

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2010

LDF CORE STRATEGY: ADOPTION OF THE PLAN.

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Council officers have been working toward preparing the Local Development Framework– Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is the most important part of the Local Development Framework as it sets the spatial vision and the priorities for the next 15 years and beyond.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy has been through an extensive preparation process over the last 3 years, including evidence base collection, option testing, public consultation, member approval and independent examination. The Core Strategy has now been found sound by the Planning Inspector and therefore is now able to be considered by the Council for its adoption.
- 1.3 The Core Strategy and other Development Plan documents form part of the Council's Policy Framework. In line with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, the Core Strategy is to be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (7 September) and Cabinet (8 September) before adoption by Council. Any further comments or recommendations arising from those meetings will be circulated to Members before the Council meeting.
- 1.4 A copy of Appendix 1 (the Core Strategy document) was sent separately to each Councillor prior to the cycle of meetings at which it is scheduled for consideration. Members are requested to bring this document with them to the Council meeting as it forms part of the agenda papers for the meeting.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Council consider:-
- a) the Final Local Development Framework Core Strategy at Appendix 1 and the Inspector's report and three Annexes at Appendix 2; and
 - b) any further information circulated following the meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 September and Cabinet on 8 September 2010.
- 2.2 That the Council adopt the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (including the Inspectors required amendments) to be a part of the borough's Development Plan.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 The decision to adopt the Core Strategy is required in accordance with Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 23 – Adoption of an Local Development Document), if the local authority seeks to enact the policies included in the plan.
- 3.2 It should be noted that, in accordance with Section 23 (3) and (4), the planning inspector's report is binding, meaning that the local authority must adopt the plan with the changes that are recommended.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Council may alternatively choose not to adopt the Core Strategy, including choosing not to adopt any one of the Inspectors binding recommendations. This would mean that the work undertaken would be aborted and work would start again on the production of the Core Strategy.
- 4.2 There are substantial risks and implications associated with this option including risks of not having an up to date planning framework to manage growth and change, as well as significant cost implications. It would also undermine for the current work being undertaken on the second tranche of plans coming forward as a part of the Local Development Framework.
- 4.3 This in turn would significantly limit the Council to deliver other priorities such as the delivery of new homes, including family homes, new jobs and critical infrastructure including a possible new in borough waste facility, new primary and secondary schools and other essential infrastructure critical to support the development of sustainable communities and deliver the borough's Community Plan vision and objectives.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The adoption of the Local Development Framework - Core Strategy is the last step in a long process of developing a core strategy for the Council. The Core Strategy has regularly been reported to the Cabinet and Council throughout its stages of production, including most recently been approved by Council on 9 December 2009 for its submission to the Secretary of State.

6. BODY OF REPORT

- 6.1 The Local Development Framework – Core Strategy is the spatial interpretation of the Community Plan and thus is one of its central delivery tools. The Core Strategy sets out the strategy for how the borough will seek to manage physical change, including illustrating where and when growth and change will happen in the borough. In Tower Hamlets context this

strategy outlines an ambitious growth strategy, as the borough takes on its role as one of the fastest growing borough in country.

- 6.2 The Core Strategy has been through an extremely comprehensive process of production and approval. Previous reports considered by the Council, including the report to Council on 9 December 2009, outline in detail the extensive work, including the development of evidence base, the testing of options and the public consultation and partnership working that underpins this strategy.
- 6.3 Following Council resolution, the Council submitted the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State on the 18 December 2009. The Secretary of State then appointed Sue Turner to undertake an examination into the soundness of the Core Strategy.
- 6.4 The examination comprised nine hearings over five days between 13 and 21 April 2010. These were attended by Cllr Francis, the Chief Executive, the Director of Development and Renewal as well as a number of senior managers over the course of the examination.
- 6.5 On 15 July 2010 Council received the Final Report from the Planning Inspectorate. This report found that the Core Strategy was sound subject to a number of minor amendments.
- 6.6 The Inspectors report, including all the required changes that have been made to the Core Strategy prior to adoption, are included in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 6.7 The adoption of the Core Strategy brings to an end a long and at times difficult preparation process. The radical overhaul of the planning system in 2004 was subject to some well publicised 'teething troubles', which Tower Hamlets experienced first hand in 2007.
- 6.8 The Tower Hamlets Core Strategy 2010 has now been recognised by number of bodies as an example of best practise for the country. In particular the Council has been recognised for its work on place-making, incorporating design into planning and for its collaborative working with the local strategic partnership (in particular our work on infrastructure planning and working with NHS Tower Hamlets to address issues of health and planning).
- 6.9 The production of this plan represents a truly collaborative and innovative process; across both the Council and the wider partnership. The strategic planning team would like to take this opportunity to thank officers from across the Council, key external stakeholders, the corporate management team, the Partnership, the Chief Executive, members and local people for their significant contributions that have shaped development of this plan over a number of years.

Next Steps

- 6.10 Subject to the Council resolving to adopt the Core Strategy in accordance with the recommendation of this report, the Core Strategy will become the principle plan within the Tower Hamlets Local Development Framework. This decision will be published in local press, on the Council website and all interested parties who have involved in the production of these plans will be notified of this decision.
- 6.11 Work has already started on the development of next phase of local development plan documents which will support the Core Strategy. These include: the Site and Place-making DPD, the Development Management DPD and the Fish Island Area Action Plan.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 This report seeks approval by Cabinet to submit the Core Strategy (including the Inspectors required amendments) to full Council, for adoption towards the Local Development Framework.
- 7.2 As outlined in the report to Cabinet in September 2009, the Core Strategy will underpin key decisions in relation to the allocation of the limited resources available within the Borough, and will influence the shaping of the Council's Capital Strategy.
- 7.3 The ongoing medium and long term financial planning of the Council will need to take account of the growth pressures contained within the Core Strategy. A robust monitoring process will review the reported outputs of the population change and growth model, including assessments of housing completions and their implications on infrastructure. Reports will be considered quarterly by the Council's Asset Management and Capital Strategy Board.
- 7.4 Following adoption of the Core Strategy by full Council, there will be revenue expenditure incurred in the production of the document. This will be funded through existing identified resources.

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1 The Core Strategy is adopted by a local planning authority under section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The authority may only adopt the Core Strategy if they accept the modifications to the Core Strategy suggested by the Inspector to this report as these modifications are binding on the authority.
- 8.2 The Cabinet are being asked to decide whether or not to recommend to Full Council that the Core Strategy is adopted with the required amendments.

This is because the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2005 provide that the process of preparation of development plan documents is an Executive responsibility but the formal process of submission to the Secretary of State and adoption are the responsibility of Full Council.

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Core Strategy delivers the spatial component of the Community Plan. It is the principal strategy that will deliver One Tower Hamlets through proactively planning and designing for the different places that make up Tower Hamlets.
- 9.2 The Core Strategy recognises that each place is different, and how they all have their role and function but all come together to help build an outward looking One Tower Hamlets. Through extensive consultation in conjunction with the Partnership, the quality and needs of each place have been addressed and visions have been generated to shape the future of each place in the borough.
- 9.3 Full consideration and engagement has ensured that the vision of One Tower Hamlets is embedded throughout the Core Strategy, in order to translate that vision in a spatial sense for the borough by delivering high quality places through place-making.
- 9.4 The Core Strategy is also supported by an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Equalities Impact Assessment considered impacts which are relevant for the Core Strategy as well as for development more generally. As a result the suggested mitigated activities have been embedded within the Core Strategy and will also be taken forward through the forthcoming development plan documents. This is in accordance with the Equalities Impact Assessment golden thread approach for the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment specifically recognised place-making as a vital component of this Strategy and recognised its importance in designing and developing places.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 The Core Strategy has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Directive 2001/42/EC. The Core Strategy includes strategies and policies to assist mitigate and adapt to climate change and will assist the Council to meet Ni186, which looks to reduce CO₂ emissions per capita across the borough by 60% in 2025 and contributes to meeting Ni197 for biodiversity improvements.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 A risk management matrix has been developed for this project in accordance with Corporate Policy. The key risks have been regularly discussed with the Core Strategy Steering Group and reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team. Many of the identified risks have been successfully mitigated through robust evidence base, as well as proactively engagement of partners and key stakeholders. The most significant risk relates to the ongoing changes to national planning policy and legislation and the plan making guidance, although recent changes have allowed for a greater degree of flexibility.
- 11.2 An LDF Programme Board has now been established, which is chaired by the Director of Development and Renewal, to ensure the effective implementation of the Core Strategy, through effective management of the forthcoming plans.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Core Strategy function is to best manage the physical environment such that we achieve the Community Plan theme of a Great Place to Live. The Core Strategy includes a priority of 'Creating attractive and safe streets and spaces'. Its focus on the importance of design seeks to design out crime through high quality and intelligence design solutions.
- 12.2 Officers have worked with the Borough Commander and other representatives the Tower Hamlets Borough Police throughout the development of this Strategy. The future infrastructure needs for police has also been addressed.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 13.1 Much of the evidence base prepared to inform the Core Strategy has been designed to provide both evidence for the Core Strategy, as well as informing other reports and strategies. This shared evidence includes (but is not limited to), the Town Centre Spatial Strategy, the Population Change and Growth model, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Waste Evidence Report, the Urban Structure and Characterisation report and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Where appropriate, costs have also been shared between parties.
- 13.2 One key example is Population Change and Growth model which the Partnership's Joint Intelligence Group will use to understand the nature and location of population growth across the borough and how that will impact on service provision in Tower Hamlets over time.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The Tower Hamlets Core Strategy (circulated separately to all Councillors and available for inspection at the Town Hall and on the Council’s website)

Appendix 2 – The Inspector’s Final Report on the examination into the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy (including Annexes 1,2 and 3) – attached.

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

| Brief description of “background papers” | Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection. |
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| Equalities Impact Assessment | Jennifer Richardson, x5375 |