

Core Strategy - Context and Update

Summary

The Government is proposing major changes to the planning system which will impact both the form and content of the Council's Local Development Framework and, in particular, how the Council takes forward the preparatory work for the Core Strategy.

The draft National Planning Policy Framework and local planning regulations consultation do not refer to Local Development Frameworks and Core Strategies but to 'Local Plans'. The proposed changes, including the Localism Bill expected to receive Royal Assent within a few months place increased emphasis on local planning authorities having 'up to date' plans based on robust evidence.

On this basis it is recommended that the continuing work to develop Bromley's Core Strategy is used to prepare a broader 'Local Plan' which will meet the requirements of proposed reforms and set clearly at the heart of the plan making process the Council's aspirations and vision for the Borough. This would provide a robust and up to date local plan that positions the Borough's objectives and policies in the context of the national and regional policy and sets a strong framework for any proposals for neighbourhood plans.

All development plan documents need to be supported by robust evidence and found 'sound' at the Examination in Public (EiP). Much of this work has already been undertaken and updating and refinement is ongoing.

The Council is required to demonstrate as part of the Core Strategy or local plan that its vision and objectives are deliverable. This requires the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out the infrastructure required (e.g. utilities, schools, health, community and leisure facilities and open space required. ((see note). In turn the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Schedule can be used to demonstrate the requirement for additional funding and support the Council in introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy.

National Context

The Government has consulted on major planning reforms that it intends to introduce by April 2012. The Council is in a good position to transfer the work undertaken to take forward its Core Strategy to the preparation of broader plan to meet the new requirements. Authorities with adopted Core Strategies will be required to revisit these in light of the changes.

London Context

The Council's development plans are required to be in 'general conformity' with the latest London Plan, adopted in July 2011. The GLA will be issuing early alterations for consultation in November 2011 that will seek to ensure that the London Plan is itself in general conformity with the national framework.

Issues for Consideration

- The requirement for any plans to be fit for purpose in the new planning environment, in particular meeting the requirements of the new policy framework and planning regulations.
- The impact of the proposed 'slimmer' national planning framework and potential desire to include policies that were previously relied on at a national level within any local plan
- Any changes in process and programme to move from preparing a Core Strategy to a broader 'Local Plan'
- Implications arising from the Localism Bill, for instance, the potential for neighbourhood plans.
- The scope for variation from, and flexibility with, the London Plan while remaining in general conformity as required by legislation.
- Issue/topic requiring further evidence/debate arising from the Core Strategy Issues Document consultation
 - Green Belt
 - Areas of Special Residential Character
 - Business Areas
 - Provision of Gypsy and Traveller Pitches
 - Crystal Palace
 - Biggin Hill
 - Housing Targets and Capacity
 - Neighbourhood Plans

Next Steps/Timescale

Nov 2011 - LDFAP Panel and DCC

Consider response to consultation on Core Strategy Issues Document and potential of moving to Local Plan to meet anticipated legislative requirements

Nov 2011 - Feb 2012

Review of Options for Key Issues and Identification of Preferred Options
Identify UDP Policies for continuation in new plan
Assessment of London Plan policies and general conformity issues
Identification of 'lost' national policies to consider for inclusion

March 2012

Draft Preferred Options for LDFAP and DC to consider March 2012

April 2012

New national planning policy and legislation in place

Spring 2012

Public Consultation on 'Preferred Options and Draft Outline Plan'