

## **Meeting of the Council – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

### **Report of the Cabinet**

### **The Black Country Joint Core Strategy - Approval of the Joint Core Strategy for Publication**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To approve the Joint Core Strategy as a basis for consultation in the publication stage of the production of the document and to further recommend to the Council that the plan should be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. The full document is on the Council's Website, a copy is available in the Members Room and further copies can be made available to members on request to Democratic Services. (Telephone: 01384 815235).
2. To authorise the Director of the Urban Environment in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to approve any further minor amendments to the document prior to its publication and/or its submission.

#### **Background**

3. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, each Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to produce a Core Strategy as part of its Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy is to provide the strategic planning basis for all development in the Borough up to 2026 linking in with other Council Strategies and the Community Plan.
4. Following changes approved by The Secretary of State to the Regional Spatial Strategy, which included the allocation of Brierley Hill as a new Strategic Town Centre for the Borough and the approval of Dudley as a centre for Tourism and Heritage, the four Black Country Authorities have continued to work together at a more detailed level on the Joint Core Strategy. The Government have increasingly encouraged joint working between authorities in the production of such Planning Documents and this arrangement has been agreed by all four Black Country Authorities being endorsed by the Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and by Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006.
5. As part of the joint working process, the four Black Country Authorities have set up a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) made up of the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Planning from each of the four Councils. The JAG meets on a regular basis to endorse the joint approach and provide a steer for the progress of the joint working arrangements. The JAG last met on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and agreed that the Joint Core Strategy could proceed to each of the four Council Cabinets to publish the Document for consultation and Full Councils for their approval to submit the document to the Secretary of State.

6. The Joint Core Strategy will provide a more detailed planning strategy at the local level, building on the work carried out previously in the Black Country Study which was part of the first review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. For example, the Black Country Study identified that future development in the Black Country would be concentrated in a network of strategic and town centres and the corridors interlinking them. The Joint Core Strategy takes that policy approach forward and provides more detail on how much and what kind of development will go into each centre and corridor. (i.e. how much new housing, how much employment land and so on).
7. In the preparation of a Core Strategy, it is necessary to follow a required set of stages as stipulated in the legislation, all of which require community involvement and consultation. The initial stage led to the production of an 'Issues and Options' Paper which was approved by the Cabinet for consultation in June 2007. Since then, the four Black Country Authorities have prepared a 'Preferred Options' Document which was approved by the Cabinet for consultation in February 2008. Following this consultation, this final Submission Document has been prepared for publication and submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This will then be subject to an Examination in Public, probably in Summer 2010, before it is finally approved by the Secretary of State.
8. On consideration of the information in this report, the Cabinet at a Special Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 resolved to recommend the Council as set out in paragraphs 13 to 15 below.

### **Finance**

9. The joint Core Strategy itself has been, and will be produced using existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents. Whereas it is intended that any additional work arising will be funded from existing budgets, if these prove insufficient to deliver the Joint Core Strategy, Members will be notified accordingly. The Joint Advisory Group (JAG) is particularly focussing on the shared costs of the Examination in Public which is due to take place in the Summer of 2010.

### **Law**

10. The production of a Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
11. In addition, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic or environmental well-being of the area.

### **Equality Impact**

12. The joint Core Strategy will set the planning framework for the development of the Borough, as well as the rest of the Black Country up to 2026. The Core Strategy will seek to ensure that sufficient homes, shops and employment, social, educational and recreational facilities are planned and provided for in that time to meet the needs of all communities and everyone within those communities. This will include meeting the needs of children and young people seeking to provide

sufficient facilities within the Borough for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations.

**Recommendations**

13. That the Black Country Joint Core Strategy be approved in order that the document can be published and that the document be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.
14. That the Director of the Urban Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be authorised to agree any minor changes to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
15. That the Leader of the main Opposition Group, or the Opposition Spokesperson for Regeneration, be notified of any changes made in good time.



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**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**