

Central Lancashire Local Development Framework Joint Advisory Committee

Thursday, 29 January 2009

Present: Councillor P Malpas (Chorley Council) (Chair) and Councillors G Morgan (Chorley Council), N Cartwright and D Gallagher (Preston City Council), J C Hughes MBE, J Hesketh and A Ogilvie (South Ribble Council) and County Councillor M Tomlinson (Lancashire County Council).

Also in attendance: Mr J Jackson (Central Lancashire LDF Team Co-ordinator), Mrs J Meek (Corporate Director (Business), Chorley Council), Mr P Kuit (Director of Development, Preston City Council), Mr J Dalton (Head of Planning and Housing, South Ribble Council), Mrs A Marland (Acting Planning Policy Manager), Mr M Molyneux (Planning Policy Manager, Preston City Council), Mr S Lamb (Planning Officer, Chorley Council) and Mr A Uren (Democratic and Member Services Officer, Chorley Council).

07.CCS.01 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor P Malpas be appointed to Chair the meeting.

07.CCS.02 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee.

The Chair informed the Committee that the meeting of Chorley Council's Local Development Framework Working Group that was scheduled to be held earlier that day had had to be postponed to a later date yet to be agreed. Consequently, the Chair clarified that the recommendations and decisions of the Joint Advisory Committee would need to be taken with the proviso that the decisions would need to be subject to Chorley Council's Working Group's endorsement of the decisions.

07.CCS.03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor T Brown and L Lennox (Chorley Council) and Councillors J Collins and C Crompton (Preston City Council).

07.CCS.04 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Group held on 9 September 2008 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

07.CCS.05 OVERVIEW OF PURPOSE OF LDF JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report of the Joint LDF Officer Team which clarified the purpose of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting and pointed to the agenda items to be addressed at the meeting.

The collaboration between the Chorley, Preston, South Ribble Council and Lancashire County Councils in taking forward the Core Strategy for Central Lancashire was at a crucial stage. The meeting presented an opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the consultation exercise and to discuss the respective Authorities' views on the Growth Point initiative, the on-going work on housing land availability and the opportunities for further LDF joint working.

An appendix to the report set out the current milestone dates for the important Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.CCS.06 CORE STRATEGY - UPDATE ON PUBLICITY, ENGAGEMENT AND OVERVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

The Committee received and considered a report of the Joint LDF Officer Team which outlined the differing means and methods by which the Officers had publicised and conducted the consultation exercise on the Core Strategy from 30 September to 19 December 2008. A number of public community and targeted meetings had been convened, in addition to media publicity and electronic engagement.

The report also contained a brief overview of the 130 representations that had been received in response to the consultation, and the LDF Team Co-ordinator highlighted the following key outcomes:

- the 20 or so representations from members of the public referred principally to the preservation of the green space at Ingol Golf Course and the suggested provision of an airstrip for recreational aviation;
- the concerns of neighbouring local authorities related to the status of Preston and the scale of the Tithebarn scheme;
- a number of developers had queried the way in which the Core Strategy aimed to maintain at least a short term supply of housing land;
- 4 NW (the Regional Planning Body) had drawn attention to the fact that the Core Strategy had referred to an earlier version of the Regional Spatial Strategy published in September 2008, but had, in fact, confirmed that the Core Strategy was in general conformity with the RSS;
- the Government Office for the North West had suggested that spatial issues, consideration of alternatives and reasoning should be afforded greater clarity in the Core Strategy and had referred to the need for the Growth Point to be embedded in the Strategy;
- a number of leading agencies had expressed support of the Core Strategy's policies on tourism, commerce and economic development, heritage, sport, higher education and environmental issues.

A further report on the content of the representations received would be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee.

The Joint Officer Team also sought the Members' views on the feasibility of future Joint Advisory Committees being publicised on the Central Lancashire website as a means of generating interest in the Core Strategy. In response, Members agreed that more extensive use of the website and e-mail facilities would be beneficial.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.CCS.07 REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY

The Joint LDF Officer Team presented a report on the implications of the publication of the final version of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) on the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy had actually been published on the Internet on the same date as the publication of the RSS and had consequently referred to the earlier version of the RSS that had contained the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes. The Joint Officer Team had anticipated only minor changes in the final RSS, but amendments had been made to the following policies in the regional development framework of the published RSS:

- Policy RDF1 – the elevated status of a number of towns and cities including Preston, had been removed;
- Policy CLCR1 – deletion of the words 'and harness its potential for economic growth in sustainable ways ' in relation to Preston;
- Policy CLCR2 – removal of the reference to Preston as a 'higher order' centre with an alternative reference to the town as a ' retail service centre ' aligned with other centres, such as Blackpool.

The Regional Planning Body, 4NW, had endorsed the Joint Officers Team's contention that the spatial vision for Central Lancashire, as set out in the Preferred Core Strategy remained in general conformity with the published RSS. The Committee was also assured that the next version of the Core Strategy would reflect the wording in the final RSS.

The Joint Advisory Committee Members expressed some concern at the revision of Policies CLCR1 and CLCR2 which deleted words from the Central Lancashire City Region Priorities Policy in relation to Preston and which linked Preston as a ' retail service centre' with the other three main centres of Blackpool, Blackburn and Burnley. The Members considered that Preston was more closely aligned to Liverpool and Manchester.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.CCS.08 OUTLINE OF GROWTH POINT AND OTHER PROBABLE CHANGES TO THE CORE STRATEGY

The Committee received and considered a report of the LDF Joint Officer Team outlining the probable changes that would be required to the Core Strategy in the event of the Growth Point initiative proceeding.

The Government's announcement supporting the Growth Point Programme of Development for Central Lancashire and Blackpool had been made too late to be reflected in the published Preferred Core Strategy. The Strategy had, however, recognised the possibility of interim changes being required to it if the Growth Point initiative were to proceed. The principal possible alterations envisaged were identified as follows.

- reconsideration of the preferred spatial distribution/appointment of growth and investment, including possible additional strategic sites;
- a reflection of the proposed accelerated rate of residential development envisaged in the Housing Chapter;
- possible related changes to infrastructure provision, including transportation proposals.

It was expected that the revision of the Core Strategy would take the form of an interim version that would need to be consulted on prior to the next full stage of document preparation.

The Committee Members were reminded that the principal benefit of the Growth Point initiative was to access Government funding to enable the acceleration of development proposals that will, in turn, generate the provision of more affordable housing units and associated infrastructure. While Preston City Council had confirmed its support in principle of the Growth Point initiative being progressed, the Executive Cabinets of South Ribble and Chorley Councils were due to debate their authorities' positions on 11 and 12 February respectively.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that the changes to the Core Strategy envisaged in the event of the progression of the Growth Point initiative be supported.

07.CCS.09 STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

The Joint LDF Officer Team submitted a report which explained the aim and overall content of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and summarised the approach being followed in Central Lancashire.

The report clarified that Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs) were required by national planning policy to assist the delivery of sufficient land for housing. The purpose of the SHLAA was to:

- identify sites with potential for housing;
- assess the sites' housing potential;
- assess when and whether the sites could be developed.

The aim of the Assessment was to identify the sites on which housing could be developed within five years and the sites that could be developed for housing in the longer term.

The Officers emphasised that the SHLAAs would not themselves allocate sites for housing development, they would only indicate potential housing sites. The allocation of sites would be identified in the later Site Allocation Document(s) in accordance with the distribution of development put forward in the Core Strategy. This site allocations process would be subject to extensive community engagement procedure and independent examination.

As Chorley, Preston and South Ribble districts formed part of the same housing market area, a joint SHLAA was underway, with an expected completion before the end of March 2009. The exercise would entail the assessment of:

- housing development sites currently in the planning process;
- sites not currently in the planning process (eg. Vacant land and buildings identified in the National Land Use Database);
- suggested potential development sites;
- lesser quality employment sites.

The sites would be assessed according to their suitability, availability and achievability. POS Enterprises were assisting with the Central Lancashire SHLAA and had facilitated the first meeting of a Panel of house builders and others involved in housing provision. Involving the housing development industry had been strongly advised by national guidance as it could secure widespread ownership of the process and aid progress with LDF document preparation.

The Members asked to be kept informed of progress with the SHLAA work and notified of the outcomes prior to the report being published.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.CCS.10 FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT LDF WORKING AND NEED TO REVIEW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

The Joint LDF Officer Team presented a report which outlined the potential opportunities to expand the joint working arrangements between the Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils, with assistance from the Lancashire County Council, beyond the production of the Preferred Core Strategy.

The Officer Team considered that there was scope to use the joint working arrangement on the preparation of the Site Allocations and Supplementary Planning Documents, in addition to their continuing work on the Core Strategy. An appendix circulated at the meeting listed eight provisional Supplementary Planning Documents which it was proposed should be referred to in the Preferred Core Strategy.

If the proposals were accepted, it would be necessary to review the document preparation milestone dates in the Local Development Schemes in order to reflect the revised procedural stages and other timescales to accord with the latest intentions and resource availability; particularly as they relate to the Growth Point initiative.

The Committee Members expressed the hope that the appropriate Supplementary Planning Documents would identify the infrastructure and other delivery requirements associated with specific development schemes.

RESOLVED – That the proposals to apply the joint working arrangement in respect of the production of the Site Allocations and Supplementary Planning Documents, in addition to continuing work on the Preferred Core Strategy, as an efficient and effective measure, be supported.

07.CCS.11 STAFFING AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS - UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Joint LDF Officers Team reviewing the staffing and financial arrangements currently in place to support the LDF joint working.

The Committee were reminded that the Joint Officers Team had been formed in April, 2008, comprising one Officer from each of the three Districts, with matching Officer assistance from the County Council. One of the seconded staff (the Planning Policy Manager at Chorley Council) had acted as the interim Team Co-ordinator. Each of the Authorities' staff input had been the equivalent of 0.8 full-time posts, with the County Council hosting and providing administrative and IT support.

The report highlighted the increasing demands on the Joint Officer Team to meet tight deadlines in the production of LDF documents, which would be aggravated by the need to undertake complementary work on the Site Allocations Document and the possible Growth Point initiative.

Therefore, in order to ensure that sufficient resources were available to expedite the production of relevant LDF documents, the Committee were recommended to support the proposal to implement the staffing structure for the Joint Officer Team that was originally to be brought into force in October 2008 (ie One full-time Co-ordinator, plus 0.8 FTE posts from each of the four authorities). It was envisaged that the interim Team Co-ordinator would undertake the Co-ordinator post on a three year secondment basis and for the cost to be shared equally by the three District authorities. In addition, the Growth Point initiative, if progressed, was likely to generate extra financial resources, which could be utilised as an opportunity to increase the staffing resources within either the Joint Officer Team or individual Districts' LDF teams.

The report also reminded the Committee of the cost savings estimated to have been achieved by the District Councils through the production of one Central Lancashire Core Strategy as opposed to individual strategies for each district. Jane Meek also confirmed that the future cost implications of maintaining a sufficiently robust Joint Officers Team would be addressed by the three District Councils within the context of their budget processes.

RESOLVED – That the report and planned staffing arrangements be noted.

07.CCS.12 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee was likely to be held on a convenient date in March, 2009 at Preston.

The LDF Team, Co-ordinator indicated that the Officer would be looking to factor bi-monthly meetings of the Joint Committee into each Authority's calendar of meetings for 2009/10.

Chair