in para 2.2 above).

Employment

- 2.11 An update of evidence sitting behind the Core Strategy's employment policies (the Employment Land Review) has identified that the Borough's supply of employment land shows deficiencies in terms of its quality and spatial distribution.
- 2.12 In particular, an independent market assessment has identified that the supply of employment land is considered to lack the provision of large, good quality opportunities with access to the motorway network – a feature which has historically held back the Borough's local economy and which would represent an attractive opportunity to foster economic growth as the country emerges from the current economic downturn.

- 2.13 The Employment Land Review has explored a variety of opportunities to improve the quality of the Borough's employment land supply and has already included proposed employment sites with good access to Junction 17 of the M60 at Prestwich, a number of sites at Pilsworth on Junction 3 of the M66 and land with access to Junction 2 of the M66 at Heap Bridge. Furthermore, although not adjacent to a motorway, the proposed employment land supply includes larger-scale opportunities, such as land around Swan Lodge in the Irwell Bank area (i.e. between Bury and Radcliffe) which would be capable of accommodating larger-scale employment development.
- 2.14 However, in addition to the sites at Prestwich, Pilsworth, Heap Bridge and Swan Lodge, identified above, opportunities to accommodate further qualitative improvements to the supply within the existing urban area are extremely limited and all additional options that were considered involved land within the Green Belt.
- 2.15 In considering the additional options, it has been concluded that the site at Gin Hall represents the most appropriate and deliverable opportunity. Although located adjacent to the motorway, the site is also accessible by public transport as well as being well-connected to East Bury - one of the Borough's most deprived neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the identification of this site will also help to address the spatial deficiencies by increasing the provision of employment land in the north of the Borough and assisting in achieving the Community Strategy's Ambition to have 'Each Township Thriving'.
- 2.16 However, the Core Strategy recognises that, given the site is designated as Green Belt, there are significant policy constraints on the site. Consequently, the Core Strategy specifies that **employment-related development at Gin Hall will only be supported on this site if an applicant is able to satisfactorily demonstrate 'very special circumstances'** as is required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Protected Open Land

- 2.17 There is some open land that sits between the Green Belt and the urban area, which is currently designated as Other Protected Open Land in the Bury UDP. The UDP policy framework seeks to protect this land from development as the land was not required at the time to meet the development requirements of the UDP.
- 2.18 However, the position since the UDP was adopted in 1997 has changed considerably and additional land needs to be found to meet the development targets set out in the Local Plan. As the Local Plan seeks to retain Green Belt boundaries, Other Protected Open Land offers the only realistic opportunity to accommodate development beyond the urban fringe. As such, the policy framework that seeks to protect Other Protected Open Land has not been carried forward in the Local Plan, although it should be noted that other policy constraints exist on some of these sites.

Consultation and Next Steps

- 2.19 The preparation of the Core Strategy has already been subject to extensive consultation throughout the earlier stages of its production. Ongoing dialogue has been maintained with key stakeholders, interested parties and the wider community to inform the latest stage.

- 2.20 With the approval of the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy, the Council will make the document, together with other supporting documents and revised evidence, available for a period of six weeks to receive comments and representations on its content. It is envisaged that this period will run from 19 October to 30 November 2012. Statutory agencies, relevant national organisations, local community groups and bodies which represent local businesses will be invited to make representations, along with individuals and organisations that have previously expressed an interest in the Core Strategy. The consultation period for the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy will also be advertised in the local press, on the Council's web site and Twitter feed to ensure that the wider community are made aware of the document.
- 2.21 Once the Core Strategy is formally published, there is limited scope to make changes to the document as it is at the Publication stage that comments will be restricted to issues of soundness and legal compliance rather than specific policy wording or the detail of the Strategy itself. As a result of this and because the document has seen significant changes, a Second Draft Publication version has been prepared in advance of a final Publication version so that there is scope to make any further detailed changes arising from comments received before finalising the document.
- 2.22 At this stage, it is envisaged that the final Publication version of the Core Strategy will be presented to Full Council in April 2013 which, if approved, will be followed by a period where comments will be invited on issues of soundness and legal compliance. Subsequent submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State is expected to occur in August 2013. This will be followed by an examination of the document (timetabled for November 2013) where an independent Inspector will report the findings of the examination. Adoption of the Core Strategy is scheduled for April 2014.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 This report has drawn Members' attention to the key elements of the revised Second Draft Publication Core Strategy. Many of the elements have been developed through an extensive programme of issues, options and preferred options, together with ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, interested parties and the general public.
- 3.2 Members are requested to approve the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy. In approving this document, Members need to be satisfied that this is the planning policy framework which they wish to see adopted for the Borough, as provision for future changes is restricted to minor amendments after final publication without going back over earlier preparation stages.

List of Background Papers:

The complete evidence base for the Bury Core Strategy is listed at Appendix 4 of the Second Draft Publication Core Strategy.

Other key documents informing the Core Strategy include:

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)
Bury LDF – Key Issues Discussion Paper (February 2006)

Bury LDF – Core Strategy First Stage Issues and Options (June 2006)
Bury LDF – Core Strategy First Stage Issues and Options – Consultation Statement (June 2007)
Bury LDF – Core Strategy Second Stage Issues and Options (July 2007)
Bury LDF – Core Strategy Second Stage Issues and Options – Consultation Statement (September 2007)
Bury LDF – Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (February 2008)
Bury LDF – Statement of Community Involvement (Revised January 2010)
Bury LDF – First Draft Publication Core Strategy (November 2011)
Bury Council Second Draft Publication Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Impact on European Protected Sites of Bury Council’s Second Draft Publication Core Strategy

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