

Area West Committee – 18th August 2010

6. South Somerset Draft Core Strategy Incorporating Preferred Options; Recommendations for District Executive Consideration

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Purpose of the Report

To provide members with a review of their workshop on the South Somerset Draft Core Strategy and to seek further comments and confirmation of the recommendations to District Executive in respect of each of the draft proposals and policies considered there. The Workshop notes and recommendations from the other three Area workshops are presented for context and to present potential conflicts of views or additional points for consideration and reconsideration. Additional policies emerging from review of the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) are also presented for member consideration.

Public Interest

The notes of the Area Workshop held on 5th July 2010 to consider the emerging proposals and policies of the draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options are presented for member approval. The recommendations emerging from the workshop on key matters are formally phrased and presented for member endorsement for subsequent consideration by the District Executive along with additional policies emerging from review of the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy.

Recommendations

That members:

- (1) affirm the notes of the Area West Workshop on the Draft Core Strategy of 5th July 2010;
- (2) endorse the recommendations set out within the notes of the workshop as the Committee's formal recommendations on the principal proposals and policies of the draft Core Strategy;
- (3) note and endorse the Settlement Strategy policies not discussed at the workshop (Policies SS1 and SS3-5) as set out within Appendix A;
- (4) endorse the Health and Wellbeing policies tabled for consideration at the Workshop (Appendix F);
- (5) endorse revised policy EP15 set out in Appendix G;
- (6) endorse the additional policies proposed for the draft Core Strategy emerging from review of the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy (Appendix H).

Background

The District Council has a statutory duty to produce a Local Development Framework for South Somerset based on thorough evidence, the Core Strategy being the principal document of the Framework. Consultation took place on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report in Spring 2008 with District Executive considering the responses received in December 2009. Throughout this period and since then the evidence base

used to inform the emerging policies and proposals has developed, including a 'front-loading' consultation exercise with Town and Parish Councils at the end of 2009 to establish initial views/consensus on how growth should be distributed throughout the District to 2026. Most recently, based on the evidence so far gathered, the Spatial Policy Team has been drafting policies, proposals and supporting text for inclusion in the 'South Somerset Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options', which is to be considered by District Executive (DX) on 2 September 2010 for endorsement for public consultation this autumn. Where appropriate, the policies and proposals have been subject to sustainability appraisal. Prior to consideration by DX, workshops were arranged for relevant council officers and for each of the Area Committees to provide all members with the opportunity in that forum to consider and discuss the draft proposals and policies.

Report

The Area West Committee workshop was held on 5th July 2010 in the Stringfellow Room, Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard. Members were provided with an update on progress to date with preparation of the Core Strategy and the implications of the revocation and impending abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies on the Core Strategy. Officers then outlined the proposed vision, settlement hierarchy and strategic policies, together with the growth proposals within the West Area, with Members providing feedback thereon. The papers considered at the workshop are reprinted in **Appendix A** for convenience. **(Appendix A is a large document and has been distributed separately with the agenda to members and key officers only. Additional hard copies are available on request. It is also available on the Council's website).** The feedback from the Area West Committee workshop including draft recommendations for endorsement is attached at **Appendix B**. These recommendations are set out in respect of:

- Scale of development
- Vision, settlement hierarchy and individual settlement strategies
- Rural settlement policy
- Policies under each of the themes:
 - Housing
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Transport Accessibility
 - Health and Well-Being
 - Environmental Quality

The Settlement Strategy policies SS1 to SS5 (but not SS2 the rural settlement policy) were not discussed at the Area Workshop and members attention is drawn to these in the relevant section of **Appendix A** and affirmation of these is sought.

Views of Other Area Workshops

Feedback from each of the other Area Committees is also attached at Appendices C, D and E for information and comparison. There is broad agreement amongst members of the different Areas on the key proposals and policies. Members' attention however is drawn to the following matters where there is some difference of view on substantive matters:-

- 2 areas seek a phasing policy to ensure employment development proceeds in pace with housing (new policy).
- 1 area wishes to call Primary Service Centres (Policy B settlements in RSS) and Local Service Centres (Policy C settlements in RSS) Market towns and small country towns respectively (Policy SS1 and elsewhere).

- 1 area seeks Gypsy and Traveller sites to be limited to 3 pitches in size (Policy HG7).
- 2 areas seek a sustainable tourism promotion policy (new policy).
- 2 areas expressed concerns with the level of sustainability being promoted in addressing climate change (Policy EQ1).

In relation to these differences members may wish to review their responses on these matters.

Health and Well Being policies

These policies were tabled at the workshop for subsequent consideration and are attached at **Appendix F** for member consideration and endorsement.

Policy EP15; Protection and provision of local shops, community facilities and services

Reference was made at the Area Workshop to further work with officers within the authority in order to enable Policy EP15 to better reflect the possibilities of local communities getting together to secure the future of key community facilities where commercial re-letting or purchase is looking unlikely. This work has been concluded and an amended policy is put forward in **Appendix G** for member consideration and endorsement.

Further Work and Other Matters

During the course of the Area West and other workshops the following further work to be taken forward by the Spatial Policy Manager and his team was identified:

- Policy TA7 parking standards were agreed to be initially the responsibility of Somerset County Council who are reviewing them as part of their Future Transport Plan with a draft publication date of November 2010. The SSDC policy on parking standards would cross refer to these emerging standards and their adoption by SSDC but the Spatial Policy Manager is required to engage early with the County Council staff to ensure that emerging policies reflect member concerns and to keep members informed accordingly. A review of this approach would be needed if a divergence of views emerges during this process.
- A confirmation of the brownfield and therefore greenfield development targets (Policy HG6) was required (prior to consideration by District Executive).
- A review of revised national regulations on houses in multiple occupation and issues emerging within South Somerset towns was to be undertaken to see whether a new policy on such homes was needed (for member consideration prior to finalisation of the Publication Plan - for submission for examination).
- A review of density standards and evidence of applied density standards and their impact is required for further consideration of policy HG 5 (for member consideration prior to finalisation of the Publication Plan - for submission for examination).

Revocation of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

The revocation of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy on 5 July 2010 requires the review of the Housing Growth target for the district set out within the RSS and this issue was specifically discussed at the workshop and recommendations on this matter are

presented in **Appendix B**. The revocation has also required a review of policies within it to see whether policy areas previously covered by the RSS now require a specific policy to be set out in the draft Core Strategy. Proposed policies emerging from this process are set out in **Appendix H** for members' consideration.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Corporate Priority Implications

The Core Strategy is a key strategy with proposals and policies that are central to delivering the Corporate Strategy across all 5 key themes.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

The Core strategy contains a specific policy on climate change adaptation and mitigation and the settlement hierarchy and strategy has taken account of the need to control CO2 generation as a key determinant.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Background Papers: *Papers presented to Area Workshops – 5th to 8th July 2010*