

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Development and Regeneration (Introduced by the Executive Member for Development and Regeneration)	Executive Cabinet	9 March 2006

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – JOINT WORKING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To gain approval for joint Local Development Framework (LDF) working with Preston and South Ribble Councils and particularly to support the preparation of a joint Core Strategy document.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- Joint working should enable us to serve our customers better, improve our capacity to deliver and help us to better achieve a greener cleaner safer Chorley

RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	√	Information	√
Reputation	√	Regulatory/Legal	√
Financial	√	Operational	√
People		Other	

- Joint working does carry some risks. Clearly, if one authority is unable to contribute fully to the preparation of the Core Strategy, or if there is disagreement as to its content, then the joint working arrangements will have to be reviewed. If necessary, authorities may resort to producing separate Core Strategies, but this would not be in the best interests of Central Lancashire as a whole.
- At this stage, a formal agreement over joint working with South Ribble and Preston Councils is not proposed. Officers from each authority will agree by negotiation how work on the Core Strategy is to be apportioned. Each authority will need to ensure that the production of the Core Strategy accords with the regulations, and that Member approval reflects its own constitutional arrangements. Joint working on the LDF Core Strategy is predicated on each of the three authorities resolving to work in partnership with the others, and in agreeing to align their preparation timetables accordingly. An informal memorandum of understanding will be agreed in due course. A more formal agreement can be considered in future if this is considered to benefit the joint working arrangements.

BACKGROUND

6. The Local Development Framework (LDF) takes the form of a suite of local development plan documents which will eventually replace the Local Plan. The Core Strategy is the principal development plan document as it sets out the vision, strategy and objectives for the future development of a local authority's area.
7. It should seek to implement the spatial and transport policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy by setting out the broad location of new housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development. It will be guided by sustainable development principles, and will be subject to a sustainability appraisal. In addition, it must be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, and take account of the Community Strategies for each local authority area and any other strategies that have implications for the use and development of land.

JOINT WORKING

8. Over recent months, your Officers have established a close working relationship with those at both South Ribble and Preston Councils on strategic planning policy and economic development issues. The three authorities have jointly commissioned the Core Central Lancashire Sub-Regional Strategy (CCLSRS), and a joint City Vision is being prepared. These initiatives follow from a Joint Cabinet Briefing for Members of each authority on 7 November 2005 and an agreement thereat to form a joint authority steering group.
9. The preparation of a joint Core Strategy development plan document by the three authorities represents a natural progression of this joint working. It will ensure that the spatial aspects of the CCLSRS, and City Vision are implemented through each authority's LDF.
10. Joint working has been discussed at the Local Development Framework and Community Strategy Member Working Group, and has been generally welcomed as a positive step. The Member Working Group will continue to have an important role in advising officers on the content of the Core Strategy. In addition, the proposed joint authority steering group will have an important role to play in ensuring a co-ordinated approach. As a development plan document, the Core Strategy will need the approval of each authority's Full Council. It is therefore imperative that all members are kept informed about the Core Strategy and the issues it has to address, and have an opportunity to contribute towards its preparation.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

8. There are no financial implications arising directly out of this report. In the longer term, joint working may give rise to some savings through economies of scale, particularly in relation to the commissioning of research.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

9. This is a major undertaking and in the initial phases human resources benefits will accrue from the utilisation of the differing levels and knowledge in each of the Authorities. To maximise this effectiveness the terms of reference must be clearly defined as to human resources responsibilities. Should it be thought advantageous for this joint working to continue following the initial phases, serious consideration must be given to formalising this arrangement.

RECOMMENDATION

10. To agree to collaborate with South Ribble and Preston Councils on the preparation of a joint Core Strategy development plan document covering all three local authority areas, and to co-operate on other aspects of the Local Development Framework as appropriate.

REASONS FOR DECISION

11. There is consensus between officers and Members of Preston City, South Ribble Borough and Chorley Borough Councils, reinforced at the Joint Cabinet Briefing on 7th November 2005, that joint working between the three authorities will be beneficial to the central area of Lancashire and that it should continue and increase. Consequently, proposals are being developed to establish a steering group to co-ordinate the implementation of the CCLSRS and the emerging "Preston City Vision". This will comprise representatives of each of the authorities' cabinets and chief executives. A joint Core Strategy, prepared as part of the statutory Local Development Framework, is the natural progression of the joint working that has occurred to date. The Core Strategy will focus on the implementation of the spatial aspects of the CCLSRS and the Preston City Vision.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12. An alternative option would be for each authority to prepare its own Core Strategy, as originally envisaged. However, a combined, joint Core Strategy will be more effective in developing and implementing the CCLSRS and Preston City Vision than three separate documents.
13. A further option would be to establish formal joint working arrangements with Preston and South Ribble Councils, including the setting up of a joint committee serviced by a dedicated team of officers seconded from the respective authorities. However, this option would be time-consuming when resources need to be directed towards the task of preparing the Core Strategy. It would also be a more difficult option in procedural terms, and would not necessarily result in a better joint Core Strategy.

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION
JANE E MEEK

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Julian Jackson	5280	13 February 2006	ADMINREP/REPORT