

Cabinet Meeting

24 February 2016

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Report title | Black Country Core Strategy Review | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets | |
| Key decision | Yes | |
| In forward plan | Yes | |
| Wards affected | All | |
| Accountable director | Nick Edwards, City Assets | |
| Originating service | Planning | |
| Accountable employee(s) | Michèle Ross | Senior Planning Officer |
| | Tel | 01902 554038 |
| | Email | Michele.ross@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report to be/has been considered by | Strategic Executive Board | 15 December 2015 |

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the timetable for the Black Country Core Strategy review for incorporation in the Council's Local Development Scheme;
2. Agree to receive a further report to approve public consultation on a Scoping / Issues / Options Document in late 2016.

Recommendations for noting:

Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The financial implications of the review;

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Cabinet approval is required for the Council to begin work on the Black Country Core Strategy review in early 2016 in partnership with Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall Councils and to incorporate the review timetable into the Council's Local Development Scheme.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Local authorities are legally required to prepare a Local Plan and, once adopted, to continually monitor its effectiveness and carry out regular reviews. An up to date Local Plan provides certainty for investment, forms a robust basis for planning decisions and protects important community and environmental assets that contribute to the identity of local areas.
- 2.2 The Black Country Core Strategy is Wolverhampton's key strategic Local Plan document and forms a significant part of the Council's policy framework. The Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and includes a commitment for a review to commence in 2016. The new Core Strategy will cover the period up to 2036 and, at this stage, it is anticipated that it will continue the existing "brownfield first" approach, focusing development in a sustainable network of Regeneration Corridors and Strategic Centres. The review will also need to consider the implications of emerging Combined Authority priorities and findings of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Study work.
- 2.3 Having an up to date Local Plan has allowed Wolverhampton to proactively plan for delivery of housing, employment and commercial development across the City in partnership with developers and land owners, and to bid for and secure external funding to unlock development. Given that brownfield sites take many years to progress from allocation to delivery, it is important that future development opportunity areas are identified beyond 2026 through the Core Strategy review. This will allow the Area Action Plans which sit below the Core Strategy to be reviewed to allocate new sites.

3.0 Timetable and Resources

- 3.1 The Core Strategy review timetable (set out in Appendix 1) will begin with commissioning of key housing and employment evidence in early 2016 and end with adoption of a new Core Strategy in 2019. Government guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that appropriate and proportionate evidence is essential to produce a sound Local Plan and the review process will involve preparation of a number of evidence reports and public consultation at key stages. The Core Strategy will carry more weight in the planning process as the review progresses.
- 3.2 The first formal consultation on the scope of the review and key options will take place in late 2016, followed by consultation on a preferred options report / draft plan during 2017. The final plan will then be published and submitted to the Government for examination during 2018 and adopted in 2019.
- 3.3 A significant body of evidence is required to inform and support the review. The evidence commissioned in 2016 will focus on testing deliverability of the existing strategy beyond 2026. More detailed and extensive evidence will be required in 2017 to support

the draft plan and ensure the strategy has the necessary infrastructure and is sustainable and deliverable. This will include an update of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (as current evidence only extends to 2018) and potentially a green belt review to provide sufficient land to meet development needs.

- 3.4 Table 1 sets out the forecast spend over the years 2015-19 which is necessary to deliver the Core Strategy review. The total cost will be split equally between the four authorities. On this basis the share allocated to Wolverhampton will be around £233,750 - the majority required in 2016-17. The estimated spend covers the minimum evidence work and consultation / examination costs necessary to progress the Core Strategy to adoption, and is less than the cost of preparing the original Core Strategy as this is a partial review only. Additional work may be required as the review progresses, therefore a contingency of 10% has been included in the forecast for each year.

Table 1 Black Country Core Strategy Review Spend Forecast: 2016-19

| Year: | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2015-19 |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Estimated total cost: | £610,500 | £132,000 | £192,500 | £935,000 |

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The total estimated cost of the Core Strategy review is £935,000 which will be divided equally between the four Black Country authorities. On this basis the likely cost to be allocated to Wolverhampton is £233,750 which can be met from the Local Plan budget to be approved by full Council 2 March 2016, combined with the Neighbourhood Plan Grant. [TK/12022016/Z]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The timetable set out in the report will become part of the Council's published Local Development Scheme. Following adoption, the Black Country Core Strategy review will become a key material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Core Strategy review will be prepared under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. [RB/05022016/H]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 The Black Country Core Strategy is a document of key importance for the future of the local area. To produce a review that is compliant with the requirements of S149 of the Equality Act 2010 it is important that the review produces a strategy that is clearly informed and influenced by relevant equalities evidence. Contributing authorities in the Black Country will develop a process to make this collection and consideration possible in a timely manner so that the resulting strategy is the most inclusive that can be delivered in the context of equalities and with the resources to hand. This evidence and these process will be recorded in equalities analyses as the work progresses.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 The Core Strategy review will have environmental implications, which will be assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 The report has no human resource implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 The report has no direct Corporate Landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 Black Country Core Strategy (2011)

Appendix 1 BLACK COUNTRY CORE STRATEGY REVIEW TIMETABLE

