

## **North Wiltshire Local Development Framework, Core Strategy – Issues and Options Document, including the Sustainability Appraisal**

### **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 To present to Members of the Executive the North Wiltshire Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Issues and Options Document and the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Document.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Option 1 - Members recommend to the Council that the Core Strategy Issues and Options document (Appendix 1) be approved for consultation. The supporting document, the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2), also be recommended for consultation.**

**2.2 Option 2 - Members propose alterations to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document as shown in Appendix 1, and recommend to Council that the revised document be approved for consultation. The supporting document, the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2), also be recommended for consultation.**

**2.3 It is recommended that Members endorse 2.1.**

### **3.0 Links to Corporate Plan Priorities/Planning Services Business Plan Objectives**

3.1 Corporate Priorities:

- Local Development Framework

3.2 Business Plan Objectives:

- Local Development Framework

### **4.0 Background**

**4.1 Core Strategy:** is a document of the Local Development Framework and importantly establishes the overall context for future growth in North Wiltshire, setting out a Vision for the area. All other documents within the LDF will have to be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The Issues and Options document is an early stage in the production of the Core Strategy. It sets out questions and options for consultation based upon past consultation, studies and surveys. The next stage of the production of the Core Strategy will be the publication of the Preferred Options. This will result from consideration of the consultation responses, the Sustainability Appraisal and other planning policy, such as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

4.2 The Public Spaces and Local Plans Panel recommended that the Core Strategy Issues and Options document be approval for consultation by the Executive. During their discussions there was a suggestion that in paragraph 7.2, of the Core Strategy, the availability of reports from the Council's Website should be highlighted. This statement has been added to the document. Members also requested that the questionnaire include a section where the address details of respondents are requested, to aid analysis, this has also been added<sup>1</sup>.

4.3 Additionally, discussion was also made regarding the sustainability testing of the Options set out in the Options Matrix (pages 13 and 36 of the Core Strategy). The discussion centred on how the Options could be assessed in light of recognised sustainability principles. A question was raised; 'what happens to the choice of Options if public opinion results in support for an Options that scores poorly against the sustainability criteria?' In response to these comments the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, of the Core Strategy Issues and Options document, is presented in Appendix 2.

4.4 **Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** The purpose of this SA is to investigate the sustainability impact of the options presented in the Core Strategy against a set of identified sustainable criteria<sup>2</sup>. In the initial appraisal the 9 Options set out in the Options Matrix have been tested. At the Preferred Options stage (May 2006) of the Core Strategy an additional Sustainability Appraisal will take place. The results of the SA will be used in conjunction with the consultation responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options document to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options document. An understanding of the sustainability implications of a Development Plan Document (DPD) is a critical element in assessing the 'Soundness' of a plan. Testing of the process of assessing the 'Soundness of a Plan will be undertaken by a Government Inspector at the Examination Stage.

4.5 It is important that the sustainability of the options is considered when deciding on the Preferred Options. Members will be made aware of the consultation responses and the Sustainability Appraisal of the options when the Preferred Options document is taken through its committee process. Members will have the reasonability for deciding on the options published in the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

## **5.0 Financial and Human Resources Implications**

5.1 None

## **6.0 Environmental and Community Implications**

6.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> A separate questionnaire document has been prepared for the Core Strategy that replicates, with additional space for responses, the questions set out in Core Strategy Issues and Options document.

<sup>2</sup> The sustainability criteria were themselves subject to consultation in October 2005, when the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was published and consulted upon. The purpose of the Scoping Report is to enable better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation of planning documents, setting out sustainability considerations from the start. This important stage has been undertaken in advance of the production of the Core Strategy Issues and Options, so that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has informed its development.

**REPORT OF THE PLANNING SERVICES STRATEGIC MANAGER TO THE EXECUTIVE  
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