

Appendix A – Extracts from Planning Policy Statement 12 on ‘Justification’ and ‘Effectiveness’

Justification of Core Strategies

4.36 Core strategies must be justifiable: they must be:

- **founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and**
- **the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.**

Evidence base

4.37 Core strategies have major effects. Social and economic impacts may include altering property values by a considerable amount; or helping access to housing, jobs, accessible local services and open space for many people, especially people with limited resources. There may be impacts on environmental or cultural assets: the core strategy may affect how much the area contributes to mitigating and reducing climate change. It is therefore essential that core strategies are based on thorough evidence. The evidence base should contain two elements:

Participation: evidence of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area.

Research/ fact finding: evidence that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts.

Evidence gathered should be proportionate to the job being undertaken by the plan, relevant to the place in question and as up-to-date as practical having regard to what may have changed since the evidence was collected.

Alternatives

4.38 The ability to demonstrate that the plan is the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives delivers confidence in the strategy. It requires the local planning authority to seek out and evaluate *reasonable* alternatives promoted by themselves and others to ensure that they bring forward those alternatives which they consider the LPA should evaluate as part of the plan-making process. There is no point in inventing alternatives if they are not realistic. Being able to demonstrate that the plan is the most appropriate having gone through an objective process of assessing alternatives will pay dividends in terms of an easier passage for the plan through the examination process. It will assist in the process of evaluating the claims of those who wish to oppose the strategy.

Effectiveness

4.44 **Core strategies must be effective: this means they must be:**

- **deliverable;**
- **flexible; and**
- **able to be monitored.**

Deliverability

4.45 Core Strategies should show how the vision, objectives and strategy for the area will be delivered and by whom, and when. This includes making it clear how infrastructure which is needed to support the strategy will be provided and ensuring that what is in the plan is consistent with other relevant plans and strategies relating to adjoining areas. This evidence must be strong enough to stand up to independent scrutiny. Therefore it should:

- be based on sound infrastructure delivery planning (see para 4.8 above);
- include ensuring that there are not regulatory or national policy barriers to the delivery of the strategy, such as threats to protected wildlife sites and landscapes or sites of historic or cultural importance;
- include ensuring that partners who are essential to the delivery of the plan such as landowners and developers are signed up to it. LPAs should be able to state clearly who is intended to implement different elements of the strategy and when this will happen; (These issues are handled through early involvement of key stakeholders in the preparation of options for the plan.) and
- be coherent with the core strategies prepared by neighbouring authorities, where cross boundary issues are relevant.

Flexibility

4.46 A strategy is unlikely to be effective if it cannot deal with changing circumstances. Core strategies should look over a long time frame – 15 years usually but more if necessary. In the arena of the built and natural

environment many issues may change over this time. Plans should be able to show how they will handle contingencies:
it may not always be possible to have maximum certainty about the deliverability of the strategy. In these cases the core strategy should show what alternative strategies have been prepared to handle this uncertainty and what would trigger their use. Authorities should not necessarily rely on a review of the plan as a means of handling uncertainty.

Monitoring

- 4.47 A core strategy must have clear arrangements for monitoring and reporting results to the public and civic leaders. Without these it would be possible for the strategy to start to fail but the authority and indeed the public would be none the wiser. Monitoring is essential for an effective strategy and will provide the basis on which the contingency plans within the strategy would be triggered. The delivery strategy should contain clear targets or measurable outcomes to assist this process.