

Cheshire East Cabinet 2nd December 2008

Cheshire East Local Development Scheme

Since the report was written we have received the comments of Government Office for the North West on the amended draft Local Development Scheme.

The Government Office make a large number of comments of a detailed technical nature which can be taken on board and which do not alter the general thrust of the development.

There are, however, a number of other comments from the Government Office regarding the content of the document as summarised below:

- They note that the LDS now includes 2 Area Action Plans (for Congleton and Middlewich) in addition to the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Minerals Development Plan Documents. They say that if the situation on resources and staffing is still uncertain for the new authority, it would be better to concentrate on these documents and state that these AAPs may be included at a later date after consideration of resources, priorities and whether matters can be dealt with by the Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Response: the Draft LDS already makes it clear that the two Area Action Plans will not be commenced until the Core Strategy is sufficiently advanced and it also states that priorities will be revisited as the Core Strategy is developed.

- They feel more clarity is needed here as they are not sure whether the 2 successor authorities will be preparing a joint DPD on minerals. If this is not the case will some core policies on minerals be included in the Cheshire East Core Strategy. If this is not the case, they ask whether some core policies on minerals be included in the Cheshire East Core Strategy.

Response: At this stage a decision has not been reached as to joint working with West Cheshire regarding Minerals and Waste. A Paper on this issue is due to be presented to a future Cabinet meeting.

- Further information needs to be included on how the authority intends to approach the stakeholder involvement and community participation for the 5 Development Plan documents.

Response: Until a Statement of Community Involvement has been produced and agreed by Cheshire East, it is not possible to provide further information on how stakeholder and community participation for each Local Development Plan Document will be approached.

- It is not clear why the Authority is proposing to prepare 9 Supplementary Planning Documents in 2009 without firmer information regarding available staff and budgetary resources. These are linked to existing saved local plan policies and consequently will have a relatively short life span. Priority must be given to the Core Strategy.

Response: The LDS could make it clear that some of the SPD's will be prepared, at least partially, by outside bodies or other departments and that the impact on LDF staff resources will be reduced.

- It is not clear how the existing evidence base has influenced the list of new evidence in Paragraph 8.3. It would helpful to add a column to the table in Appendix 3 to indicate whether the existing evidence is likely to be used or whether it will need updating or replacing. Also it is not clear whether the list of evidence in Paragraph 8.3 represents the proposed workload for the future LDF team to be undertaken in house or by consultants. Without project management information on when, how and by whom the evidence base will be compiled or brought up to date, it is difficult to determine whether sufficient time has been allowed for preparing the Development Plan Documents and the Core Strategy in particular.

Response: The LDS should be amended to provide more project management information as requested by the Government Office. This would make it clear which work is new and whether it would be done in house or by consultants.