

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET COUNCIL		
SUBJECT:	ADOPTION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY		
DATE OF DECISION:	CABINET – 21 DECEMBER 2009 COUNCIL – 20 JANUARY 2010		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Not applicable

SUMMARY

The main planning document for the city is the Core Strategy which sets out the vision for the future development of the city and the key strategic planning framework. The Core Strategy underwent its Examination in July 2009 and the Planning Inspector's Report has been received. The Inspector found the document sound providing the amendments he recommended were made. The Inspector's report is binding on the Council. The final version of the Core Strategy, incorporating the Inspector's recommendations can now be adopted. Fewer than 15% of local authorities in England have adopted Core Strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CABINET

- (i) To recommend that Council adopts the Core Strategy which has been amended in accordance with the Inspector's recommendations
- (ii) To recommend that Council endorse the list of additional Local Plan Review policies (attached as Appendix 1) that will be replaced in part or in full by the Core Strategy.

COUNCIL

- (i) To adopt the Core Strategy which has been amended in accordance with the Inspector's recommendations
- (ii) To endorse the list of additional Local Plan Review policies (attached as Appendix 1) that will be replaced in part or in full by the Core Strategy.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To give adopted development plan status to the Core Strategy which will encourage investment in the city by providing clarity and predictability in decisions on the use and development of land and contribute to achieving the PUSH and local (City of Southampton Strategy) vision for the City.
2. To adopt the Core Strategy by January 2010 to meet the target agreed by GOSE in our Local Development Scheme.

CONSULTATION

3. Throughout its preparation the Core Strategy has been subject to consultation, both internal and external. There have been 3 formal stages of public participation that culminated in the public examination of the Core Strategy in July 2009. This was held by a Planning Inspector and members of the public, stakeholders, developers and amenity groups were invited to participate in the Examination.
4. The Inspector's report is binding on the Council so the Council is not in a position to further amend the Core Strategy (other than to include his recommended changes).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. The alternative would be not to adopt the Core Strategy. The current statutory plan (the Local Plan Review) was adopted in 2006 for the period up to 2011. It needs to be updated to ensure delivery of the additional growth identified through the South East Plan. Having an up to date planning framework will contribute to the future prosperity of the city by encouraging investment in new and expanding businesses, homes and leisure, sporting and cultural facilities supported by the necessary infrastructure.

DETAIL

6. The Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy was published for public consultation between December 2008 and February 2009. Following receipt of comments some changes were proposed to the document. Most of these were minor but some did impact on the soundness of the document. These changes were endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in March together with the suggested changes plus all the background evidence that had been produced to support the document. A Public Examination into the Core Strategy was held by a Planning Inspector for two weeks in July. A number of further changes to the document were discussed during the Examination.
7. The Inspector's report was received in October 2009. The Inspector concluded that with the amendments he recommended the Core Strategy satisfies the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and meets the test of soundness in PPS12 "Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning".

8. The Inspector supported the overall strategy set out in the Core Strategy and considered that it “provides an appropriate and realistic spatial vision for the city to 2026”. He considered that “there are soundly based and realistic prospects that the CS will deliver the required growth over the plan period, sustainably focussed on the city centre”. He supported the general thrust of the policies such as those relating to family homes (CS 16), affordable housing (CS 15), the safeguarding of employment sites (CS 7), the requirement for new development to meet the standards for carbon reduction and water resource conservation (CS 20) and measures to improve access to jobs (CS 24).
9. The Inspector accepted most of the changes put forward by the Council but suggested further amendments that relate to points of clarification and soundness. The main changes required are:
 1. **Flood risk.** The policy (CS 23) and the supporting text have been rewritten to explain how the appropriate steps of the flood risk hierarchy required by government guidance will be implemented at the local level.
 2. **City centre retail**, especially future needs. The level of comparison retail floorspace for the city centre has been reduced in policy CS 1 from a level of up to 200,000 square metres down to 130,000 square metres. This is in light of the most recent update study on retail capacity in the city centre carried out by DTZ in June 2009.
 3. **Transport**, notably concerning the strategic road network. Additions have been made to the supporting text to policy CS 18 to refer to the measures that will need to be taken following the joint study of the strategic road network that is underway.
 4. **Biodiversity / nature conservation.** Additions to the supporting text to policy CS 22 to refer to the Habitats Regulations Assessment that has been carried out and the implementation of a strategic approach across the sub-region to protect internationally designated sites.
 5. **The Port.** Additional wording in policy CS 9 and the text (throughout the document) to refer to the importance of the Port and its role in the city’s economy.
10. The Inspector made two further significant changes to policies although they do not affect the overall approach of the strategy.
 1. Affordable Housing. He supported the thresholds and percentages of affordable housing that will be sought by policy CS 15 but changed this to relate to ‘net’ dwellings proposed rather than the ‘gross’ number.
 2. Open Space. He deleted the words ‘seek to’ from the first line of policy CS 21 thus making it a requirement to retain the quantity of open space within the city and also added “help deliver new open space both within and beyond the City”.

11. In order to now adopt the Core Strategy so that it forms part of the development plan, we are legally bound to incorporate the Inspector's recommendations. These changes mainly reflect those that were put forward before and during the Examination and do not affect the overall approach of the strategy. Therefore it is recommended that the changes are incorporated and the strategy adopted. The Core Strategy will be used to enable and enhance development within the city.
12. Once the Core Strategy is adopted it will supersede a number of the policies in the Local Plan Review 2006. Appendix 3 of the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy lists the Local Plan Review policies that are to be replaced by Core Strategy policies. With the changes that will be made to the Core Strategy a number of other local plan policies will be partly or wholly replaced by the Core Strategy policies and need to be added to the list in the Core Strategy. A list is attached as Appendix I.
- 13 **Next steps.** The Core Strategy sets out the main strategic policies for the city. Work is now being progressed on the City Centre Action Plan and the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document which will draw up the detailed site allocations and policies for the city centre and the rest of the city, respectively.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

14. The Core Strategy is a spatial planning document. The Core Strategy does not itself commit the Council to capital expenditure but does include an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will provide a framework for some future decisions on capital expenditure.

Revenue

15. Printing the final document will cost approximately £6000 which will be funded from the existing publication budget associated with the production of the Local Development Framework within the Environment and Transport Portfolio. Costs will be kept to a minimum by making electronic copies available on the website.

Property

16. There are no immediate property implications arising directly from the Core Strategy. If, following approval of this report, property implications arise as the policy is implemented, they will be the subject of further detailed consideration in the normal way which will include evaluation of any property implications and the results of any formal option appraisals where the investment is over £2 million (as required by Financial Regulations).

Other

17. The Core Strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment and the findings have informed the document.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

18. The report is prepared in accordance with section 23 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

Other Legal Implications:

- 19. In preparing the Core Strategy regard has been had to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and Equalities legislation as appropriate.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 20. The Core Strategy is a part of the LDF and is a statutory development plan document. It supersedes part of the Local Plan Review 2006. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Core Strategy unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	List of additional Local Plan Review Policies to be replaced by the Core Strategy.
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	Inspector's Report on the Examination into the Southampton Core Strategy Development Plan Document, October 2009
2.	Core Strategy – as proposed to be adopted

Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	Proposed Submission Core Strategy, December 2009	
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Background documents available for inspection at: Office of the Head of Planning and Sustainability

FORWARD PLAN No: ET03718 **KEY DECISION?** Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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