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Report

Report subject: Consultation on Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future

Report to: Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 21st August 2007

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1.0 Report Summary

To consult councillors on the Issues and Options paper Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future. This paper includes consultation on the Salisbury Vision and provides an opportunity to gather evidence that could be helpful when we come to review any future community strategy.

Members are asked to discuss options within the paper as well as proposing further local options that should be investigated.

2.0 Purpose of Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future

- 2.1 The new planning system of 'Local Development Frameworks' that is replacing the old system of local plans is divided into a series of documents. One of the key documents is the Core Strategy. This will set out the overarching strategy that development in the district will need to conform to. The new planning system requires local authorities to undertake several stages of public consultation, the first of which is called 'Issues and Options'. This therefore represents this first stage in consultation of the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy will also identify broadly where new development will be directed and will reinforce the message of sustainable communities. As part of this new process, officers have been gathering evidence to identify the key issues facing the district and have put forward a range of options to tackle them.
- 2.3 As there were two key corporate projects that were coming up for major consultation at the same time - the Issues and Options for the Core Strategy and options for the Salisbury Vision, a corporate decision was taken to consult on both documents at the same time. It was also decided to take this



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opportunity to gather evidence that could be helpful when the council come to review any future community strategy.

- 2.4 This joint consultation exercise should have the benefit of providing greater synergy between the strategies.
- 2.5 The Forward Planning Team are therefore seeking your views on the issues and options proposed within the document 'Salisbury and South Wiltshire – your place in the future'. A copy of this can be found as Appendix 1 to this report, although all Members have also been sent a copy in advance as part of the consultation process. Other options that Members feel are also relevant should additionally be identified. These options will then be investigated to ascertain if they are supported by a sound evidence base and meet sustainability appraisal and appropriate assessment objectives (please see paragraph 5.1 – 5.5). If options are supported and meet such objectives they may be taken forward to the Preferred Options.

3.0 Public Consultation

The consultation on Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future is taking place for a ten week period from 26th July 2007 to 5th October 2007, to give residents and stakeholders plenty of time to respond. During this time there will be many consultation events, including exhibitions in the main settlements, a technical consultative group, direct notification, consultation with area committees and planning and economic development scrutiny panel, citizens' panel and visits to parish council meetings and schools. The consultation arranged is in accordance with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The consultation should facilitate a high response rate.

4.0 Key Issues

- 4.1 Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future firstly identifies a strategic vision of the district in 20 years time:

'By 2026 South Wiltshire will be a thriving and vibrant district, where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life and good health in a safe, clean neighbourhood, and appreciate a superb environment which makes the most of the natural landscapes and historic buildings and complements them with exciting new buildings. It will be a place where the economy is thriving and maintains its important role within the wider region, and where everybody can realise their potential and enjoy their lives'.

- 4.2 The document then asks you to rank in order of importance and satisfaction issues such as improving access to health services and activities for teenagers to providing affordable decent housing and support for post offices, shops and services in rural villages.

- 4.3 The paper groups planning issues identified into eleven broad subject areas:

- Ensuring a sustainable future for south Wiltshire
- Agreeing the role our settlements should take
- Providing a decent, affordable home for all
- A prosperous economy providing jobs, vibrant town centres and a thriving countryside
- Supporting safe and healthy communities that provide opportunities for all
- Making the most of our beautiful natural environment
- Making the most of our historic environments and looking after them for future generations
- Welcoming visitors and promoting leisure and shopping opportunities
- The 'Community Chest'
- Place shaping: the design of new buildings and spaces and
- Facing challenges such as flood risk, waste, reducing pollution and providing transport choices

- 4.4 The final section of the consultation paper seeks views on the Salisbury Vision.

5.0 Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

- 5.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a systematic process undertaken during the preparation of a plan or programme. Its role is to assess the extent to which the emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to consider ways in which the plan or programme can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions. It is also a means of identifying and addressing any adverse effects that draft policies and proposals might have. The SA must also meet the requirements of the European Union's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 5.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required to be undertaken to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of nature sites protected under European Law (directive 92/43/EEC – the Habitats Directive) and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of those sites. The River Avon and part of its tributaries are such a site and are known as the River Avon Special Area of Conservation.
- 5.3 There is no requirement at this stage to produce either a SA or to undertake an AA. Draft SA's and AA's will be undertaken at the Preferred Options stage.
- 5.4 With respect to the SA, officers have produced an Interim Sustainability Statement (ISS). The ISS tests the options proposed, as well as those discarded, against sustainability objectives identified within the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The ISS should ascertain if an option is sustainable or not in terms of social, environmental and economic aspects. The ISS can be found as a background paper to this report.
- 5.5 With respect to AA an Interim Appropriate Assessment Statement (IAAS) has also been produced which sets out a framework for ensuring robust Appropriate Assessment is carried out in due course. Part of the reason for this, is to seek views from key stakeholders, such as natural England on the effectiveness of the methodology we are proposing.

6.0 Next steps

- 6.1 When the consultation period finishes on 5th October 2007, the Forward Planning team will read and analyse all responses received. These will be used to produce a Preferred Options core strategy, which again will be consulted on.

7.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that:

Members discuss the issues and options put forward in Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place in the Future and identify their preferred options, together with other options that are important to the District and which officers should look into.

Background Papers:

Interim Sustainability Statement
Interim Appropriate Assessment
Interim Equality and Diversity Report
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (DCLG)
Salisbury Vision Report and Sustainability Appraisal
Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (DCLG)
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
Topic Paper 1 – Climate Change
Topic Paper 2 – Housing
Topic Paper 3 – Settlement Strategy
Topic Paper 4 – Sustainable Communities
Topic Paper 5 – Biodiversity
Topic Paper 6 – Flooding
Topic Paper 7 – Agriculture, farm diversification and rural economy
Topic Paper 8 - Retail
Topic Paper 9 – The Economy and Employment
Topic Paper 10 – Tourism, Leisure and Night Time Economy
Topic Paper 11 – Planning Obligations
Topic Paper 12 – Waste and Pollution
Topic Paper 13 – Conservation
Topic Paper 14 – Design
Topic Paper 15 – Transport
Topic Paper 16 – Inclusive Design

Implications:

Financial: All costs relating to this consultation are planned for, and can be contained within existing budgets. Once consultation is finished, if additional work is required which cannot be contained within existing budgets, then a further report will be brought before members at that time.

Legal: Comments incorporated.

Human Rights: Article 6 (the right to a fair hearing) may apply. The consultation process contributes to compliance with this.

Personnel: None at this stage

IT: None

Community Safety: None at this stage

Council's Core Values: Excellent service, thriving economy, fairness & equality, open council & willing partner, communicating with the public, supporting the disadvantaged, protecting the environment.

Ward Affected: All.