

Cabinet Meeting

27 June 2017

Report title	Black Country Core Strategy Review – Issues and Options Consultation	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee(s)	Michele Ross	Lead Planning Manager (Sub-Regional Strategy)
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Report has been considered by	Executive Team	24 April 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Black Country Core Strategy Review Issues and Options Report for consultation.
2. Delegate authority to the Service Director City Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for City Economy to make any necessary minor amendments to the Issues and Options Report and other consultation documents prior to commencement of the consultation process.
3. Request a further report summarising key issues raised during the consultation, to inform preparation of a Preferred Spatial Option Report.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To gain approval for consultation on the first formal stage of the Black Country Core Strategy Review – the Issues and Options Report, to summarise the key issues for Wolverhampton and to outline the consultation process and next steps.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Black Country Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2011, is the key strategic planning and regeneration document covering the Black Country authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The Core Strategy establishes housing and employment land targets, identifies priority regeneration areas and key infrastructure projects and includes a set of strategic planning policies which are used to determine planning applications, in the context of an overarching vision for the sub-region. The Core Strategy covers the period up to 2026 and contains a commitment to a review, which will extend the lifespan of the Core Strategy to 2036.
- 2.2 Work on the Core Strategy review began in 2016 and has focussed on production of key evidence to establish up-to-date housing and employment land requirements. This work has informed the development of an Issues and Options Report which, following approval by the four Council Cabinets, will be published for 10 weeks consultation from 3rd July 2017. The consultation responses received will be considered and used, along with other evidence, to inform the development of a Preferred Spatial Option Report during 2018.
- 2.3 The timetable for the Core Strategy review is set out below:
- July / Aug 2017: Issues and Options Consultation
Summer 2018: Preferred Spatial Option Consultation
Summer 2019: Draft Plan Consultation
Winter 2020: Publication Plan Consultation
Summer 2020: Submission of Core Strategy
Summer 2021: Adoption of Core Strategy

3.0 Key Issues and Strategic Options

- 3.1 The Issues and Options Report, which is available on the Core Strategy website (<http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>) focuses on nine key issues:
1. Updating the evidence base
 2. Meeting the housing needs of a growing population
 3. Supporting a resurgent economy
 4. Supporting strong and competitive centres
 5. Protecting and enhancing the environment
 6. Reviewing the role and extent of the green belt
 7. Keeping the Black Country connected
 8. Providing infrastructure to support growth
 9. Working effectively with neighbours

- 3.2 A consultation leaflet has been prepared (attached as Appendix 1 to this report), which summarises the key issues and options for consultation. The main issues and options relating to housing and employment land are summarised below. A Sustainability Appraisal report has also been prepared, as part of the on-going sustainability appraisal of the review process. Other key evidence is also available on the Core Strategy website.

Housing and Employment Land Requirements

- 3.3 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out for the Black Country and South Staffordshire concludes that the Black Country needs 78,190 new homes by 2036. A commitment has been made to 'test' if the Black Country can accommodate a further 3,000 new homes to help address the 38,000 home shortfall identified across the Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (HMA) up to 2031. The HMA covers the Black Country, Birmingham, Solihull, South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Tamworth and North Warwickshire.
- 3.4 The Black Country has enough housing land to meet existing housing targets up to 2026, and has a 5 year housing land supply. However, looking forward to 2036 and taking into account all potential sources of housing land in the urban area, there is an estimated shortfall of around 21,650 homes. This shortfall would increase if the Black Country were to contribute towards the HMA shortfall.
- 3.5 The only remaining sources of land which could address this shortfall are occupied employment land and green belt. If these sources of land cannot deliver enough new homes then there would be a need to look to 'export' to neighbouring authorities – in the first instance within the HMA.
- 3.6 A Black Country Employment Land Study has concluded that an extra 800ha of manufacturing and logistics land is needed up to 2036 to support economic growth in the Black Country. There is currently 300ha of employment land supply in the Black Country and land which may come forward in South Staffordshire is capable of providing 200ha towards meeting Black Country needs. This leaves a remaining requirement for 300ha of new employment land, with a focus on high quality, accessible sites capable of accommodating national investment requirements. All of this requirement will need to be accommodated in the green belt as there is no further suitable land available within the urban area.

Strategic Options

- 3.7 The Black Country authorities believe that the existing Core Strategy remains broadly fit for purpose and can accommodate the majority of long term growth needs, continuing the focus on urban regeneration. However, in light of the projected gaps between need and supply of housing and employment land, two strategic options have been developed.
- 3.8 The first option is to protect all remaining employment land and provide up to 300 ha of new employment land on green belt in the Black Country or neighbouring authorities to meet growth needs. All of the housing shortfall (21,650 – 24,650 homes) would need to

be provided on green belt sites. There will be a limit to the amount of housing which can be delivered in the green belt up to 2036 due to the dynamics of the housing market and the business models of the volume housebuilders, for example in north Birmingham the limit was considered to be 5,000 homes over 15 years.

- 3.9 The second option is to release more occupied employment land for housing during 2026-36 - 10,400 homes on 300 ha would be consistent with current Local Plan allocations for 2016-26. Up to 600 ha of employment land would then need to be provided in the green belt in the Black Country or neighbouring authorities to meet growth needs and replace employment land lost to housing. This option would require significant additional external funding due to the costs of business relocation and remediating brownfield land.

Call for Sites

- 3.10 Under either option the Core Strategy would continue to focus on urban regeneration as a priority. However, as evidence indicates that it will not be possible to meet all housing and employment land needs within the urban area, some development in the green belt would be considered in the next stage of the review. This is consistent with the process taking place in other nearby authorities and is in accordance with Government guidance.
- 3.11 Therefore the Issues and Options consultation will include a “call for sites”, inviting land owners and developers to put forward potential development sites, both in the urban area and in the green belt. Information on these sites will feed into a Black Country-wide detailed green belt review, which will follow the consultation. This review will take place in the context of a strategic review currently underway for the wider HMA to establish potential areas for future development. This work will allow development of a Preferred Spatial Option Report during 2018, which will consult on a range of sustainable and deliverable sites.

4.0 Implications for Wolverhampton

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The Review is also an important opportunity to re-affirm and enhance the importance of the City Centre as ‘the City’ of the Black Country - building on the success of the current wave of physical regeneration projects either underway or in the pipeline.
- 4.3 The work undertaken to date has reviewed the capacity of existing sites and considered opportunities for additional brownfield land to come forward. Density has been maximised and the City has access to external funding to help deliver the more difficult site allocations. Regeneration is well underway in the key priority areas of the City Centre, the growth corridors and the i54/M6/M54 employment area. Sufficient

employment and housing land has been allocated to deliver the existing Core Strategy and housing permissions and completions have been sufficient to meet housing targets.

- 4.4 In terms of employment land, it is important that the City maintains and enhances its existing stock and maximises opportunities coming forward in surrounding areas including South Staffordshire. The Employment Land Study has confirmed the need for a next generation of high quality, accessible sites, building on the success of i54. There is a limited supply of such sites in the City and further land is identified close to the City boundary in South Staffordshire including the western extension of i54, the emerging West Midlands Interchange proposals and RO Featherstone. These sites will provide up to 400ha of land and 19,000 jobs.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 The Issues and Options consultation is likely to give rise to considerable public and press interest. A range of national, regional and local stakeholders will be consulted and pro-actively involved throughout the review process. Local public consultation events are planned during the consultation period and close public engagement will continue throughout the review.
- 5.2 A consultation and engagement programme has been developed for the Issues and Options consultation which makes use of a variety of approaches to reach the broadest audience possible and encourage more responses to the consultation. Key elements of this programme are:
- Press release to raise awareness at the start of the consultation period;
 - Media campaign during the consultation period including press interviews and articles in local papers;
 - 10 week long consultation period - longer than the normal 6 week requirement;
 - Wide-ranging consultation questions seeking responses and feedback on all aspects of the consultation document.
 - Local public consultation events where officers will be available to answer questions and receive comments - for Wolverhampton there will be four events covering the City Centre, Tettenhall, Bilston and North areas of the City;
 - Workshop event for key stakeholders to take place in July 2017;
 - Leaflets summarising key information to be available at events and online;
 - Use of social media and re-branded web site to promote engagement;
 - Use of consultation video including key messages about the Core Strategy Review - to be used on websites, social media, drop in events, etc.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The costs of preparing the Core Strategy review are shared on an equal basis between the four Black Country Local Authorities with Sandwell taking the lead role. Costs incurred during 2016-17 totalled £100,774. The Wolverhampton share of this has been met from Planning revenue budgets for 2016-17.

- 6.2 A review of detailed cost projections is underway, however it is currently estimated that total costs during 2017-22 will not exceed £900,000, of which the Wolverhampton share would be a maximum of £225,000.
- 6.3 For Wolverhampton, these costs could be met from Planning revenue budgets including approved budgets for 2017/18 and future budgets subject to budgetary approval processes. An indicative breakdown is provided in the table below:

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000	Total £000
Black Country cost	240	240	160	200	60	900
Wolverhampton cost	60	60	40	50	15	225

[ES/15062017/C]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 The Core Strategy will form part of the adopted Local Plan for the City. [LD/14062017/A]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 The Issues and Options consultation will involve engagement with a wide range of organisations and individuals and information from this will be used to inform the Equality Analysis. On-going equality analysis will be undertaken and completed in a phased manner as the development of the Review progresses, with a particular focus on housing and employment issues to ensure that the needs of the people and the City are addressed.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is being carried out throughout the plan preparation process. SA is a process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policies and proposals to ensure sustainability issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage. The overall aim of the SA process is to inform and influence the development of the Core Strategy and maximise its sustainability value.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 The Review is being produced by a team of officers working across the four Black Country Councils. Within Wolverhampton, 1.5 FTE posts are dedicated to the review, with further support from colleagues in City Development, Transportation and Corporate Landlord. This level of resource is currently sufficient but will be kept under continual review.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 10.1 The policies and proposals in the Core Strategy review will apply to any Council land and property which is subject to a development proposal. Liaison with corporate landlord has been and will continue to take place on an on-going basis.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

Black Country Core Strategy Review - Issues and Options Report, June 2017

Black Country Core Strategy 2006-2026, adopted February 2011

Black Country Core Strategy Review Sustainability Appraisal (Lepus Consulting) June 2017

Black Country Core Strategy Review Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Peter Brett Associates and HDH Planning) June 2017

Black Country Core Strategy Review Employment Development Needs Assessment (Warwick Economics and Development) June 2017

Appendix 1

Black Country Core Strategy Review - Issues and Options Consultation Leaflet Text

Planning for the future of the Black Country

Black Country Core Strategy Consultation

HAVE YOUR SAY!

We need local people from across the Black Country to have their say on the future development of the Black Country. We want your views on meeting our area's housing, economic development and transport needs, as well as on the protection of our local environment. It's important that people have their say so we are all working together to achieve the very best for our local communities.

The Black Country Core Strategy is a planning and regeneration plan for the whole of the Black Country, which is signed up to by the four Black Country councils. It plans for the area's future local development needs and ensures the necessary services are in place to meet these local needs. It also makes sure that the necessary level of investment is attracted to create jobs and wealth in our area.

The strategy was adopted by the four councils in 2011. It has shaped the housing, industrial and retail growth of our region, whilst protecting the environment and green belt. It has also been successful in supporting regeneration for the past six years.

The strategy now needs to be reviewed to meet the new challenges and opportunities for the coming years, up to 2036. We are launching a consultation to make sure that all local people across the Black Country have the opportunity to have their say on the plans for our area.

This leaflet provides an overview of the Black Country Core Strategy consultation and of the main issues and options facing the area, up to 2036. It includes a tear off questionnaire which we would be grateful if you would complete and return to us. Alternatively you can visit our website and complete it online.

What are the key issues we would like your views on?

There are nine key issues we would like people's views on. The information below outlines these. The tear-off questionnaire then gives you the opportunity to have your say on these issues.

1. Meeting housing needs

Evidence indicates there is a need for around 78,000 more homes in the Black Country up to 2036, as a result of natural population growth and migration. It is estimated that sites in the urban area - including homes being built, homes that are already planned and new high density housing sites - can provide 56,000 of these homes. This means there is still a need to find space for around 22,000 more homes. Up to 10,500 of these homes

could be built on employment land, where businesses currently operate. The only place where the rest could be built is outside the urban area, in the green belt. A key role of the review is to decide how much employment land to release for housing, and where housing sites should go.

2. Supporting the economy

To accommodate the level of economic growth and new jobs needed across the Black Country up to 2036 an extra 800 ha of employment land is needed (1 ha is the size of a football pitch). 500 ha of this land has already been identified. There is no more room in the urban areas to create new employment land. Therefore, we need to consider if the remaining 300 ha can be accommodated in the Black Country green belt, and if so, where best to locate it. If more employment land is redeveloped for housing, this will also need to be replaced in the green belt to protect jobs.

3. Supporting our town centres

The Core Strategy aims to maintain our network of strong and competitive town centres that are a focus for retail and commercial development. New research is to be done to show the amount of development required for the Black Country and whether this should remain focused around our town centres.

4. Protecting the environment

The protection and enhancement of the Black Country built and natural environment will remain a key priority. The Core Strategy will also need to tackle air pollution and make the area more resilient to climate change. There will need to be new and improved environmental areas, such as networks of open spaces, walking and cycling routes, to serve new developments.

5. Reviewing the green belt

Evidence shows that there isn't enough land in our urban areas to meet the housing and employment land needs of the Black Country up to 2036. This means that we need to review the green belt to find more sites to develop to meet our future needs. The last time the area's green belt was reviewed was in the 1970s. A new review will therefore take place during 2017/18.

6. Keeping the Black Country connected

An overarching transport strategy will ensure that all of the new development is accessible by a range of modes of transport, including a variety of public transport.

7. Providing community facilities to support growth

To support the area's growth and future development the capacity of community services such as health, education and social care will need to be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of new and existing communities.

8. People's health and wellbeing

Making sure our Black Country communities are strong and healthy is very important. The Core Strategy will look at the ways our communities' health and wellbeing can be improved. This includes:

- Making sure that healthcare and community facilities are accessible to people
- Planning for people's active lifestyles
- Planning for people's safety and wellbeing
- Supporting people to live in good health throughout their lives

9. Working with our neighbours

The new West Midlands Combined Authorities will play a significant role in the Core Strategy. There is a need to work with neighbouring councils on key cross-boundary issues, such as housing, employment, transport, waste and minerals.

10. Regeneration across the Black Country

Development in the urban Black Country can be challenging because of mine workings and contaminated land from our area's industrial legacy. We will need to overcome this barrier and consider how new growth can help support urban regeneration in centres and across regeneration corridors.

Why get involved?

The new Core Strategy will provide the framework for growth and development across our area up to 2036. It is really important that people who live and work in the area help us to shape it, so that it reflects the aspirations of local people. You can either complete the tear off questionnaire, or visit <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudey.gov.uk> and complete it online.

You can also visit the website to:

- Read the full consultation document
- Take a look at key housing and employment evidence
- Find out details of consultation events taking place near you
- Make your comments quickly and easily using the online form, or complete the more in-depth detailed questionnaire
- Submit your site details if you are a developer by completing a 'call for sites' form

Please note that the consultation will run for ten weeks and closes at 5pm on 8 September 2017

Next steps

When the consultation has closed all of the feedback will be collated, considered and used to help us develop the next stage of the strategy. This is where we identify key locations for future development. People's views, together with detailed evidence, will form the basis for this. Next year there will be a second consultation where people will be able to have their say on the preferred options and locations for future development.

Tear-off questionnaire:

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Email:

1. Meeting housing needs

Should the new homes needed in the Black Country be built on:

- Employment land, where businesses operate
- Green belt land

(Tick all that apply)

Or other, please state.....

2. Supporting the economy

Should the new employment land needed in the Black Country be built on green belt land?

3. Supporting our town centres

Should we focus the growth of shopping, leisure and commercial development into our main town centres?

Yes

No

4. Protecting the environment

What type of new environmental areas should be provided to serve new developments?

- Parks
- Sports pitches
- Nature areas
- Walking and cycling routes
- Other – please state

(please rank in order of priority)

5. Reviewing the green belt

Do you agree that we need to consider releasing some areas of green belt land to meet our future development needs?

Yes

No

6. Keeping the Black Country connected

What transport improvements do you think are required across the Black Country to improve our area's connections?

.....

7. Providing community facilities to support growth

What new community facilities might be needed to support the area's future growth?

.....

8. People's health and wellbeing

Do you think people's health and wellbeing should be a key issue in the Core Strategy?

Yes

No

9. Working with our neighbours

Are there any West Midlands wide issues that the Black Country Core Strategy needs to consider?

.....

10. Regeneration across the Black Country

How do you think we can speed up the delivery of new homes and jobs in the Black Country?

.....