

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of the Strategic Director - Transformation to the LDF Task & Finish Group – 1st April 2009

Breckland LDF Work Programme 2009/10

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an outline of the work which the Council's LDF team will be undertaking during 2009/10 and the anticipated requirements to bring material to this Group as part of the preparation of LDF documents.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Group note the contents of the report for their information.

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare project plans known as Local Development Schemes which set out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) together with details around the documents that will form the LDF. Breckland published its first Local Development Scheme (LDS) in November 2004 and this has been revised in 2005, 2007 and 2008. The latest LDS was signed off in December 2008 and contains milestones for the production of each of the documents the Authority is preparing. Breckland is monitored for its progress against the milestones contained in the LDS as part of the Planning & Housing Delivery Grant.

3.1.2 The overall timetable from the adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) is provided at Appendix A. Members may also wish to note that the LDS is available to view on-line at the Council's website.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The adopted LDS prepares the broad milestones for LDF document production over the next 3 years (to April 2012). During this period the Authority should have adopted its Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document, The Site Specifics Document and the Area Action Plans for Thetford and Attleborough & Snetterton. The authority will also have produced a detailed Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Obligations setting out clearly the levels and mechanisms of contributions for infrastructure set out in LDF policies. The LDS is not a detailed project plan and this report seeks to provide some additional detail on the work which the LDF team will be undertaking during the financial year 2009/10.

3.2.2 The adopted LDS has been prepared to reflect the new Government guidelines whilst reflecting the spatial planning agenda for Breckland. The Core Strategy remains the central document for the Breckland LDF and a number of documents can only be developed and finalised once the Core Strategy is in place. Delays around the Core Strategy will have consequences for the

3.2.3 The main work items for the LDF team are presented below and key dates for a need to report to this Group have been proposed:

- **Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document** – the document will be submitted for examination at the end of March. It is anticipated that the Examination will be held in July, with a pre-Examination meeting in May. The Inspectors Report should be received by the authority in October. These dates are dependent on confirmation from the Planning Inspectorate. Subject to the Inspector recommending that the document is sound, the Council will be invited to adopt the document. It is proposed that the Inspectors Report is considered by this Group in **December 2009**.
- **Site Specifics document** – This document has already been the subject of two rounds of public consultation (Summer 2008 and February/March 2009). The next milestone is consultation on 'preferred sites'. The selection of sites will use the criteria that has been consulted on together with additional evidence, including inputs from this Group. The Local Development Scheme indicates that consultation on preferred sites will be undertaken in September/October 2009. Your Officers advise that this milestone is at risk. This partly due to the volume of sites that need to be assessed (there are some 850 sites to consider). However, the greater risk exists from uncertainties around the scale of staff resource needed between April and July on the Core Strategy examination and the need to receive certainty from the Government Inspectors Report. It may be more realistic to work towards consulting on preferred sites towards the end of the year and early into 2010 to enable the following to occur: (1) A series of meetings of this Group (**October & November 2009**) to consider the next draft of the site specifics document; and (2) The authority needs to take into account the Inspectors Report on the Core Strategy when finalising the preferred sites. The site specifics document presents an intense piece of work for this Group which may require regular meetings over a focussed period.
- **Thetford Area Action Plan** – The timetable during 2009/10 on the Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) is to respond to the comments received from the recent Preferred Options consultation and prepare a final document by February 2010 which will be published for 6 weeks prior to be submitting for Examination. The immediate preparation of the TAAP is managed under the auspices of Moving Thetford Forward. However, as a document of the local planning authority it will need to be considered and submitted by Breckland Council. It is proposed that the final draft version of the document is presented to this Group in **November 2009**, though this is subject to the outcome of the current TAAP consultation, the CS inspector conclusions for Thetford, and the finalisation and resourcing of a number of Thetford evidence base studies. As such, should one or more of these 'risks' materialise, then it is likely to be presented to the Group slightly later, in probably **January or February 2010**.
- **Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan** – The preparation of the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan (ASHAAP) depends on the outcomes from the Inspectors Report on the Core Strategy. As Members will be aware the scale and location of growth in Attleborough presented in the Core Strategy has received significant comment and alternatives have been presented. Until a Government Inspector has adjudicated on the matters, investing considerable effort in writing an Action Plan in advance of the Inspectors Report could be unproductive. However, work on Attleborough should not stop and further evidence is needed particularly on water infrastructure and energy solutions. Work is already underway on a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, a detailed Water Cycle Study for the District and this will be completed by December. Additionally a detailed A11 Energy Study (stage 2) will also be prepared in 2009, focussing on energy solutions for Attleborough and Thetford in particular. Furthermore, additional work on transport and green infrastructure in Attleborough also needs to be undertaken in 2009/10. Dependent on the Inspectors Report into the Core Strategy and available resources it is proposed that the Group be presented with evidence base findings on water and energy in **January 2010** and shortly thereafter by an initial draft Issues and Options Area Action Plan for Attleborough in **February 2010**.

- **Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy 2031** – Given the role of the Regional Spatial Strategy to distribute District housing and job targets and to set higher order policy on issues such as affordable housing, energy and biodiversity, it will be incumbent on this Group to provide technical advice to the Council's Cabinet in formulating the Council's position on the contents of the proposed RSS review to 2031. The timetable for the RSS review is already in flux but best estimates are that this Group may need to meet to consider the draft RSS Review in **September 2009** and again in **early 2010**.
- **Monitoring** – The authority is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report, based on the most recent financial year, which examines how policies are performing and delivering (i.e. housing completions). The AMR needs to be submitted by end of December and presents an opportunity for the authority to formally consider whether the timetable for preparing the LDF needs to be amended and whether a policy, policies or an entire document needs to be reviewed in light of the evidence presented in the AMR. It is proposed that this Group considers the AMR for 2008/09 at a meeting in **September 2009** and that this meeting considers potential amendments to the Local Development Scheme arising from AMR work.

3.2.4 This report aims to outline the main items in the work programme for the Council's planning policy team in 2009/10 and how and when the delivery of that work can be supported by the involvement of this Group. In addition to the delivery of the LDF, it should be borne in mind that the Council's planning policy team is also engaged in other Corporate activities (i.e. Sustainable Community Strategy) and the Development Control process and there may be occasions where this generates work for this group. As well as the items highlighted in the Report, the Group may also have issues or items which it wants considered through this forum for which Officers may need to prepare reports or co-ordinate organisations to attend. Additionally, this Group will also be asked to formalise responses to draft National Planning Policy Statements and local planning policies in adjoining authorities where there is an effect on Breckland communities.

3.2.8 Ultimately the year 2009/10 will be dominated by your Officers preparing for and representing the Council at the Examination in Public into the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document. At present there is considerable uncertainty as to what additional work will be generated by the Inspector and what capacity will be available between now and the start of the Examination to drive forward other work areas. This is reflected in the suggested dates for this Group presented above, the effect of which is that the Group's work programme will be light over the next 4-5 months before entering an intense period of work from October 2009 through to March 2010.

3.2.9 The work programme and timetable presented in this Report is dependent on the Examination into the Core Strategy taking place from the end of June and the Inspectors Report being available in October. As members will recall the delivery of the Local Development Scheme (the overall programme) will be affected by availability of resources, in particular suitably qualified staff and capacity to commission and prepare evidence base materials. These risks are already identified and should they materialise, then Members will be informed of amendments to the overall LDF programme as part of the Annual Monitoring Report process.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 Report is for information only and no options are presented.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 To ensure Members' are kept informed of the programme of work for the Local Development Framework.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 I have completed the Risk Management questionnaire and can confirm that risk has been given careful consideration, and that there are no significant risks identified associated with the information in this report.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 This report has no financial implications.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 sets out the procedures to which the LDF process must adhere.

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: None – Matters in this report have no equalities impact.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 PPS12 deals with the Local Development Framework, including arrangements for consultation and participation. The statement will need to be taken into account throughout the production of the Local Development Framework and its components and will be relevant to the following Council priorities:

- Building Safer and Stronger Communities
- Environment
- Prosperous Communities
- Your Council, Your Services

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 All Wards and Parishes within Breckland will be indirectly affected due to the nature of the Local Development Framework and the associated consultation arrangements surrounding its future progress.

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/ Post: David Spencer – Principal Planning Policy Officer:

Telephone: (01362) 656889

Email: david.spencer@breckland.gov.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

This is not a Key Decision as indicated on the Forward Plan.

Appendices attached to this report:

Adopted Breckland Local Development Scheme (December 2008)