

**ROTHERHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP**  
**Friday, 17th September, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Jack, Pickering, St. John, Sangster, Whelbourn and Whysall.

together with:-

Andy Duncan	Strategic Policy Team Leader
Neil Finney	Technical Assistant, Planning and Regeneration
Anthony Lowe	Solicitor
Ken MacDonald	Planning Manager
Bronwen Peace	Principal Officer, Planning and Regeneration
Neil Rainsforth	Senior Planner
Helen Sleigh	Senior Planner
Ryan Shepherd	Quality and Design Co-ordinator
Gordon Smith	

**19. INTRODUCTIONS/ APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Steering Group:-

The Mayor	Councillor McNeely
Councillor Austen	Chair, Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Dodson	Vice-Chair, Planning Board
Councillor Lakin	Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children
Councillor R. S. Russell	Cabinet Member for Town Centres
Councillor Walker	Senior Adviser, Regeneration and Environment
Councillor Wyatt	Cabinet Member for Resources and Commissioning

**20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH JULY, 2010**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a

correct record.

**21. ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**22. TOWN CENTRES RETAIL SURVEY AND BOROUGH-WIDE RETAIL AND LEISURE STUDY**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Neil Rainsforth, Research and Spatial Analysis Officer, and Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, relating the results of the latest surveys of the main borough town centre shopping areas, including Rotherham town centre.

The report highlighted the general increase in vacancy rates seen over the last few years and the varying fortunes across the borough's retail centres. It also provided information on the appointment of consultants to undertake an update of the Borough-wide Retail and Leisure Study which will form part of the evidence base for the preparation of the LDF.

Particular reference was made to:-

(i) the Town Centre Retail Surveys

It was reported that the annual survey in respect of Rotherham Town Centre, Bramley, Dinnington, Kiveton Park, Maltby Parkgate and Rawmarsh, Swallownest, Swinton, Thurcroft, Wath and Wickersley had taken place in July, (rather than October), in order to provide consultants with the latest information.

Attention was drawn to the graph within the report, which illustrated town centre vacancy rates over the period 2001 to 2010. It was noted the graph showed a steady increase in the retail vacancy rates. This however was a national trend.

(ii) Borough-wide Retail and Leisure Study

It was reported that PPS4 highlighted the need for an up to date and sound evidence base to plan positively for town centre uses. It was explained that due to the detailed and technical nature of the study, and in accordance with Standing Orders, Colliers CRE had been commissioned to undertake the study. A copy of the brief was attached to the submitted report. It was anticipated that the study would take between 3-4 months to complete and a further report would be presented to a future meeting of the Steering Group.

Those present raised and discussed the following:-

- misleading figures which indicated a centre was thriving when in fact it was not

- occupancy by Take-aways which distorted the figures
- infrastructure provision e.g. easy links to transport
- success of the Business Vitality Grants in Rotherham town centre
- the need for a marketing policy to increase the number of units let in townships
- what were the barriers preventing properties being let e.g. those that had been vacant for several years
- decline in traditional markets and other changes in shopping behaviour e.g. internet shopping and banking
- inclusion of leisure facilities e.g. bowling alleys, cinemas

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the report and the general upward trend in retail vacancy rates experienced in many of the main borough town centres, particularly in Rotherham town centre, be noted.

(2) That the commissioning of a borough wide retail and leisure study, which will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, be noted.

## **23. EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW CONSULTATION**

Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, reported on the feed back from the consultation in respect of the Employment Land Review which was carried out during June and July 2009.

It was reported that 76 representations had been received from 23 individual consultees from a range of organisations e.g. Yorkshire Forward, landowners, local organisations and members of the public.

The purpose had been to look at the amount of employment land required over the LDF period and to assess the suitability of existing employment land and its continued use in the future and also identify any sites to be re-allocated for other uses.

A re-assessment of the figures was now needed following the abolition of the RSS. This would include looking at how much growth existing sites could take up.

All the comments received would be entered onto the Council's LDF Consultation Portal. The original document would be amended accordingly to take account of the comments and a future report brought to a future meeting of this Steering Group.

## **24. PUBLICATION OF BDR JOINT WASTE PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Neil Finney, Technical Assistant, relating to the Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham (BDR) Joint Waste Plan that had been developed by planning officers from the three authorities as part of the Local Development Framework.

The aim of the Plan was to provide policies to determine planning applications for waste management facilities and included facilities for the following waste types: Municipal, Commercial & Industrial, Construction & Demolition, Hazardous, and Agricultural.

It was further explained that the BDR Joint Waste Plan was a formal Development Plan Document which had already been subject to statutory public consultation and other stages of consultation with public and private bodies, to assist in its development.

In addition to providing policies to inform the determination of planning applications, the Plan also proposed to allocate four strategic sites of up to 5 hectares (12 acres), for the development of larger scale waste management centres and to encourage the co-location of similar facilities from the waste industry.

The 3 local authorities were simultaneously moving the Plan forward to the publication stage, and that would be followed by a further 6 weeks consultation period to challenge the soundness of the Plan. Ultimately the Plan would be submitted to Government to be examined for soundness by an Independent Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. If the Inspector's report was favourable then the BDR Joint Waste Plan would be recommended to each of the Local Authorities' full Councils for formal adoption.

Reference was made to the importance of the design of the facilities and also to the planning process.

Resolved:- (1) That the formal Publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan be endorsed insofar as this Steering Group is concerned.

(2) That a report be submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the formal publication of the BDR Joint Waste Plan.

## **25. LDF SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Helen Sleight, Senior Planner, proposing a settlement hierarchy to guide ongoing work on the Core Strategy and to assist in the selection of sites for future development.

It was explained that a clear spatial strategy for the Borough was the bedrock for the preparation of the final draft Core Strategy and would guide the preparation of the Sites and Policies DPD Issues and Options Consultation Draft Development Plan Documents (DPD's).

Some of the key issues that had been considered in preparing the suggested settlement hierarchy were:-

- to clearly demonstrate the settlement hierarchy for the borough

- to determine how the settlement hierarchy will function in the future
- to determine how a settlement identified for growth will change in the future

The proposed settlement hierarchy reflected the status of the centres / settlement groupings as they were and also their potential future role. It reflected the availability of existing facilities and where growth could potentially be supported in the future.

The settlement hierarchy and the emerging Spatial Strategy would be the over arching policy to guide future development.

Members were asked to consider the wording of the draft Spatial Strategy for the Borough as set out in the submitted report. This spatial strategy would guide the preparation of the Sites and Policies DPD Issue and Options Consultation Draft. It was explained that the submitted report proposed a settlement hierarchy to guide ongoing work on the Core Strategy and in the selection of sites for future development.

Further reference was made to:-

- the greenbelt review background paper to support the draft Core Strategy
- Preferred sites and those that are the most sustainable
- Changed terminology – principal town was now ‘principal settlement’
- Identification of settlement groupings by population and dwellings
- Super Output Areas mapped out
- 7 key issues (listed in the submitted report) that had been considered in proposing the suggested settlement hierarchy
- Tables summarising the proposed settlement hierarchy and comparison to the Retail Hierarchy
- Identification of principal settlements for growth:- Rotherham Urban Area; Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common/ Wath, Brampton Bierlow, West Melton/Bramley, Wickersley and Ravenfield/Kiveton Park and Wales.
- Identification of Waverley as a Local Service Centre with significant potential for Growth

Members present raised and discussed the following:-

- the Dearne Valley Eco Vision
- renewable energy – sustainability (noting the required sustainability appraisal) and climate change
- local wildlife and geological sites
- provision of schools re: number of homes proposed, and other infrastructure requirements
- preservation and development of local communities

- provision of affordable housing
- proximity to rail links and the M1/M18/A1 corridors
- potential future benefits from the development of the Chesterfield Canal (noting legal advice re: whether those aspirations can be achieved over the lifetime of the Plan)
- area of the Borough that would welcome development of housing and employment opportunities, and the proximity of the South Yorkshire Navigation

Resolved:- That the content of the report be noted as work in progress.

## 26. LDF NEXT STEPS

Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader, reported on the next steps in the LDF process.

He reported that Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 had considered a report which set out details of the public consultation on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy over the summer of 2009, together with the feedback on that consultation response. This report had also been considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

Consideration as given to the next round of public consultation and the proposed timetable. It was pointed out that approval had also been given to a new approach to standard letters and petitions.

Reference was made to the revocation of the housing targets set in the Regional Spatial Strategy and it was reported that the Cabinet had supported proposals to set an interim housing target to provide continuity. This would demonstrate to the market that there was land available for mixed and affordable housing development over the next five years and provide a stop-gap figure until the LDF process had been completed.

Reference was also made to the yet uncertain role of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), noting that a bid had already been submitted to form a LEP.

It was also noted that the details of the new homes scheme had not yet been made available and so it was uncertain which organisations (i.e. the Council or the LEP) would benefit from this reward grant.

It was confirmed that the Council would need to continue to work closely with other local authorities within the sub-region.

Resolved:- That this Steering Group notes the following:-

(1) the draft Local Development Framework Consultation Plan and the draft Local Development Framework timetable.

(2) the revised approach to standard letters and petitions received in

response to future Local Development Framework consultation.

(3) the adoption of an interim housing target for Rotherham of 750 net new dwellings per annum (based on the 2005 draft RSS figure, or “Option 1” figure, as allowed for by Government guidance following revocation of regional strategies).

(4) the further public consultation through the Local Development Framework process on a range of housing targets to determine a final housing target.

(5) the issuing of a Press Release on the position.

## **27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following issue was raised:-

(i) Census data

It was reported that the April 2011 census was to be the last. The question was asked what other population/demographic information would be available in its place to guide work such as the LDF.

It was reported that the ONS had a range of statistics updated and available every two years.

## **28. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of this Steering Group be held on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 at 10 a.m. in the Town Hall.