

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

10th January 2011

**REVISED PREFERRED DRAFT CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
DOCUMENT CONSULTATION**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jinny Pearce, Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development & Transport
Relevant Manager	Emma Baker, Acting Development Plans Manager
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy (PDCS) (Appendix A) and Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix B) for the purposes of public consultation. The public consultation would be held from 21st January 2011 for six weeks.
- 1.2 The Preferred Draft Core Strategy has been revised following two periods of public consultation.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **The committee is asked to RECOMMEND that the Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy (Appendix A) be approved for the purposes of public consultation;**
- 2.2 **The committee is asked to RECOMMEND that the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix B) for the Preferred Draft Core Strategy be approved for the purposes of public consultation;**
- 2.3 **The committee is asked to RECOMMEND that a consultation period be held between from 21st January 2011 for six weeks;**
- 2.4 **The committee is asked to RECOMMEND that authority be delegated to the Acting Development Plans Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Leader of the Council, to make any minor amendments to the Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal prior to the consultation period commencing on 21st January 2011.**

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### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Local Development Framework is a folder of documents that aims to deliver the spatial portrait for the administrative area: it is made up of Local Development Documents. The Core Strategy is the principal Development Document of the LDF. The purpose of a Core Strategy DPD is to outline the vision, objectives and key policies that will guide Redditch Borough's development up until 2026. The Core Strategy will reflect national planning policy and reflect local information about the matters that are important for the Borough.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy has been the subject of several drafts and periods of formal public consultation:
- a) The Issues and Options Document highlighted the matters relevant to Redditch Borough (Issues) and the ways in which these issues could be combated through the application of planning policy (Options). The Issues and Options document was placed on deposit for public consultation between the 9th May and the 20th June 2008. During this period, interested parties were asked to submit comments via a questionnaire.
  - b) The Preferred Draft Core Strategy (PDCS) was the first draft version of the Borough Council's forthcoming Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Consultation on the PDCS was undertaken from 31st October 2008 to 8th May 2009.
  - c) During February and March 2010 a special consultation was held jointly between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council on the options for Redditch-related cross-boundary growth, based on the requirements in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Panel Report. The outcome of this consultation is the subject of a separate report to this committee.
- 3.3 On 27th May 2010 the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, wrote to Council leaders highlighting the Coalition Government's commitment to rapidly abolish Regional Strategies and return decision making powers on housing and planning to local councils. On 6th July 2010 the Secretary of State announced the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Prior to this, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) formed part of the statutory development plan for Redditch Borough, the revocation meant

that the WMRSS did not form part of the development plan. However, following a judicial review the decision to revoke RSSs was found to be unlawful; this ruling re-instates the WMRSS as part of the statutory development plan. Following this judgment, the Chief Planner at the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) wrote to all Local Authorities stating that the Government still intended to abolish RSSs and that material consideration should be given to this. A further legal challenge has now been launched seeking a declaration from the Court that the government's stated intention to revoke RSSs is not a material consideration for the purposes of making planning decisions. The claim has been expedited with the effect that both the government's statement and the letter from CLG is stayed until further notice. Therefore, at the time of writing this report the WMRSS is part of the development plan and the Government's intention to abolish RSSs is **not** a material consideration.

- 3.4 The WMRSS provided the framework for the Core Strategy and set housing, employment and other development targets for the Borough up to 2026. The WMRSS Phase Two Revision Panel Report for the Examination in Public recommended that 7000 dwellings are delivered to meet Redditch's growth needs up to 2026. Around 4000 of these dwellings were to be delivered within Redditch Borough and around 3000 in Bromsgrove District, adjacent to the Redditch boundary. The employment targets for Redditch's long-term requirements were 68 hectares. The Panel Report specified that 37 hectares would be provided cross-boundary, of which at least 12 hectares would be provided within Stratford-on-Avon District west of the A435.
- 3.5 The Core Strategy makes several references to the WMRSS including, in some cases, reference to figures within it. The evidence underpinning much of the WMRSS is not currently disputed and the Revised PDCS largely reflects the January 2008 adopted WMRSS and the emerging Phase Two Revision. The loss and then return of the RSS with development plan status therefore has little effect on the Redditch Borough Council Core Strategy because all content is underpinned by a justified and effective evidence base.
- 3.6 The joint consultation referred to in paragraph 3.2 above presented three broad options for Redditch-related growth in Bromsgrove District. In light of the revocation of RSS and emerging changes to the national planning system detailed above, the context for cross-boundary development has changed and this is reflected in the Revised PDCS.

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**4. KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Revised PDCS is separated into seven strategy areas which are detailed below. Following consultation on the Preferred Draft Core Strategy (31st October 2008 to 8th May 2009) GOWM and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) provided advice on how the document could be revised to ensure the Core Strategy is found 'sound' at examination. The PDCS was organised according to the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, however advice from GOWM and PINS suggested that the Core Strategy should be focussed on key priorities for the Borough. The Revised PDCS is therefore organised into strategy areas that reflect key priorities.

4.2 Creating and sustaining a green environment

This strategy area seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment and rural area of Redditch Borough. In order to address this broad issue this section contains policies covering the following topics; Flood risk and water management, Natural Environment, Climate Change, Sustainable Travel and Accessibility and Green Infrastructure. This reflects the Council's corporate priority to be 'Greener'.

4.3 Sustainable places to live which meet all our needs

This strategy area reflects Redditch Borough Council role, as Local Planning Authority to ensure the efficient and sustainable release of land for development, which this strategy area aims to achieve. Dwellings should be provided at the correct locations to ensure that the most deliverable and sustainable areas of the Borough are developed first. Redditch need to ensure that pressure for development on greenfield land is kept to a minimum, and that those sites released first benefit from, and maximise the use of, existing and planned infrastructure. Sufficient dwellings should to be provided to ensure that everyone has access to a home that meets their needs. The provision of an appropriate level of affordable housing delivery across all types and tenures is critical to meeting the needs of all our residents.

4.4 Creating a borough where businesses can thrive

This strategy area recognises that there is a need to diversify the economic base of Redditch's economy to ensure we meet economic aspirations, whilst also remaining flexible in our approach and supporting existing businesses. This strategy area seeks to identify potential ways of diversifying the economy without being overly restrictive given the nature of the economy changing at a faster pace than planning policies. The strategy also seeks to remain flexible and not restrict growth of existing business sectors which are not looking to diversify from a traditional industry.

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The importance of the rural economy is acknowledged but the strategy also considers the impact economic development can have on the rural area and consequently some criteria are set out which aim to guide certain types of economic development in rural area. This reflects the priority to be an 'enterprising' Borough.

**4.5 Improving the vitality and viability of Redditch Town Centre and District Centre**

Redditch Town Centre plays an important role in supporting local economic growth, encouraging investment and providing a range of services and facilities for the population of Redditch and the wider area. Existing retail areas lie predominantly within the Town Centre and District Centres. Within the Town Centre, retail is the predominant land use, but the Centre also fulfils a commercial and administrative role and includes leisure activities. The policies within this strategy aim to protect and strengthen the retail role of Redditch Town Centre and to encourage a wider range of services and facilities including employment, leisure, entertainment and housing. The strategy also focuses on regeneration including a number of strategic sites which help achieve the retail vision and objectives. The quality and attractiveness of Redditch Town Centre relies upon a number of additional elements including a clean, secure and attractive environment designed for pedestrian use; convenient and well managed traffic access; parking close to the Centre; traditional activities such as markets; good access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Town centre regeneration is a priority for the Council.

**4.6 Protecting and enhancing Redditch's historic environment**

This strategy area recognises the importance of both designated and non-designated historic assets in the Borough. In particular, the process for identifying and dealing with local buildings of historic interest is set out in policy. The conservation and enhancement of the Borough's wider historic environment is also a focus of this strategy area.

**4.7 Creating safe and attractive places to live and work**

Crime and the fear of crime can have a detrimental effect on the quality of people's lives. A well planned environment can help fight crime and the fear of crime by using good design as a tool to help remove opportunities to commit criminal activities and making potential targets less attractive. Planning has a major role to play in crime prevention as it can be used proactively to create an environment that decreases the vulnerability of people and buildings. Good design improves the local environment, helps it to fit in with its surroundings and creates a distinctive sense of place. In Redditch Borough it is also important that residents and visitors feel safe.

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### **4.8 Promoting Redditch's community well-being**

This strategy area makes provision for Leisure and Tourism facilities and Health facilities in the Borough. The redevelopment of the Abbey stadium has now received planning permission; however it is important to safeguard this location for future leisure and tourism use.

There is an important link between planning and health in terms of how places are planned and develop and that impacts on the health of communities who live in them. Consequently, the Borough of Redditch Core Strategy is considered to be an important document which can have an impact on health as the plan goes beyond matters of pure land use. This strategy area seeks to ensure facilities for health needs are provided in strategic locations – Town Centre, District Centres and the Alexandra Hospital, whilst acknowledging the need to take account of wider planning policies and material considerations. The relevant policy identifies a set of criteria that certain applications have to consider in order to ensure health benefits are taken into account in new developments.

This strategy area includes a policy to safeguard the Abbey Stadium Complex and the land adjacent to it for leisure and leisure-related uses. This includes the teardrop shaped area of land between the A441 and the crematorium/cemetery which is currently being marketed for sale by RBC for leisure and leisure-related uses, in accordance with the current Local Plan No.3 Policy. Following discussion at Planning Advisory Panel, Members requested that the revised Core Strategy policy requires that any development on the teardrop shaped area of land is sensitive to the adjacent crematorium/cemetery use.

### **4.9 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

A Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix B) has been completed incorporating the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment. A SA has been completed at all stages of Core Strategy production and has informed the policies in both the PDCS and Revised PDCS. The Sustainability Appraisal will be a key piece of evidence, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of the various options. For the purposes of the Revised PDCS the SA has appraised any new options that arose from the PDCS consultation. How effectively different alternative options will progress, or move away from, the stated sustainability objectives, has been included in the Sustainability Appraisal with regards to each issue.

### **4.10 The government has signalled its intention to radically reform the planning system and introduce new national planning policy through the recently published Localism Bill. Officers consider that any implications arising from**

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the Bill in relation to this draft of the Core Strategy can be dealt with through a questionnaire which will be published alongside the Revised PDCS.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To progress to the next stage of the Core Strategy (Publication and Submission to the Secretary of State), full compliance with Planning Policy Statement 12 'Local Spatial Planning' is required, to demonstrate deliverability. To achieve this, additional evidence base work will be necessary in light of changes to the economic circumstances and the likely changes to the planning system, which will have budget implications. This will be the subject of future committee reports.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Borough Council is required to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Core Strategy forms an integral part of the LDF.

### **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Redditch Borough's LDF forms part of the development plan for the area. The Core Strategy is the main Development Plan Document within the LDF.

### **8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

The policies in the Core Strategy will contribute to achieving the following Council Objectives:

- EC3: Improving Economic Development
- EC4: To develop the Town Centre and Church Hill District Centre
- EC5: To provide new leisure facilities across the town enhancing residents' opportunities to access quality sporting facilities
- EC7: To improve health and well being across the Borough through leisure and arts
- S1: To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- S4: Deliver agreed improvements to the Town Centre in terms of environmental quality and the night-time economy
- CG1: Deliver a cleaner, greener Borough and improve the quality of green spaces
- CG5: Improve energy efficiency

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9. **RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY  
CONSIDERATIONS**

Progress on the Core Strategy is necessary to ensure the Core Strategy can be adopted in the anticipated timescale. If the Core Strategy is not progressed and adopted there is a risk the council will not have an up to date development plan with which to determine planning applications.

10. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

11. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

Equalities Impact Assessments have been completed for the Core Strategy and Town Centre Strategy (which underpins part of the Core Strategy). These assessments have highlighted no noticeable impacts on equalities groups, however, more information is needed to determine the effects. This will be achieved by further data gathering from monitoring forms sent out with consultation material. A further Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed at the next stage of the Core Strategy.

12. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET  
MANAGEMENT**

None identified.

13. **CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

National planning policy has a requirement to address adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change. National Planning Policy also has a requirement to ensure that implications from development on biodiversity are minimised and mitigated against. The Core Strategy will seek to implement this at a local level.

14. **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

15. **GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.



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**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF  
CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

The Redditch Borough Core Strategy will seek to ensure that community safety is maximised by having a policy which ensures new development in Redditch is designed to high standards. The High Quality and Safe Design section of the Core Strategy aims to aid changing perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour through practical measures identified in policy. The district centres in the New Town areas of Redditch have been identified as 'Strategic Sites' for redevelopment in order to improve crime and anti-social behaviour issues that are due, in part to the design of the District Centres.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

A Health Impact Assessment will be completed for the Core Strategy. The purpose of which is to ensure that the policies in the Core Strategy, where possible, actively promote health gain for the local population, reduce health inequalities and do not actively damage health.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

Monitoring of previous consultations has identified that there was very limited response from those under 35 years of age and from ethnic minorities. Therefore, future consultations will aim to target groups that have previously had limited involvement in the Core Strategy in order to achieve a comprehensive consultation.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Consultation on the Core Strategy will be carried out in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes - PAP
Chief Executive	Yes - CMT
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes - CMT
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes - CMT
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes - CMT

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Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes - CMT
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes - CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes - CMT
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards.

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy  
Appendix B - Sustainability Appraisal

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Borough of Redditch Preferred Draft Core Strategy 31st October 2008

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy January 2009

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Report of the Panel September 2009

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