

 Executive 14 September 2011		Agenda Item No. 9
Title	Interpreting the Vision – the Way Forward to 2028	
For further information about this report please contact	Chris Elliott, Chief Executive; tel. no. 01926 456001; chris.elliott@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	2 nd March 2011 Executive Minute Number 152 re Local Plan The New Sustainable Strategy for Warwick District: Executive 10th June 2009 - minute no. 3 Council 8 th July – minute no. 31	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No (If No state why below)

The next stages of the proposition will need to be accompanied by an EIA and a SEA.

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	30/08/11	Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones
Head of Service	30/08/11	All
CMT	30/08/11	CMT
Section 151 Officer	30/08/11	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	30/08/11	Andrew Jones
Finance	30/08/11	Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)	30/08/11	Les Caborn (lead), All Executive
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Insert details of any consultation undertaken or proposed to be undertaken with regard to this report. The report sets out a process of consultation.		
Final Decision?		No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
A report to Full Council in October 2011 and then in March 2012.		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report proposes a process for the development of the Local Plan (also known as the Core Strategy) for the district to 2028 to help implement the wider vision for the District.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The process for developing the Local Plan for the District for the period up to 2028 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
- 2.2 Key Partners are asked to co-operate and actively engage with the Council in this process as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Executive notes that officers will work with Localities to develop their priorities for their area in conjunction with this process and timescale.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Council and its key partners agreed a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in 2009 for the period up to 2026 which the then emerging Core Strategy would sit alongside. The SCS set out a long term vision for the area – “To make Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit; where we aspire to build sustainable, safer, stronger and healthier communities”. The 4 priority policy areas featured are: Housing; Jobs, Skills and the Economy; Health and Well Being; and, Community Safety. It also identified cross cutting themes that would apply to each of these areas: Sustainability; Narrowing the Gaps; Community Involvement and Cohesion; Supporting Families at Risk; Rurality.
- 3.2 The purpose of any vision and the accompanying strategies necessary to implement it is to give clarity of purpose to an organisation and its partners and customers. It should set out transparently and clearly what we are trying to do and why. This would then be reflected within the Core Strategy being developed by the Council, a process which had got as far as the publication of a preferred options version in 2009, which would be based on delivering the vision contained within the wider SCS.
- 3.3 However, the relationship, from a national perspective, between a SCS and a Local Plan (Core Strategy) is changing. The latter will no longer have to formally pay regard to the former under the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). However, a SCS will remain important for local authorities as the vision it contains is much wider than the spatial vision for the area that is contained within a Council’s Local Plan.
- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that the SCS should have an extended timescale to 2028, that will cover the same 15 year timeframe as the new Local Plan, as it sets out an overall vision for the future of the area and that remains necessary. The SCS co-ordinates the range of key strategies that local authorities and key partners need to have in order to be open and transparent to the communities they serve and establish what has priority and how those priorities will be achieved. Accordingly, the SCS informs and set the direction of the Council’s other key strategies which focus on societal outcomes, such as housing, community safety, health and well being, sustainability, and so on, as well as those more internally focussed organisational policy areas such as asset management, people, finance and IT. This should also apply to the strategies of the key partners.

- 3.5 In the light of changes in Central Government policy and the abandonment of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) as part of the Development Plan system (to be finally confirmed when the Localism Bill is approved and impact assessments are undertaken by the Government), the Council has previously decided not pursue a Core Strategy based on the RSS levels of growth and instead take the opportunity to re-consult with local communities on a number of scenarios. Broadly the 3 scenarios set out in this consultation were linked to different levels of physical and economic growth that might be accommodated within the District but the consultation has also been about what stimulating debate on the wider vision for the future of the area. That consultation was undertaken through late spring and early summer this year.
- 3.6 In taking stock of that consultation with the local community, a whole range of other matters and information needs to be taken into account, including new Government planning policy, the state of the economy, and other information on community need and demands. The course that the Council chooses to take effectively determines how policy will be developed in other key areas e.g. economic development and housing; so the decision on the scenarios, or variations of them, will also determine the wider vision for the area and vice versa. In effect, decisions made on the scenarios, necessary to progress the Local Plan, may also impact on the SCS and require the Council to amend its wider vision for the area. By implication this process will also then help to prioritise the efforts of the new administration of the Council and hopefully that of key partners. This linkage will be greater than it has been in the past as the Government is creating new financial tools that inextricably link development/growth to financial return for Local Authorities.
- 3.7 In respect of what is now called the Local Plan, it is this Council that has primary legal responsibility; nevertheless the co-operation of Key partners, such as the County Council needs to be sought especially as they will be key deliverers of various elements of the wider vision as expressed in the SCS.
- 3.8 Recognising the implications of the Localism Bill, a clear opportunity for localities to set out their priorities is built in to the process and each should be asked to set out their priorities in conjunction with this process. Whilst not providing a guarantee of achievement of those priorities it will represent an opportunity to address at least some of the issues a local community regards as important.
- 3.9 The process of developing the Local Plan is set out at Appendix 1. It aims to provide for a more strategic approach to be exercised by the Executive and Group Leaders but still allows for involvement of **all** members. A consequence of this will be the discontinuation of the Development Plans Working Party, a change suggested partly as a result of the extensive feedback that the direction of its past activities had insufficient connectivity with the wider SCS vision and the other aspects of the Council's strategic and resource needs and partly because the past approach discouraged the wider involvement of all members or of local communities. Firm political leadership will be required to adhere to the timetable and that can only come from the Executive and Group Leaders.
- 3.10 The proposed process also creates involvement for localities and for partner's agencies. It will help meet the statutory requirements of the Local Plan by being based on a robust body of evidence that means the Council's position, when eventually determined, can be effectively defended when challenged at Inquiry or used to seek funding to meet local community priorities.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 **Policy Framework**

If the process at Appendix 1 is agreed then the Council's Policy Framework could eventually all be changed. The changes will relate potentially to the Sustainable Community Strategy; the Development Plan; Fit for the Future; the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and, even the Housing Investment Programme. Fundamentally this could affect all of the Council's Strategies; however, those changes will become clear at subsequent stages.

- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – This report itself will not propose changes to the Fit for the Future programme but the outcomes of the process if agreed are highly likely to. It is because of this interconnectedness that the process at Appendix 1 is proposed.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 Similarly, this report itself will not propose changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy but the outcomes of the process if agreed are highly likely to. It is because of this interconnectedness that the process at Appendix 1 is proposed.
- 5.2 The timetable set out at Appendix 1 is challenging and will require firm political and managerial leadership. Any significant deviation from this timetable is likely to expose the Council and the communities it serves to the greater potential of unwanted planning applications and successful appeals as it would not have a clear Local Plan in place and Government policy is moving toward supporting applications in the absence of a plan.

6. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The Council could consider the response to the public consultation in scenarios in the traditional way. However, this would ignore the increasing connectedness of issues and implications and indeed would ignore the development of the wider vision for the area. As a consequence it is an option which is not recommended.

7. **BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 The Council are required by legislation to prepare a Core Strategy (now to be referred to as the new Local Plan) for the District. In September 2010, Executive resolved not to proceed with preparing a draft core strategy until such time as it has considered and reviewed all evidence on future growth and tested alternative options through consultation and sustainability appraisal. That decision was informed by the Secretary of State's decision in July of this year to revoke regional spatial strategies using his powers under Section 79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Although his decision was subsequently found unlawful by the High Court, the Executive resolved in January 2011 to reaffirm its resolution in light of the Government's intent to abolish regional spatial strategies through the Localism Bill which is now before Parliament. In March 2011, the Executive authorised public consultation on a paper which sought the public's views on the key issues for the District, and various scenarios for future growth as a means of addressing those issues.

- 7.2 'A Shared Vision Warwick District's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026' was endorsed by Warwick District Council and partners in July 2009. It was developed in conjunction with the Core Strategy and joint consultation exercises undertaken over a period of 18 months to ensure, where appropriate, land use priorities are aligned with the needs and wants of the community, integrating social and economic regeneration with physical planning policy.
- 7.3 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out the long term vision and priorities for the area, derived from extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders across all sectors. These shared priorities focus on issues and challenges that individual agencies cannot address in isolation because of their cross cutting nature and therefore necessitate a joint approach. It is a document that seeks to add value through collaborative working. The Integrated Delivery Plan provides a robust framework within which the District Council and its partners can work towards achieving the aims of the SCS.

Appendix 1: Defining the Vision

Any good organisation will spend time assessing its priorities within the constraints of financial and other resources and a rapidly changing policy context to try to develop a plan of implementation.

Many issues/opportunities, but especially related to jobs, skills and economy, are predicated on a growth type scenario. The Council has recently concluded a public consultation on the growth options for the Local Plan and by implication which ever scenario is chosen, this will have a profound effect on the priorities the Council is able to implement and with which to be consistent policy and resource wise; e.g. if we go for low growth what actually would we do to promote employment and employers?

So the Council needs to explain what its vision for the future of the area means in principle before officers can put anything else in place. However, that choice is not a simple one either and indeed is probably getting more complicated. There are a whole series of issues that will arise as a consequence of the choice or which should influence the choice. This is inherently bigger than the Local Plan this is about the whole strategy for the area and for the Council.

Officers have summarised below some of the key issues that Councillors will need to know about and/or make decisions upon when also considering the Local Plan, they can't be determined in isolation from the vision as set out in the wider Sustainable Community Strategy.

Government Legislation/Policy

Local Government Resource Review – involving re localisation of the growth in business rates and the ability to borrow against increases in business rates (e.g. we collect £60m and get £9m back).

New Homes Bonus Scheme – source of funding for 6 years now known from surplus business rates so we can advise know on likely yield for each scenario e.g. £6m for low, £8m for medium, £10m for high – all over 6 years.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 – members need to know how this will work and what it can yield as a lot of issues are about supporting infrastructure and how communities get it if they get development.

Enterprise Zone designation – even though we have not received an EZ designation, members and partners will want to consider whether to take forward the proposal even if in an amended form but if so then we get a large spurt of growth in any case which will have all sorts of impacts.

Localism Bill – members need to know how we'd deal with the relevant aspects of this Bill when enacted in November – especially re neighbourhood plans.

National Planning Policy Framework – draft has just been produced and members need to know what it says and its impact on WDC area as our plan will have to consistent with it and therefore this will have a significant influence on the decision Members must take.

Our Policy and that of Partners

Our Priorities – need to consider what Council wants for area. Is it ambitious or not? Does it want things to be done and if not then what doesn't it want doing?

Our Other Strategies – will shape and be shaped by the local Plan choice – on economy, housing, health and well being, community safety, sustainability, narrowing the gaps, community involvement/cohesion, families at risk and rurality. We should develop these in tandem with the Local Plan once we know the scenario we are heading for.

Other's priorities – need to consider plans and proposals of key partners for our area, particularly neighbouring authorities (most importantly Coventry City Council) as

under the duty to co-operate the Council will need to demonstrate it has co-operated on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, such as the Strategic requirements for housing growth. How would they be affected for good or ill by our choice? Would/should our choice be affected by their ideas?

LEP Growth Strategy – we have signed our support – what does it mean for our plan? What might a sub regional spatial statement on growth have on our area? Its Investment plan could help achieve our scenario – depending on which one chosen. *Other White Papers e.g. Open Public Service, Environment* – members need to know how these other Government Policy proposals impact on the area and this Council

Other Views and Info

Public response to consultation on scenarios – this is clearly important and as a Councillor you will need to know if there a clear view or, does it differ depending on where people live and their needs?

Strategic Housing Market Assessment – this will also give the Council valuable information on the needs of the community and will be a key piece of evidence informing the decision on scenarios.

Various infrastructure studies, including the strategic transport assessment, green infrastructure, sports facilities audit, renewable resource assessment – will give Council information on supply and need and help with an investment plan for our facilities and infrastructure

Views of Employers – the views relating to needs of those generating businesses and jobs will also be important

SHLAA – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will be updated

Locality Plans – being developed by the 7 localities should feed into this process of understanding local views

Residents Survey of 2010 - identifies things residents want to see improved

Population information – will help set out stats on nature of population and it will help to point toward various needs – including Index of Multiple Deprivation, mid year estimates, population projections, marketing info, Mosaic data, etc

Asset Management Plan – which will outline what properties we and our key partners have – what we can use to help make things happen – including for our partners.

State of Local Economy information - will help to illustrate challenges being faced and which scenario is best to meet them.

Conclusion

All of this will affect **all** of the Council's strategies – taking the Sustainable Community Strategy to 2028 (15 years from 2013). This will then affect our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Fit for the Future (FFF) Programme and all of our other supporting corporate strategies.

However, it is important to be able to develop a reasonable degree of consensus on the way ahead within and between groups and between this Council and its Key Partners. A suggested process is set out below. This aims to take the report directly to Full Council but to allow all members to be briefed and to have a say whilst allowing the Executive and Group Leaders to exercise strategic leadership and in doing so, to see and shape the big picture. It will also though allow at the second stage for Localities to input their priorities.

A – What is the Vision?

1. Setting the scene – week commencing 24/10

-Briefings on all of the above for Group Leaders– ½ day

-Briefings on all of the above for Executive – ½ day

- Briefing on all of the above for all Councillors – 1 day (29/10 – a Saturday)
- Briefing on all of the above for Partner agencies – ½ day

2. Feedback - week commencing 31/10

- From Group Leaders to CMT/SMT
- From Executive to CMT/SMT
- From Partners to CMT/SMT

3. Drafting the Proposal - week commencing 14/11

- Group Leaders/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations
- Executive/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations
- Key Partners/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations

4. Decision - week commencing 28/11

- Presentation on paper and recommendations to each Group at Special Group Meetings on 28/11 and to Key Partners on 29/11
- Full Council on 30/11

B. How do we achieve the Vision?

5. Setting the scene - week commencing 06/02/12

- Briefing for Group Leaders– ½ day
- Briefing for Executive – ½ day
- Briefing for Partner agencies – ½ day
- Briefings all Councillors in geographical groups **By 20/2**– 1/2 day each e.g. Warwick, Kenilworth, Leamington, Whitnash, Rural East, Rural West (include Town/Parish and County Cllrs too). This will allow for both possible development and possible benefits to be outlined and developed, a town/area plan will emerge. Should aim to have Locality Plans for all areas in place by this time! **By 20/2**

6. Feedback – week commencing 27/02/12

- From Group Leaders to CMT/SMT
- From Executive to CMT/SMT
- From Partners to CMT/SMT

7. Drafting the Proposal - week commencing 12/03/12

- Group Leaders/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations
- Executive/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations
- Key Partners/CMT briefing on draft report and recommendations

8. Decision – week commencing 26/03/12

- Presentation on paper and recommendations to each Group at Special Group Meetings and to Key Partners. **26th/27th March 2012**
- Full Council to decide on the preferred options for the Local Plan for consultation but also on strategies for economy, housing, health and wellbeing, community safety, sustainability, narrowing the gaps, etc and on the priorities to be implemented by council and on resources to be deployed (investment strategy) **on 28th March 2012.**

Basically this will establish a sustainable community strategy plan for the next 15 years with a Local Plan and strategies for the other key policy areas alongside it with an Investment Strategy!

The remainder of the Local Plan timetable will then be as follows:

Consultation phase: Preferred Options	April to June 2012 (8 weeks consultation)
Date of publication of draft Local Plan	December 2012 (6 weeks consultation)
Date of submission of draft Local Plan to Secretary of State	April 2013
Pre-hearing meeting	June 2013
Hearing	September 2013
Receipt of Inspector's report	February 2014
Estimated date for adoption	March 2014