

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Local Development Framework: Member Task Group

Meeting 1pm Tuesday 28th October 2008
Committee Suite 3, Westfields, Sandbach

Present

Cllr David Brown	Cheshire East
Cllr Harold Davenport	Cheshire East
Cllr Jamie Macrae	Cheshire East
Cllr Barry Moran	Cheshire East
Cllr Chris Thorley	Cheshire East
Cllr George Walton (Chair)	Cheshire East
John Knight	Macclesfield BC
Alan Millington	Crewe & Nantwich BC
Richard House	Congleton BC
Stewart House	Macclesfield BC
Stuart Penny	Cheshire CC

1. Apologies: Cllr Jacqui Weatherall (Cheshire East)

2. Introductions

Members and officers were welcomed to the second LDF Member Task Group meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

4. Local Development Scheme Progress

At its meeting on 15th October, Congleton Borough Council resolved to make representations for the Cheshire East Local Development Scheme (LDS) to include the Middlewich Canal Corridor Area Action Plan, the Congleton Town Centre Area Action Plan and a Sandbach Town Centre Design Statement SPD. The draft LDS was withdrawn from the last Cheshire East Council meeting to enable consideration of the proposed amendments.

Alan Millington and John Knight outlined the importance of completing the Core Strategy and highlighted that this should be the first priority for the LDS. Resources available to carry out LDF work are not yet known and the inclusion of additional documents could compromise work on other priorities. Members emphasised that significant efforts have already been made in progressing these documents and Congleton's impact analysis of its own LDS indicated that they are still needed. Inclusion of these documents in the Cheshire East LDS would also keep continuity for partners and avoid negative perceptions of the Council.

Macclesfield and Crewe & Nantwich had taken a different approach to Congleton and effectively stopped LDF work last year. Consequently, other important issues in these areas as yet unknown may also need to be addressed through the LDF. These issues will become apparent as the Core Strategy develops.

Following discussion of the issues, it was agreed that:

- The three additional items requested by Congleton Borough Council for inclusion in the Cheshire East Local Development Scheme (for Congleton town centre, the Middlewich Canal corridor and Sandbach) be agreed and included in the 2008 submission
- LDS would make it clear that the preparation of the Core Strategy will take priority until it is sufficiently advanced.
- Once spatial priorities emerge from the Core Strategy across Cheshire East, plans and policies will be prioritised and resources allocated accordingly
- This approach to the LDS should be agreed with the Government Office for the North West

Action: Cllr Macrae proposed that this wording be circulated for agreement with the portfolio holder, Cllr Brown prior to the circulation of the minutes. Cllr Moran seconded this and the meeting agreed.

The timescale for approval of the LDS will now be as follows: Places Advisory Panel 12th November; Cabinet Briefing 19th November; Cabinet 2nd December; Council 9th December.

Following announcement of the draft structures, this LDF group will need to consider the resource requirements for producing the LDF.

5. Regional Spatial Strategy

John Knight presented a report on the new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for information. The majority of Structure Plan policies have been replaced by RSS and the Development Plan now consists of the RSS, saved policies from each Borough's Local Plan, saved policies from the Structure Plan and saved policies from the Minerals and Waste Plans.

Guidance recently received from Government Office requires new authorities to add together the housing requirements from each former authority. There is some flexibility to move housing numbers around within the new authority subject to meeting local and affordable needs in each of the three former areas. A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be commissioned for Cheshire East to provide evidence, but in the meantime national advice will guide development to brownfield sites at higher densities.

The Partial Review of RSS will not include Housing, Waste or Renewable Energy and will concentrate only on Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Regional Parking Standards. Work is starting to update the previous Cheshire Gypsies and Travellers study; it is likely that a new study will be required.

An 'Issues and Principles' paper for the forthcoming Single Regional Strategy will be published in December for consultation between January and March 2009. A response will be coordinated through this group.

The LDF Member Task Group's paper on the RSS will be circulated to all Cheshire East members.

6. Core Strategy (Cheshire East) Evidence Base

A report had been circulated for information purposes. Stuart Penny provided details on the scale and extent of the evidence base required for the Cheshire East Core Strategy.

Although significant work will be carried out in-house, extensive use of consultants will be required to assemble the evidence base. Much of the work is resource intensive, highly specialised and will need to be justified and defended at a public enquiry. The resources and specialisms are not available to undertake all of this work in-house. Development of the evidence base will bring additional benefits to the authority. The forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy will enable Local Authorities to ring fence infrastructure contributions from developers based on evidence from the Infrastructure Study.

Proposals to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be considered by the Shadow Cabinet in December. Subject to agreement, the tendering process and commencement of the study will begin in the New Year. This will be funded out of existing budgets.

The Annual Monitoring Report to be submitted in December 2009 will report on the 2008/9 financial year and will therefore need to present data for each of the three predecessor authorities. The report for the first year of the Cheshire East authority, 2009/10, will be submitted in December 2010.

7. Member Training

Two member training events are currently planned in association with the Planning Advisory Service:

- (1) LDF event to be held on Monday 24th November (all day) in the Capesthorpe Room, Macclesfield Town Hall. This will be run by Addison and Associates exclusively for members. LDF Topics covered will include:
 - Context (RSS / links with Sustainable Community Strategy / spatial planning concepts)
 - Production (evidence / consultation / Sustainability Appraisal)

The Places Advisory Panel members, Cabinet members and portfolio holders will be invited.

- (2) A “Common Vision” event to be held on Friday 5th December (all day), likely to be in the Council Chamber, Crewe (venue TBC). This will look at the work required to coordinate the LDF and Sustainable Community Strategy and links to the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreements.

Representatives from the Local Strategic Partnership, Places Advisory Panel members, Cabinet members, portfolio holders and officers will be invited.

Action: Stuart Penny will arrange for circulation of details to attendees as soon as possible.

It was agreed that there would need to be separate training for members of the Planning Committee and Area Committees with an emphasis on decision-making.

8. Any Other Business

Cllr Moran questioned whether saved policies from the predecessor authorities’ Development Plans and other informal planning guidance would need to be formally adopted by Cheshire East. Existing Development Plan policies will be carried forward and will continue to form part of the adopted Development Plan for Cheshire East. Other informal guidance will need to be adopted by the new Council. A list of such documents has been prepared and an officer report will be tabled for a future meeting that reviews these documents and gives a recommendation of adoption or discontinuation for each.

The Cheshire West and Chester LDF Working Group will consider a paper on potential joint working on minerals and waste on 5th November. Should they decide to pursue joint working, the LDS timetable may be affected and amendments will be required before the LDS goes to full Council. Andy Farrow will be invited to the next Strategic Development Member Task Group meeting to discuss issues. If joint working is engaged, there must be robust processes in place for decision making. A copy of the West’s paper will be circulated with these minutes.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was suggested that future Strategic Development and LDF Member Task Group meetings be held back to back. The next Strategic Development meeting is scheduled for December 3rd 10am at Westfields. Following lunch from 12pm – 1pm, the LDF meeting will take place on the same day between 1pm and 3pm at Westfields (subject to room availability).

The meeting finished at 2.50pm.