

Planning Committee

Wednesday 11 November 2009 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors G B Woodger (Chairman), D W Parr (Vice Chairman), J R Ashmore, Mrs F J Barden, J Broadhead, D A Cotty, R J Edis, J.M. Edwards, J R Furey, Mrs E Gill, C Knight, M T Kusneraitis, Mrs Y P Lay, H W V Meares and J J Wilson

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr B A Fleckney, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425620). (Email: bernard.fleckney@runnymede.gov.uk).**
- 3) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
- 4) Public speaking on planning applications only is allowed at the Planning Committee. For details please contact the Administrative Section of the Technical Services Department. **(Tel Direct Line: 01932 425153)** or view the guidance on the Committee web page.
- 5) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

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PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

- a) Exempt Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)
- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TERM	EXPLANATION
BCN	Breach of Condition Notice. Formal enforcement action to secure compliance with a valid condition
Brownfield land	'Previously Developed Land'. Land which is or was occupied by a permanent (non-agricultural) structure, including the curtilage of the development (therefore includes gardens)
BVPI's	Best Value Performance Indicators. Specified by central government to measure performance on a wide range of Council services
CHA	County Highways Authority. Responsible for offering advice on highways issues relating to planning applications as well as highways maintenance and improvement
CIR	Government Circular – document setting out policy which has legal connotations
CLEUD	Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development. Formal procedure to ascertain whether a development which does not have planning permission is immune from enforcement action
CLOPUD	Certificate of Lawful Proposed Use or Development. Formal procedure to ascertain whether a development requires planning permission
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest designated due to factors such as the layout of buildings, boundaries, characteristic materials, vistas and open spaces
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment. An external process to assess the quality of individual Council's Performance (set out in the Local Government White Paper 2001). It brings together evidence from a range of internal and external sources, in addition to an on site inspection, in order to arrive at an overall category
DC	Development Control – the area of planning service that processes planning applications, planning appeals and enforcement work
Design Statement	A design statement is submitted with a planning application and sets out the design principles that the applicant has adopted to make the proposal fit into its wider context
Development Plan	The combined policy documents of the Structure Plan, Local Plan, Minerals and Waste Plans. Will shortly be replaced by the South East Plan, the Local Development Framework and the Minerals and Waste Frameworks
DTS	Director of Technical Services
EA	Environment Agency. Lead government agency advising on flooding and pollution control
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment – formal environmental assessment of specific categories of development proposals
ES	Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GPDO	General Permitted Development Order. Document which sets out categories of permitted development (see 'PD')
GOSE	The Government Office for the South East. This is the local office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the South East region of England
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LBC	Listed Building Consent
LDD	Local Development Documents – component parts of the LDF
LDF	Local Development Framework. The policy document that will guide development in the Borough up to 2026
LDS	Local Development Scheme - sets out the programme and timetable for preparing LDDs

TERM	EXPLANATION
Listed building	An individual building or group of buildings which require a level of protection due to its architectural interest, historical interest, historical associations or group value
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
Local Plan	The current planning policy document that will be replaced by the LDF
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership – Leads on the Community Strategy
Material Considerations	Matters which are relevant in determining planning applications
Net Density	As defined in PPG3: Housing. The density of a housing development excluding major distributor roads, primary schools, open spaces serving a wider area and significant landscape buffer strips
PCN	Planning Contravention Notice. Formal notice which requires information to be provided in connection with an enforcement investigation. It does not in itself constitute enforcement action
PD	Permitted development – works which can be undertaken without the need to submit a planning application
PDG	Planning Delivery Grant. An annual grant from central government which reflects the previous year's performance in delivering planning services
P & I	Policy and Implementation – the area of planning service that produces the Local Development Framework, monitors development and supports the Runnymede Business Partnership and Travel Initiative
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
POS	Public Open Space
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance. This is guidance issued by the Secretary of State detailing National Planning Policy within existing legislation
PPS	Planning Policy Statements. The replacement title for PPG
Ramsar Site	A wetland of international importance
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Provides limitation on covert surveillance relating to enforcement investigation
SAC	Special Area of Conservation – an SSSI additionally designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the European Community's Habitats Directive 1992 in order to maintain or restore priority natural habitats and wild species
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement. The document and policies that indicate how the community will be engaged in the preparation of the LDF
SEA/SA	Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal – formal appraisal of the Local development Framework
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly – based in Guildford. Responsible for producing South East Plan
Sec. 106	A legal agreement for the provision of facilities and/or infrastructure either directly by a developer or through a financial contribution, to meet the needs arising out of a development. Can also prevent certain matters
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Importance. A non-statutory designated area of county or regional wildlife value
South East Plan	Regional Planning Document produced in draft form by SEERA. Will provide regional planning guidance and housing targets for individual Councils for the period up to 2026
SPA	Special Protection Area. An SSSI additionally designated a Special Protection Area under the European Community's Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 1979
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document – provides additional advice on policies in Local Development Framework (replaces SPG)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Structure Plan	Strategic guidance for the whole county produced by Surrey County Council. Will eventually be replaced by the South East Plan

TERM	EXPLANATION
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Providing urban drainage systems in a more environmentally sensitive way by systems designed to reduce the quantity of run-off, slow its velocity or provide for filtering, sedimentation and biological degradation of the water
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. It is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
TA	Transport Assessment – assessment of the traffic and transportation implications of a development proposal
TPO	Tree Preservation Order – where a tree or trees are formally protected and prior consent is needed for pruning or felling
TRICS	Computerised database and trip rate analysis used to estimate traffic flows to and from a variety of land uses, to assess transportation implications of new development in southern England
Use Classes Order	Document which lists classes of use and permits certain changes between uses without the need for planning permission

1. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an agenda item please record the interest on the orange coloured form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

5. CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED APPROACHES CONSULTATION (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to:**

- i) **advise the Committee of the Core Strategy Preferred Approaches consultation which has been carried out under regulation 25 as required by PPS12;**
- ii) **provide a summary of the responses received (Appendix 'A');**
- iii) **confirm that the general approaches to key issues are appropriate; and**
- iv) **outline the areas which require further attention in the next stages of preparation of the Core Strategy.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) requires Local Authorities to undertake timely, effective and conclusive discussion with key stakeholders on what options for a core strategy are deliverable, and requires this engagement to be early in the production of the Strategy.

- 2.2 PPS12 also states that Core Strategies must be justifiable, so they must be:
- Founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and
 - The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.
- 2.3 The first step towards the preparation of a Core Strategy for Runnymede was the carrying out of Issues and Options Consultation and this was carried out in 2008. This consultation was based on the production of a series of topic papers dealing with key topics.
- 2.4 Following the completion of this consultation, another version of the Core Strategy was produced, identifying the Preferred Approaches developed following the earlier consultation and the completion of several evidence based studies.
3. The Consultation
- 3.1 The consultation on the Preferred Approaches ran for 6 weeks, from 19 June to 31 July 2009.
- 3.2 Two versions of the consultation document were prepared, the full Preferred Approaches document and a summary version, and a number of background studies were also published, including a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Retail Study and a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. All these documents were available for comment during the consultation.
- 3.3 The letter identifying the consultation was sent to approximately 800 consultees. These consultees included:
- Statutory Consultees
 - Agents/Developers
 - Interest groups
 - Businesses
 - Residents Associations
 - Care Services
 - Day Centres
 - Local Authorities
 - Adjoining Parish Councils
 - Churches
 - Schools/Education
 - Housing Associations
 - Libraries
 - Interested Individuals
- 3.4 The consultation was also advertised in the following ways:
- On the RBC website
 - At all Surrey Libraries within Runnymede
 - An article in the Runnymede Voice Magazine, delivered to every household in the Borough

- A press release to local papers
 - Posters on public notice boards around the Borough
 - Documents and posters at Day Centres around the Borough
- 3.5 In order to try to reach a wide range of stakeholders, displays identifying the consultation were set up in the libraries in the Borough, and Officers also attended residents groups, the Runnymede Youth Festival, Chamber of Commerce meetings, the Runnymede Older Peoples Forum, and the Local Strategic Partnership task groups. A consultation with Magna Carta School has also taken place.
- 3.6 The consultation was carried out in accordance with the adopted Runnymede Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

4. Responses

- 4.1 Approximately 100 individuals/organisations replied to the consultation (Approx 80 from agencies/groups, 20 from individuals), providing approximately 500 individual responses. The majority of the responses were made on the comments forms provided with the consultation letters and documents.

5. Initial analysis

- 5.1 A summary of all the responses received is attached as Appendix 'A', but in summary the main issues raised are set out below with a general officer response

- The document needs to be more spatial, being specific about what will actually happen in the various parts of the Borough over the next 20 years.

Officer response: Agree

- Is the plan right to give greater protection to the green belt than areas that might flood (Particularly in relation to housing).

Officer response: Further exploration of this issue is required using the background evidence in particular the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- Should there be a Green Belt review in general and in particular with regard to Royal Holloway College?

Officer response: The Green Belt and the need for boundary review has been a clear area raised in the Preferred Approaches consultation and represents a challenge to the Council's urban area approach that needs to be carefully considered.

- Is the proposed development of DERA sustainable, what capacity work is available to prove that the level of development proposed for the site can be achieved?

Officer response: Work continues on this site and discussions between the Council and landowners are ongoing seeking to understand the capacity of the site for the purposes of inclusion within the Core Strategy.

- Need more information on the quantum, location and timing of development

Officer response: Evidence base is being developed to enable this to be reflected and addressed in the next version of the Core Strategy

- Evidence base needs to be developed particularly with regard to transport, employment land and infrastructure planning

Officer response: Agree

- There should be more cross-referencing between policies and perhaps an amalgamation of policies

Officer response: Agree

- More emphasis needs to be given to the infrastructure required to deliver the plan. In particular a schedule of what is needed, when it is needed, who will deliver it and how will it be achieved needs to be developed further.

Officer response: Agree. Work is underway on this issue in conjunction with the wider Surrey Infrastructure Project

5.2 The following is a summary of the specific comments received from the statutory consultees:

5.3 GOSE

- Commented on the clear structure of the document, with the availability of the evidence base providing a useful source of information to inform the preferred approaches.
- Expressed concern that the document has progressed along a policy formulation rather than a strategic approach; the core strategy should identify where and when development is programmed to address the strategic objectives and to realise the vision.
- Some of the positive benefits associated with new development are still to be captured, such as supporting local centres, employment opportunities and reducing carbon emissions through sustainable design and construction methods.
- Concerned that the vision doesn't appear to provide a genuine high level focus for the future of Runnymede and the different areas within the Borough.
- Risk analysis work has not been undertaken and it is fundamental that appropriate contingencies are considered to support the flexibility sought by PPS12.
- The plan will require a significantly enhanced approach to implementation, monitoring and management, and at the publication stage it is vital that clearer monitoring mechanisms are identified.
- The root of the challenge facing the document is to address the place shaping role; delivery of development will involve the bringing together of different partners working to common objectives.
- With regard to the Location of Development, the proposed policy should be widened to an over arching approach which considers location, quantum of development and timescales in a more place shaping manner.
- The proposed housing delivery is too simplistic; the strategy does not identify any distribution for new housing, and this is a fundamental consideration for an inspector. This distribution may be affected by any number of factors, particularly with regard to infrastructure.
- The community infrastructure policy articulates planning contributions and the planning tariff but does not really consider community infrastructure – an infrastructure schedule should be produced as an essential part of the evidence base.
- The Green Belt policy needs to be refocused on Major Developed Sites and the Green Belt Review.

5.4 Thames Water Property Services

- object to the omission of a policy relating to sewerage infrastructure as the provision of this infrastructure is a key issue in accordance with PPS 12 and the tests of soundness;
- comment that development should be located in areas where sewerage capacity exists or can be provided;
- support the continued designation of Lyne Lane Sewage Treatment Works as a MDS.

5.5 Natural England

- Very encouraged by this comprehensive document which sets a vision that encourages sustainability and improvement of quality of life and recognises the importance of the natural environment.
- However, they would wish to see the reinforcement of the role of Green Infrastructure through the production of a spatial plan (a GI Strategy) to help deliver a GI network across the Borough.
- Commend the acknowledgement of the environmental implications of climate change within the core strategy but the development and flood risk policy approach needs to demonstrate that proposals for alleviation will comply with the policy approach relating to protecting and enhancing the natural environment, particularly with regard to the proposed flood relief channel 2, which is located within Runnymede between Chertsey Lock and Staines Bridge.
- The Core Strategy should adequately reflect the value of its landscapes.

5.6 The Highways Agency stress the importance of a transport evidence base for the Core Strategy (PPS 12, the need for infrastructure planning) and would wish to be reassured by this that proposed development will not adversely impact on the operation of the Strategic Road Network (the motorway network).

5.7 The South East England Partnership Board (the agency which replaces SEERA):

- Generally support the objectives and preferred policy approaches set out in the document, particularly those that seek to address the housing needs of those with specialist requirements, make provision for Gypsies and Travelling Showmen and support the Joint Delivery Framework for the TBHSPA.
- However, they suggest that an inspector would expect the spatial strategy to indicate the broad quantum of development that is expected for various uses and locations over the plan period and when it is to be delivered.
- There should be a specific policy on green infrastructure.
- The submission core strategy should also set out a policy approach to encourage renewable energy development in Runnymede and a set of criteria to assess proposed developments.
- Reference should be made in the sustainable transport section to the need to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and the encouragement and support for the use of more sustainable forms of transport.
- With regard to the former DERA site it is very important that the policy sets out in sufficient detail the appropriate parameters for levels of development to guide the subsequent SPD.
- The proposed submission document should also clearly set out what infrastructure is required to support the overall strategy

5.8 The Environment Agency

- Complimented the way the document was laid out, and would not want to see major changes to the structure of the document.
- However, their biggest concern is the lack of options considered and the lack of testing of options, to form a sound evidence base upon which to make decisions.
- With regard to flood risk, they felt that the preferred approach (to avoid areas at risk from flooding) is undermined by the promotion of the settlements most at risk of flooding, and therefore the preferred approach is undeliverable.
- The strategy does not provide sufficient hooks to enable subsequent documents to deal with issues such as SUDS, flood risk mitigation, water resources, water quality and waste management.
- It is not clear from the document why the Green Belt is offered definitive protection from development whilst parts of the flood plain are considered available for development.
- Ask whether the Borough's housing targets can be met if the floodplain is avoided and whether this justifies a review of the green belt.

5.9 Surrey County Council Planning Implementation Team

- Support policies to protect Runnymede's unique cultural history and natural resources.
- Emphasise the need to ensure that vitality and viability of town centres is maintained, and this is dependant on communities receiving proper benefit from development.
- However, they have some concerns over the borough's commitment to ensuring infrastructure contributions to improve local facilities and services.
- The County's role as minerals and waste planning authority should be explained and how the two authorities will integrate effectively in this respect.
- Education similarly should have a high profile.
- The Core Strategy objectives are supported, particularly the concentration of development on previously developed land and the conclusion that there is no need for a general green belt boundary review.
- Support the proposed approaches to affordable housing and housing needs but contributions for affordable housing should not be at the expense of education infrastructure; it is essential that the Borough has a policy of pursuing developer contributions to mitigate the cumulative effect of pupils yielded by developments, and to recognise that a school is at the heart of the community.
- Concern over the lack of regard for the historic environment, including archaeology, and it is suggested that 'heritage' would benefit from a separate policy approach.

5.10 SEEDA

- Supports the overarching objectives of the Core Strategy, particularly those which help achieve the priorities in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).
- Achieving 'smart growth' is one of the key economic objectives for the South East within the RES and SEEDA considers that Runnymede could usefully refer to the smart growth concept to increase economic prosperity while reducing the borough's ecological footprint.

6. Council Policy

- 6.1 The consultation results will help inform the next stage of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which when finally adopted will become part of the Council's Development Plan and will be used in decision-making on planning applications.
7. Resource implications
- 7.1 Reviewing the consultation responses on the Issues and Options consultation is part of the LDF process and is covered by existing resources.
8. Legal Implications
- 8.1 Developing the LDF is focused on the continued involvement of key stakeholders, statutory bodies and the local community. The Preferred Approaches play a key part in this development and help set the direction of the Core Strategy. This is set down in the provisions of PPS12. As part of the development of the Core Strategy a statement of consultation is required as part of the Local Development Framework regulations and as such this report forms part of that statement.
9. Conclusions
- 9.1 The above report and Appendix 'A' outline the responses to the Preferred Approaches consultation. The next stage is to resolve and consider responses and the new elements of the evidence base documents to develop a Pre-Submission version of the Core Strategy, which will then be subject to a further round of consultation. This is likely to be in Spring 2010.
- 9.2 From comments received it is clear that the next version of the document will need to be a more place focused strategy rather than a series of independent policies; the approach to development will be the same in many cases, but will need to focus on the specific issues in each town/area rather than considering the whole of Runnymede in the same way. This will provide a different format for the document and will enable more cross referencing between policies and the creation of what is termed a more spatial plan.
- 9.3 In response to the consultation and with new evidence becoming available, a different or amended approach for some policies may need to be taken; In particular the infrastructure needs from new development will be understood better as will transport and employment issues. These will help to better understand the impact of the approaches which have been set out in the preferred approaches document and in cases strengthen or refocus them.
- 9.4 The Green Belt and the need for boundary review has been a clear area raised in the Preferred Approaches consultation, in particular reference to some housing and employment sites and in relation to Royal Holloway College. These challenges to the Council's urban area approach need to be carefully considered.
- 9.5 As mentioned above there needs to be further work carried out on the evidence base, particularly with regard to employment and tourism, recreation & leisure and this may lead to a different policy approach in these cases.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the Committee note the comments received on Core Strategy Preferred Approaches Consultation; and**
- ii) the Committee confirm their agreement to the officer responses set out in Paragraph 5.1.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

Responses received on consultation

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE REPORT (DTS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the ongoing work on the Local Development Framework including the preparation of evidence base studies and the likely change to timetables set out in the Council's current Local Development Scheme.**

2. **Background Information**

- 2.1 The Local Development Framework will eventually replace the Runnymede Local Plan and will form a key part of the Council's Development Plan. The Core Strategy is the first document which the Council is required to prepare. This document sets out the growth which is expected to occur in the borough over the next twenty years and takes the big decisions regarding location of new housing and employment development. Once adopted this will then be further supplemented by a "Sites Development Plan Document" and a "Development Management Policies Development Plan Document" which will be used in assessing planning applications. Once all three of these documents are in place they will wholly replace the Runnymede Borough Local Plan.

- 2.2 In preparing the Council's Core Strategy Officers have been developing a robust and credible evidence base which will be used to inform the development of the Local Development Framework. The Council has already published a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, a Retail Study, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and an Open Space Study. The following are the additional studies which are being developed or have recently been completed.

Employment Land Review

- 2.3 Officers are currently working with consultants on an Employment Land Review (ELR) which is due for completion in early 2010, the findings of which will be reported to the LDF Members Working Group and will be used to further inform the employment elements of the Core Strategy and subsequently the Housing and Commercial sites and Development Management, Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

Transport Assessment

- 2.4 Officers are seeking to undertake transportation assessment work with the aid of the County Council. This project will aim to use the Surrey Transport Model to consider the transport implications of the level of growth for Runnymede as set out in the South East Plan. Currently access to the model is not available to Runnymede due to County resources not being available. The Surrey-wide Infrastructure project may enable a much quicker use of the Model which will fit in with the Council's Core Strategy preparation timetable.

Infrastructure Review

- 2.5 An Infrastructure review is underway at the Runnymede level using information available from the first stage Surrey Infrastructure Study which was undertaken by Surrey County Council on a county wide basis. This intends to highlight where there are capacity issues in service provision and consider how this might be affected by the level of growth that is proposed for Runnymede. This will help further develop the strategy for the Borough and identify the type of infrastructure required, who needs to deliver it and in what timescales.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

- 2.6 The Council currently has a strategy for dealing with the impacts associated with residential development affecting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA). Currently the approach enables developers to either provide their own SANGS land or contribute to upgrading the Council's SANGS land. However this is limited to 600 new units worth of capacity, of which nearly 300 units have been allocated. In order for the evidence base for the Core Strategy to be sound, it will be important that the Council is able to

demonstrate that there is capacity for a larger number of new homes so that future housing provision can be delivered over the longer term.

- 2.7 Surveys of all the Council's SANGS' and a potential SANGS site have been undertaken and the results are being analysed at the moment. It is expected that once this information is available the Council will consult with Natural England about the level of capacity available in the existing SANGS' and the potential allocation of a new SANGS before publishing the updated study for public consultation.

Affordable Housing Viability Study

- 2.8 An Affordable Housing Viability Study has been undertaken on behalf of the Council. This will form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and in particular the policy approach adopted for Affordable Housing. The study was undertaken in the middle of 2009 and reflects the viability of achieving affordable housing (through development) against the backdrop of the significant economic downturn. The study identifies that currently a figure of closer to 20% (rather than 40%) affordable housing is achievable at this point in time. This conclusion has been reached by assessing 10 typical housing sites within the Borough and looking at how achievable affordable housing would be on these sites. These findings have been reflected in the level of affordable housing which has been achievable on some of the more recent schemes in the Borough (in particular the former Safeways site, where 25% affordable housing was given permission.)
- 2.9 Although this level is considered low at this point in time, the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that there is a need to achieve 40% affordable housing from varying sites to go at least some way to meeting need. This means that the Core Strategy will have to identify what the need is but set this against the viability of schemes considering the market conditions at that time. The executive summary of this study is attached at Appendix 'B' and a full copy of the report is available in the Members Room.
- 2.10 It is anticipated that this study will be reviewed on an annual basis to consider viability under varying market conditions.

Runnymede Character Appraisal

- 2.11 The Borough Council's Urban Design Consultant has prepared an assessment of the character of the built up areas within the Borough, a copy of which has been placed in the Members' Room for information. The purpose of this document is to consider the varying character of the Borough and what issues exist in these areas and possible solutions which could be considered when planning applications are received. This study will be useful because it differentiates between the character of the different settlements and this will enable more locally specific descriptions and visions to be set out in the re-worked Core Strategy.

3. Local Development Scheme

- 3.1 The responses to the Preferred Approaches Core Strategy consulted upon in June 2009 have identified a number of areas where the suggested policy approaches need to be amended to consider the "Place Shaping" role that the Core Strategy should play. Identifying change at the local level rather than considering it on a Borough wide basis was a key theme in the comments received through the consultation. This along with the need to further develop our evidence base makes it clear that the dates set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) need to be amended to be more achievable.
- 3.2 Currently the LDS identifies that the Council will publish the next version of the document in January 2010; this is called the publication version. With the outstanding evidence which is still to be completed it is no longer considered achievable to meet this deadline. This and the need to restructure the strategy mean that it is likely that our next published version of the plan will be in spring 2010. It is suggested that a re-worked Local Development Scheme be

brought before the Committee in December once the most likely time frame for the completion of the next stage of the Core Strategy is known.

4. Council Policy

- 4.1 The LDF will form the local elements of the Council's Development Plan. It is therefore important that the Core Strategy is founded on a sound and credible evidence base so that it is likely to be approved following an Examination in Public by a Government appointed Inspector.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Creating a robust and credible set of evidence to support the Local Development Framework is being met from within existing LDF resources.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 In order to have a sound Core Strategy the document needs to be in general conformity with the existing national and regional development plan (Planning Policy Statements and the Regional Plan) It also needs to be founded on a sound evidence base having explored the various alternative strategies that could have been taken.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 It has become clear from the consultation on the Preferred Approaches Core Strategy and the need to continue to build the Council's evidence base that the timetable as set out in the Council's LDS will need to be revised and as such a report to the Council's Planning Committee presenting an updated version of the LDS will be required by the end of this year.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the Committee note the contents of this report and in particular the need to review the Council's Local Development Scheme.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

7. LOWER THAMES FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to receive the views of the Committee on a consultation by the Environment Agency (EA) entitled 'Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy' (LTF).**

- 1.2 **Comments are requested by 4th December 2009.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The LTF considers the risk that a flood will take place in the Lower Thames from Datchet to Teddington (including the Runnymede stretch of the Thames), examines the consequences of a flood and develops a strategy to manage the flood risk. The consultation indicates that the EA manage flood risk includes:

- maintaining floodplains to store water during floods;
- building and maintaining defences;
- discouraging new developments in areas where there is a risk of flooding;

- provide flood warning mechanisms;
 - building flood diversion channels to protect towns and cities from major floods.
- 2.2 Members will be familiar with flood events in the Lower Thames and the recent floods of 2000, 2003 and 2007. The consequences of these events had a particular impact in the Chertsey area, whilst the 2007 event was wider-ranging in the Borough and beyond. When the Thames flows through Runnymede, the floodplain is broad and flat.
- 2.3 Some Members may recall that initial work took place in the early 1990s on this study and the current consultation seeks to build on this work. The work now considers a series of options for managing flood risk for the Runnymede stretch of the Thames, referred to as 'Reach 3'. The key focus of the study is the creation of flood diversion channels. Within Reach 3 there are three elements between Datchet and Shepperton. For the Runnymede stretch of Reach 3, the Channel 2 corridor proposes a new diversion channel from just south of Staines, through Thorpe Park and rejoining the Thames south of the M3 motorway at the junction of the Abbey River/Chertsey Weir.
- 2.4 The channel would be as natural as possible, being some 50-60 metres wide within a broad corridor of 100m. The channel would be about 3.5m deep with standing not flowing water (except in times of flood) like the gravel lakes along its course that would be linked by the channel.
- 2.5 The consequence of the channel is that flood risk is reduced for some 5,100 properties in Reaches 3 and 4. Apart from reducing flood risk, the channels could improve local landscape character and biodiversity and add recreational activity.
- 2.6 It is recognised that the new channels would have some short term regional impacts for local people and their environment (including the loss of a limited number of properties). However, this is considered to be compensated by the longer term gain.
- 2.7 The post-consultation process will be slow and if funding is identified for the scheme, works would not commence before 2017. The total project costs are estimated at £300M at today's prices.
- 2.8 Alternatives are considered but not considered to produce the comprehensive approach to the problem of flooding and flood risk.
3. Planning and Technical Considerations
- 3.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) has given consideration to the impact of flood risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been proposed that considers flooding in Runnymede. The approach currently taken in the emerging LDF Core Strategy, in Policy Approach 16, is to support the proposals for strategic flood relief measures including the proposed flood relief Channel 2 through Runnymede. The principle of support for the issues set out in the EA consultation for the Runnymede stretch of the Thames is established. Members may however now wish to review this approach on the basis of the more detailed work contained in the consultation. In general terms your Officers would recommend support for the proposal for a flood channel subject to the opportunity to comment on the details as they emerge.
4. Council Policy
- 4.1 The LDF will form part of the Council's Development Plan. The principles in the LTF are supported by the LDF Core Strategy policy approach 16. This Committee's Service Plan has a long-standing aim 'To encourage the Environment Agency to take action to alleviate the potential for flooding on the River Thames'.
5. Resource Implications
- 5.1 Whilst there are no resource implications for the Borough Council, the cost of the project at £300m means that there is little prospect either now, or in the immediate future that this will receive support from the Treasury, despite the fact that this area is amongst the highest under threat nationally, from fluvial flooding.

6. Legal Issues

6.1 The LDF Core Strategy will be subject to detailed scrutiny at the Examination in Public and the impact of the EA proposals may be an issue that is subject to more examination at that point.

7. Equality Issues

7.1 The EA proposals would have an impact on some local residents but the scheme intent is to bring flood relief for the wider community.

8. Consultation

8.1 The proposals set out in the LTF would help attenuate the vast impact of potential flooding in the Borough and are therefore to be welcomed. However, there will be short term disruption. Support for the LTF is established in the LDF Core Strategy subject to the details of the scheme being subject to further scrutiny.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

support be given to the proposal in the Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy – Consultation Document as it impacts on the stretch of the Thames in Runnymede

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing reports in private it is the

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)