

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TIMETABLE

### LDF ADVISORY GROUP - 7 DECEMBER 2011

Report of the: Director of Community and Planning Services

Status: For consideration

Key Decision: No

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#### **Executive Summary:**

The report considers the need to amend the timetable for publishing the Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document so that it takes full account of the National Planning Policy Framework and enables further consideration to be given to key development sites.

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#### **This report supports all the key aims of the Community Plan**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Mrs. Davison

**Head of Service** Head of Development Services – Mr. Jim Kehoe

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#### **Recommendation :**

that the need to amend the timetable for the Allocations and Development Management DPD be noted.

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**Reason for recommendation:** To help ensure the Development Plan Document is sound.

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#### **Background**

- 1 Following the adoption of the Core Strategy plan preparation has focussed on the Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) which will contain proposals for the development of key sites and detailed policies to control development. Separate consultation has taken place on draft proposals for site allocations and development management policies.
- 2 The current programme for the DPD is aimed at taking the draft document to the Environment Select Committee on 17 January 2012 and then to Cabinet on 9 February 2012 and Full Council on 21 February 2012, leading to formal "publication" in March.
- 3 Work is advanced in revising the earlier consultation documents on site allocations and development management policies and combining them into

one. The results of the open spaces consultation are also being integrated. The DPD will need to be supported by an updated sustainability appraisal, an equalities impact assessment and a statement of publicity and consultation incorporating formal responses to consultation comments. All this work is being carried out within the team and it is envisaged that the draft documents will be complete in time to meet this timetable.

- 4 Once the publication stage is reached it is difficult to make significant changes to the plan without withdrawing and re-publishing which potentially involves substantial delay. It is therefore extremely important that the plan is a finished document so far as the Council is concerned. In short we need to be satisfied that the publication version is a “sound” plan.
- 5 There are significant external factors that will affect are ability to produce a sound document for approval in February. These fall under two headings:

#### Issues with the NPPF.

- 6 Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) closed in October and the final version is promised by April 2012. The plan must be consistent with the NPPF and, while the draft gives a clear indication of the Government’s intended policy directions, there have been extensive and high-profile calls for change and it is likely that there will be significant changes in the final version compared with the draft. In advance of the final version we can produce a draft publication version that is consistent with the draft NPPF but until we see the final version we cannot be sure that we have a plan that will be consistent with the finalised NPPF. In essence there is a risk attached to progressing to the publication stage in advance of seeing the final NPPF and it is serious because changes to the NPPF that are not reflected in the published plan could render the plan unsound.
- 7 Additionally there are aspects of the draft NPPF to which the Council has objected because of concerns about potential adverse implications for the District (e.g. the ability to maintain the stock of employment land). It would not be appropriate to recommend DPD policies to Members that might have a damaging effect on the District while a possibility remains that they may not be needed if the draft NPPF is amended in response to comments received.

#### Issues with Key Sites

- 8 There are unresolved issues with some key development sites identified in the Core Strategy for which the Allocations and Development Management DPD needs to give direction. The two most important sites are:

##### *a) Swanley Town Centre*

- 9 Regeneration of the town centre is a key proposal of the Core Strategy. Discussions have taken place with the owner which should lead to proposals coming forward early next year. These will need to be considered and be subject to wider engagement. At the beginning of the year the position will still be uncertain.

*b) Land West of Blighs Meadow, Sevenoaks*

- 10 This is identified as a key development site in the Core Strategy. The site allocations consultation is based on the Planning Brief proposal for mixed use development including 59 dwellings but a final decision has yet to be made on whether to take forward the Planning Brief proposals.

**Proposed Approach**

- 11 In view of the uncertainties over the NPPF and key sites outlined above it is proposed to delay the publication stage of the DPD until summer 2012. This will enable account to be taken of the final version of the NPPF and give time for firmer proposals to be developed for key sites.
- 12 In the meantime there is scope for bringing forward a draft document in advance of the final version for consideration by Members but on the understanding that some aspects may be unfinished or subject to change. The advantage of this approach is that it will enable Members to consider informally aspects of the final plan, particularly changes in response to representations.
- 13 An amendment to the Local Development Scheme will be required to reflect the change to the formal programme.

**Background Papers:**

Allocations DPD (Options) February 2010

Development Management Draft Policies for Consultation May 2011

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