

# Report

**Report subject:** Revised Local Development Scheme

**Report to:** Planning & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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## 1. Purpose of Report

The Local Development Scheme is the council's timetable document for the production of the new Local Development Framework. It sets out the areas of planning policy which the council will review in the next 3 year period and outlines a broad timetable so that stakeholders can gain a better insight into how the process will unfold. The timetable information will be used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to assess the council's performance.

In March 2005, the council submitted its draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) to the Government Office (*for the South West*) as was required under the regulations associated with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Despite extensive consultation during the drafting of the LDS, Government Office has directed that changes should be made to the council's timetable. This report sets out the issues raised and the changes that have been made.

## 2. Background

In preparing the Local Development Scheme, members will be aware that officers undertook a focused consultation exercise with key stakeholder groups. This exercise involved all of the area committees, parish councils, business community leaders, community planners and other groups. These discussions resulted in a list of policy issues being raised, namely;

- Further action to tackle the need for affordable housing in the district
- Review of policy R2 and calls for development contributions towards other types of community infrastructure.

- Social inclusion and the combating of anti-social behaviour
- Safeguarding of community facilities and employment land, particularly in rural areas.

In determining how the council would structure its Local Development Framework, it became clear that there would need to be a policy document which drew together a range of community focused policies. Furthermore, in moving from Local Plan to LDF there was a need to incorporate existing policies (e.g. rights of way, education provision, transport infrastructure, clear links to design policies, etc.) to ensure that future development plays a more comprehensive role in maintaining and enhancing vitality and viability of local communities.

To this end, the draft Local Development Scheme included a Development Plan Document (DPD) entitled Sustainable Communities which was designed to address all of these aspects.

The table below sets out how this DPD fitted into the proposed work programme at that time

Local Development Document	Commencement of Work
Statement of Community Involvement	Spring 2005
Site Allocations (Review of Local Plan Phase 2 Housing sites)	Late Summer 2005
Sustainable Communities	Autumn 2005
Core Strategy	Summer 2006
Topic Area Policies (e.g. Design, Economy)	Mid 2007

The second key policy document of note in the early stages of LDF preparation is the Core Strategy. Guidance on this matter makes it clear that the Core Strategy should be informed by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This strategy will set out key policies at a regional level as well as key targets, including the number of houses to be built in each district.

When the draft LDS was prepared, officers considered that there was little point in commencing the Core Strategy until the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was well progressed. Clearly, if significant changes to the policy framework in the RSS were to emerge at a late stage, then early work on the council's Core Strategy may have to be abandoned. Thus, on this basis, it was proposed to start work on the Core Strategy in summer 2006, at which time it was expected that the RSS would be undergoing its Public Examination.

### 3. Government Office Response.

The council submitted its draft Local Development Scheme to Government Office ahead of the March 24<sup>th</sup> deadline. In achieving this, a sum of around £50,000 in Planning Delivery Grant was secured.

An initial verbal view from Government Office on the content of the LDS, was received in late April. This feedback was generally supportive of the content of the LDS document, however the view taken was that the council should concentrate on the production of its Core Strategy in the first instance, with the Sustainable Communities DPD being pushed back. At this time further information was requested.

In light of the importance which members had attached to the issues identified in the Sustainable Communities DPD, officers undertook further discussions with Government Office to highlight the priority in addressing these matters. Furthermore, officers continued to question the value in commencing the Core Strategy over a year before the RSS would be subjected to its Public Examination.

Despite these efforts Government Office responded formally on the 5<sup>th</sup> May indicating that the initial LDS was not acceptable. The letter indicated changes that should be made and, by means of a concession, did concede that the Sustainable Communities DPD could be prepared alongside the Core Strategy.

In light of the insistence of Government Office, the LDS has been revised to reflect their comments. The LDS timetable can now be summarised as follows

Local Development Document	Commencement of Work
Statement of Community Involvement	Spring 2005
Core Strategy	Autumn 2005
Sustainable Communities	Autumn 2005
Site Allocations (Review of Local Plan Phase 2 Housing sites)	Autumn 2006
Topic Area Policies (e.g. Design, Economy)	Mid 2007

### 4. Officer Comment

Officers commenced work on the LDS in May 2004 when Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) was initially published. This guidance was formalised in September 2004 but its content did not alter radically. However, the interpretation of this guidance has changed quite frequently during the last 12 months and it is this aspect which has been of greatest frustration to Forward Planning teams across the country.

In terms of deciding how Salisbury District's LDS should be finalised, officers have balanced the value of continuing to debate this issue with Government Office, with the need to concentrate on the delivery of new policy and the required research to underpin it. The view which has been taken is that the urgent attention needed in certain policy areas (e.g. R2 review, affordable housing, etc) has only been delayed by 3 months in comparison with the initial timetable. Therefore, the only drawback is that early commencement of the Core Strategy may be imprudent in light of the considerable evolution which the RSS may yet undergo.

In conclusion, despite all the issues, the revised LDS, attached to this report, sets out a clear and robust work programme which responds to the agenda being set at national level whilst still focusing, at the earliest opportunity, on matters which are of importance to the district and its communities.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That members recommend to Cabinet that the revised Local Development Scheme be adopted.**

## **Background Documents**

PPS12 - Planning Policy Statement 12 : Local  
Development Frameworks, ODPM  
Creating Local Development Frameworks – Companion  
Guide to PPS12, ODPM

### **Implications:**

- **Financial:** All initial costs associated with the implementation of LDF can be contained within existing budgets. If additional funding is required for future years, it will be bid for through the portfolio planning process
- **Legal:** No implications at this stage
- **Environmental Health:** Observations incorporated into the attached draft LDS
- **Human Rights:** The LDF process builds in the right to a fair hearing through a process of continuous community involvement.
- **Personnel:** No comments raised
- **Community Safety:** Not applicable at this stage
- **Council's Core Values:** Being fair and equitable, providing excellent service, communicating with the public, Open learning council and willing partner
- **Ward(s) Affected:** All