

**Subject:** Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and Rawtenstall AAP Revised Preferred Options Report **Status:** For publication

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006

**Report of:** Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive and Linda Fisher, Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Councillor William Challinor

**Key Decision:** YES

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform cabinet members of the current situation and proposed action with regards to taking forward the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and the Rawtenstall Area Action Plan (AAP) Revised Preferred Options Report in light of recent comments received by Government Office for the North West. This is with a view to progressing both documents to submission stage as quickly and effectively as possible.
- 1.2 This report is not proposing creation of policy, but is aiming to provide clarification of the procedures with regards to progressing the Core Strategy and Rawtenstall AAP at this stage.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:
- *Delivering regeneration across the borough (economy)- Both the Core Strategy and Rawtenstall AAP have significant positive implications on the regeneration of the borough.*

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- There is a risk to the council that if the action proposed in this report is not taken, the Core Strategy and Rawtenstall AAP may be deemed as *unsound* by the Planning Inspector.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

### Background

4.1 As the Cabinet will be aware, Rossendale has a time expired local plan which was issued with a Statement of Non-Conformity by Lancashire County Council in July 2005. The Council has therefore been keen to press ahead with the new Local Development Framework system as an 'early adopter' in order to develop a portfolio of up to date planning policies as quickly as possible.

4.2 The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and Rawtenstall Revised Preferred Options Report went out to consultation during April and May 2006, with the consultation period ending on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2006. As with other Local Authorities within the north west area who are 'early adopters' of the new Local Development Framework system, comments had been received from Government Office for the North West raising some unforeseen concerns with the two reports.

4.3 Following the same approach as the other Local Authorities in a similar position, the Forward Planning Officers organised a meeting with Alan Large and Steven Fife at Government Office for the North West on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2006 to establish the best way forward in order to gain their support prior to the production of the submission stage reports.

### Options

4.4 As Government Office for the North West agreed in principle with the Forward Planning Officers and Head of Legal and Democratic Services at the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2006, the proposal is for the Forward Planning Officers to produce a combined addendum document for the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and the Rawtenstall AAP Revised Preferred Options which addresses Government Office for the North West's reservations in terms of clarifying the options open to consultation. It is then proposed that this document be published for consultation for a six week period to allow comments to be made. It should be noted that the combined addendum report will only repeat what has been produced for consultation previously; this information will be presented in a different format.

4.5 This option is proposed because:

- It is an approach that Government Office for the North West have agreed in principle with Forward Planning
- It mitigates the risk posed by not taking on board Government Office for the North West's comments
- It is considered to be the most efficient way forward in terms of meeting Government Office for the North West's requests and keeping workload to a minimum
- It is an approach which other Local Authorities have recently undertaken in order to resolve the concerns raised by Government Office for the North West.

(See attached letter from Steve Fyfe on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 which confirm these arrangements).

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

6.1 Having attended the meeting with Government Office for the North West ,the Council would be taking a risk in ignoring their request to prepare an addendum report to the Core Strategy and the Area Action Plan . Failure to prepare and consult on the addendum would result in Government Office for the North West objecting at submission stage on the grounds of soundness of our documents. By re-depositing we are reducing the risk of challenge and objection .I am aware of other Authorities in the north west who have also been advised to do the same.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

7.1

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 Due to the unforeseen circumstances with regards to comments received from Government Office For The North West on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and the Rawtenstall AAP Revised Preferred Options report, there are implications in terms of “soundness” for both reports as they currently stand. A recent meeting with Government Office for the North West has provided a proposed way forward (similar to that taken by other north west Local Authorities) which would enable the council to progress to submission stage without the need to significantly alter the Preferred Options reports.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

9.1 That Cabinet approves the decision to produce a combined addendum document for the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and Rawtenstall AAP Revised Preferred Options Report which addresses Government Office for the North West’s reservations in terms of clarifying the options open to consultation, with an aim to publish this for consultation for a six week period to allow comments to be made.

That Cabinet gives the authority to approve the combined addendum report to go out for consultation to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and the Deputy Chief Executive. This is because the document will not contain anything additional to that already approved by Cabinet, it will be in a different format. Devolving this decision will allow the consultation on the combined addendum report to take place more swiftly.

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 N/A

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Letters from Government Office For The North West dated 26 May 2006	Forward Planning Office