

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 April 2013</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Submission of Rotherham's Core Strategy</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Development Services</b>

### 5. Summary

The report seeks Cabinet approval for the Submission of Rotherham's Core Strategy to Government.

### 6. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the contents of the report and the Schedule of Proposed Minor Amendments to the Core Strategy
2. That Cabinet approve the Submission of Rotherham's Core Strategy to Government

## **7. Proposals and Details**

As a statutory requirement the Council is preparing a Local Plan for Rotherham. The two key documents contained within the Local Plan are the Core Strategy, and the supporting Sites and Policies document.

The Publication Core Strategy was subject to consultation between June and August 2012. Members may recall that on 23 May 2012 Cabinet minute C3 (endorsed by Council meeting minute A17, 25 July 2012) approved submission of the Core Strategy to Government subject to there being no major changes as a result of the consultation on the Publication Core Strategy.

Following a consideration of the consultation responses further additional work to support submission has been undertaken, including consultation on a number of Focused Changes to the Core Strategy (endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 19 December 2012, minute C116). These were intended to improve the clarity and presentation of the document and do not alter the overall thrust of the Core Strategy or particular policies.

Following on from this the Council has identified a limited number of additional proposed changes to the Core strategy arising from a consideration of responses received, recent issues (announcement of the proposed HS2 route) and minor corrections (drafting errors). This schedule is attached at Appendix 1, and may be amended further prior to submission of the Core Strategy. These will be submitted alongside the Core Strategy for consideration by the appointed Inspector.

### ***Submission of the Core Strategy***

Following the conclusion of the Focused Changes consultation and revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Council is now in a position to proceed to submission of the Core Strategy, subject to the conclusion of the following key areas of work:

- Completion of transport modelling work – Transportation are liaising with consultants to complete the work April / May
- Completion of the Integrated Impact Assessment (including Sustainability Appraisal) (early April)
- Completion of the Bassingthorpe Farm Concept Framework (end of April)
- Negotiation to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Sheffield City Council regarding Rotherham's housing target (March/April)
- Completion of key supporting documents, including Consultation Statement, Statement of Co-operation, and relevant background papers (early May)

It is proposed to submit the Core Strategy to Government for independent examination, subject to the conclusion of the above areas of work and the administrative requirements associated with submission.

Once submitted the Planning Inspectorate will appoint an inspector to undertake examination of the Core Strategy. Subject to a timetable to be established by the Planning Inspectorate, the examination hearings could take place in September 2013, with a view to the Council receiving the inspector's report before the end of the year, and being in a position to adopt the Core Strategy early in 2014. These timescales are indicative. The Government has previously announced that

examination of plans involving the review of Green Belt will be prioritised. The precise implications of this for the examination timetable are not yet known.

The selection of sites to deliver the Core Strategy will be made through the Sites and Policies document, which will also contain more detailed Development Management policies. This will be subject to further public consultation beginning in May; therefore there will be further opportunity for Members, stakeholders and residents to have their say on which sites should be developed and the policies to guide any new development.

### **Core Strategy headlines**

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision for the future development of the Borough between 2013 and 2028, and the strategic policies to guide investment and development decisions to achieve this vision.

### ***Vision and objectives***

The vision for the future of Rotherham Borough is:

Rotherham will be prosperous with a vibrant, diverse, innovative and enterprising economy. It will fulfil its role as a key partner in the delivery of the Sheffield City Region recognising the close economic, commercial and housing markets links with Sheffield and our other neighbouring authorities.

Rotherham will provide a high quality of life and aspire to minimise inequalities through the creation of strong, cohesive and sustainable communities. Rotherham will be successful in mitigating and adapting to future changes in climate. It will have a sense of place with the best in architecture, sustainable design and public spaces. Natural and historic assets will be conserved and enhanced. Rotherham will promote biodiversity and a high quality environment where neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained, with good quality homes and accessible local facilities, making best use of existing infrastructure, services and facilities. A network of green infrastructure will link Rotherham's urban areas with the wider countryside, providing access to green spaces and acting as habitat links for wildlife.

The largest proportion of growth will be focused in the Rotherham Urban Area including major new development at Bassingthorpe Farm which is key to delivering growth in the heart of Rotherham. Regeneration of Rotherham town centre will enable it to fulfil its role as the borough's primary retail, leisure and service centre. Considerable development will take place on the edge of the urban area at Waverley, with the development of a new community and consolidation of the Advanced Manufacturing Park. Significant development will also take place in Principal Settlements for Growth: in the north around Wath, Brampton and West Melton, on the fringe of Rotherham Urban Area at Wickersley, Bramley and Ravenfield, and in the south-east at Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common. New development will also take place in the borough's principal settlements and local service centres. Throughout Rotherham development will aim to create self contained communities which support a network of retail and service centres, where the need to travel is reduced and communities enjoy good access to green spaces and the wider open countryside.

The vision is underpinned by 17 objectives, addressing the key issues facing Rotherham over the next 15 years, covering subjects ranging from the provision of sufficient new homes to protection of the environment.

### **Strategy**

The regional strategy, the Yorkshire and Humber Plan (2008), was formally revoked by the Secretary of State on 22 February 2013. The regional strategy is therefore no longer part of the development plan for Rotherham.

As the regional strategy is now revoked, the major obstacle to determining a local housing target has been removed. The Council is therefore proposing a **lower** local housing target (the only Council within South Yorkshire to do so) of **850 new homes a year**. This is in line with an assessment of the latest evidence on future household growth and the capacity available on suitable sites. This will require 12,750 new homes to be built over the 15 year plan period from 2013 to 2028. Provision will also be made to accommodate the backlog of 1,600 homes against the annual target between 2008 (the base date of key population and household projections) and adoption of the Core Strategy in 2013. Not meeting this backlog risks rejection of the plan by the inspector.

The local housing target will enable us to meet our housing requirements whilst also ensuring that we can reduce the need for the release of Green Belt land. This level of proposed growth is also broadly comparable with the Borough's growth over the last 15 years.

Based on a review of employment land, it is considered appropriate to provide for around **235 hectares** of employment land for new economic development. The overall strategy will result in sensible growth across Rotherham which has regard to local characteristics. Most new development will be focused in the Rotherham Urban Area (including at Bassingthorpe Farm) and at Principal Settlements for Growth at:

- Wath, Brampton and West Melton,
- Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common, and
- Bramley, Wickersley and Ravenfield.

Within this plan period it is anticipated that development at Bassingthorpe Farm will deliver 1,700 homes and 11 hectares of employment land.

The Core Strategy contains 33 policies grouped under seven themes designed to meet the main aims of the strategy, which are:

- **deliver new development in sustainable locations**
- **create mixed and attractive places to live**
- **support a dynamic economy,**
- **support movement and accessibility**
- **manage the natural and historic environment**
- **create safe and sustainable communities**
- **ensure that the necessary new infrastructure is delivered** and that decisions are taken with regard to the national **presumption in favour of sustainable development.**

As well as providing for new homes and employment, the Core Strategy's suite of policies covers a range of related subjects such as retail provision, heritage protection, flooding, biodiversity, greenspace and climate change.

## **8. Finance**

The costs associated with submission of the Core Strategy will be met from the existing Planning Policy team budget. The Council will also be required to meet the costs of the independent examination undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate. The precise cost will depend upon the length of the examination, but may be estimated to be around £60-80,000.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Endorsement by Members of the submission of the Core Strategy is sought to enable progress towards adoption.

- The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) express a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development. Our UDP policies only continue to have any weight where they are in accordance with the NPPF. It is important that Rotherham's Core Strategy is in place as soon as possible to provide an up-to-date planning policy framework for the Borough's future growth and development.
- A failure to achieve timely progress on the Local Plan could delay the spatial strategy required to guide future decision-making on planning applications.
- Having a Local Plan in place will provide a steer for any neighbourhood plans that may emerge under the provisions of the Localism Act.
- Failure to make progress with the Local Plan risks delayed provision of the new homes and employment opportunities that the Borough needs.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The implementation of the Local Plan will make a positive contribution to all of Rotherham's Regeneration priorities. When adopted, the Core Strategy and supporting documents will further the objectives of the Corporate Plan and support the delivery of the Rotherham Sustainable Community Strategy by:

- providing sufficient good quality homes
- ensuring well designed, decent affordable housing
- providing employment land to meet the needs of the modern economy and support sustainable communities through access to employment opportunities
- promoting the "town centre first" policy approach to help the regeneration and renaissance of Rotherham Town Centre and other town, district and local centres within the borough.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Appendix 1: Schedule of Additional Proposed Changes
- Publication Core Strategy (July 2012):  
[http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6665/publication\\_core\\_strategy\\_june\\_2012](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6665/publication_core_strategy_june_2012)
- Focused Changes to Publication Core Strategy (January 2013):  
[http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7837/core\\_strategy\\_focused\\_changes\\_january\\_2013](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7837/core_strategy_focused_changes_january_2013)

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## Appendix 1: Schedule of Additional Proposed Changes

This Schedule sets out a number of proposed amendments to the Core Strategy in addition to those set out in the Core Strategy Focused Changes document.

The changes included here address erratum identified in the Focused Changes document, or issues which have come to light after publication of the Focused Changes document. These have not been subject to public consultation; however are considered to be minor in nature or relate to national infrastructure projects beyond the control of the Local Authority.

Each proposed amendment has been given a reference number and are listed in the same order as the text of the Publication Core Strategy. Amendments proposing new text are shown in **bold and underlined** and those proposing the deletion of text are shown ~~struck through~~. Where it is considered helpful the full text of any policy/ paragraph that is suggested for amendment is also specified. The Reason for Amendment section outlines why the amendment(s) are being suggested.

Text reference	Suggested amendment
Paragraph 1.0.1	<p>1.0.1 The Council is preparing a series of new planning documents to create a Local Plan for Rotherham. This Core Strategy has been prepared around a vision for the future development of the borough for the next 15 years, <b><u>from 2013 to 2028</u></b>.</p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> This change proposes an addition to the wording of paragraph 1.0.1 as suggested to be amended by focused change 5. It inserts reference to the plan period to clarify that the Core Strategy plan period is 2013 – 2028. This is response to concerns raised in representations to the Core Strategy Focused Changes.</p>
Policy CS6, criteria c(i)	<p>Development within the broad locations for growth identified in Policy CS1 Delivering Rotherham’s Spatial Strategy will be supported after the first five years of the plan period. Development in these locations within the first five years of the plan period will only be supported where this is required to meet the supply of deliverable sites set out above <b><u>or it has been demonstrated that sites are deliverable and make a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the Core Strategy</u></b>.</p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> This change proposes an addition to the wording of Policy CS6, criteria c(i) as suggested to be amended by focused change 5. This, in response to concerns raised in representation to the Core Strategy Focused Changes, seeks to provide additional clarity regarding the development of Broad Locations for Growth and when they may come forward.</p>

Text reference	Suggested amendment
	<p>The Council considers the Broad Locations for Growth as critical to the Core Strategy, however is also aware of the need to meet its requirements in terms of maintaining a five year supply of deliverable sites. Since Publication of the Core Strategy work has continued on the Bassingthorpe Farm Concept Framework, and taking account of this and the concerns raised, the Council is minded to support the proposed changes to Policy CS1. This recognises the significant contribution that Bassingthorpe Farm will make to meeting Rotherham's housing requirement over the Plan period, and the fact that it may well provide more sustainable development than other sites to be allocated for development within Rotherham. The proposed change will be included in the schedule of additional changes which the Council intends to submit alongside the Core Strategy.</p>
Policy CS17	<p><b><u>g. the provisional route of the High Speed Two rail line</u></b></p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> To take account of the recently announced preferred route for the High Speed 2 rail route.</p>
Insert new paragraphs after 5.5.32	<p><b><u>The High Speed 2 rail network is a major national infrastructure project. Phase 2 includes an eastern branch connecting Birmingham with Leeds via a new station in Sheffield at Meadowhall.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The initial preferred route runs immediately to the west of Aston, Aughton and Swallownest, and Treeton before passing through Catcliffe and Waverley and to the west of Brinsworth. From Meadowhall the route passes to the west of Thorpe Hesley.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>The route will be subject to consultation prior to being finalised by the Government in 2014. Construction could begin within the Local Plan period, with the route potentially opening around 2032-33. Whilst it is acknowledged that the precise route has yet to be determined the Council will look to safeguard the broad route corridor wherever possible.</u></b></p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> To take account of the recently announced preferred route for the High Speed 2 rail route.</p>
Paragraph 5.6.126	<p>Insert the following after the second sentence:</p> <p><b><u>Map 14 shows the broad extent of mineral resources within the borough.</u></b></p>

Text reference	Suggested amendment
	<p><b>Reason for amendment</b>            Focused Change 129 relates to the inclusion of a map showing the broad extent of mineral reserves within the borough. It is also necessary to include a textual reference to this map within the supporting text.</p>
Table 2	<p>Replace the suggested wording of Focused Change 21 with the following:</p> <p>Re-number entries in column two 'Core Strategy Issues Addressed' to reflect insertion of new issue, and include reference to the new heritage issue against objective8</p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b>            This corrects a drafting error in Focused Change 21 to show that the new issue inserted regarding heritage should be shown against objective 8 rather than 18.</p>
Policy CS1, Bassingthorpe Farm section, first paragraph	<p>Development will provide for around 2,400 new dwellings on site with around 1,700 new dwellings <b>expected</b> to be delivered in the Plan period (43% <del>13%</del> <b>12%</b> of Rotherham's housing requirement) with a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes. Around 11 hectares (5%) of Rotherham's employment requirement will be developed in this area.</p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b>            To correct a drafting error in Focused Change 30, which did not clearly identify the insertion of the word 'expected'. This is to clarify that the expected number of dwellings to be delivered within the plan period is an estimate and that actual delivery will be dependant upon a number of factors including the housing market.</p> <p>The change above shows this alongside the proposed change in Focused Change 30 to reflect the revised percentage in line with the proposed amendments to housing figures in Policy CS1 to take account of undersupply to 2008 (focused change number 28).</p>
Policy CS3, criterion f	<p><b><u>Maximising the opportunities for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and</u></b> <del>E</del> ensuring that sites create a coherent built form, <b><u>minimising the</u></b> impact on heritage assets and the open countryside <del>is minimised</del></p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b>            To correct a drafting error in Focused Change 47 which failed to show the last two words 'is minimised' as being deleted. This is</p>

Text reference	Suggested amendment
	<p>corrected above and is shown alongside the other proposed changes in Focused Change 47. The changes are made to better accord with paragraph 131 of the NPPF and Paragraph 5.2.63 of the Core Strategy.</p>
Paragraph 5.2.63	<p><del>New Development will have an impact on the character of an the local area, and t</del> The NPPF requires planning policies to seek to <b><u>Local Plan policies to protect and enhance</u></b> the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas. <del>In</del> <b><u>our natural, built and historic environment. This Policy recognises that new development will have an impact on the quality, character and amenity of the locality or local area and in</u></b> choosing locations for new development considerations needs to be given to which sites will have potentially positive effects on the character of the locality and which have the least negative impacts and what potential for the mitigation of negative impacts exists. New development sites should <b><u>promote local distinctiveness, integrate new development into the natural, built and historic environment</u></b>, be in locations that minimise the impact upon, and where possible improve <b><u>and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and to</u></b> the existing surrounding urban areas and countryside as well as the wider environment.</p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> To correct a minor drafting error in Focused Change 50 which in the second sentence should have deleted the ‘s’ from considerations, to read “...consideration needs to be given to...”. This is corrected above and overall the changes reflect the requirements of the NPPF in the selection of sites and the impact new development will have on the locality.</p>
Policy CS22	<p>a. Requiring development proposals to address gaps in provision and local deficiencies in accessible green space <b><u>where it is necessary to do so as a direct result of the new development</u></b></p> <p><b>Reason for amendment</b> This change proposes an addition to the wording of Policy CS22, criteria a as suggested to be amended by focused change 115. This, in response to an objection raised in representation to the Core Strategy Focused Changes, seeks to provide additional clarity that not all forms of development will be required to address these deficiencies.</p>
Insert new paragraph after 5.3.12 (Housing	<p>Amend the Trajectory to reflect the effect of the allocation of sites in the Sites and Policies Document on the housing land supply in the early part of the plan; showing increased delivery</p>

Text reference	Suggested amendment
Trajectory)	<p data-bbox="483 230 778 264">in the first five years.</p> <p data-bbox="483 304 847 338"><b>Reason for amendment</b></p> <p data-bbox="483 338 1401 371">To better reflect the result of implementation of the plan policies.</p>
Paragraph 5.3.6	<p data-bbox="483 414 1401 815">The particular sites which will be allocated in each area will be selected in light of the <del>C</del>criteria in Policy CS3 from among those identified as developable and deliverable by the SHLAA <u>or as any new evidence may indicate</u>. The Government's policy is to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations contributing to the sustainable growth of communities. The NPPF states that plans should, where reasonable to do so, create patterns of development that facilitate the use public transport, cycling and walking and also to aim for a balance of land uses, in an area, to encourage people to minimise journey lengths...</p> <p data-bbox="483 855 847 889"><b>Reason for amendment</b></p> <p data-bbox="483 889 1390 1032">The above amendment includes the changes already proposed under focused change 62. To allow the consideration of any new sites that may come forward that have not yet been evaluated in the latest SHLAA.</p>