

Subject: Core Strategy and Evidence Base Update **Status:** For Publication

Report to: Policy Scrutiny Committee **Date:** 27th July 2010

Report of: Planning Manager

Portfolio

Holder: Regeneration

Key Decision: Yes / No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report is to inform members of the progress of the Core Strategy and provide an update of the Evidence Base studies, namely the Renewable Energy Study and the Tourism Study.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering quality Services to our customers
- Delivering regeneration across the Borough
- Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
- Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe
- Promoting the Borough
- Providing value for money services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Progress is continuing on the **Core Strategy**, one of the key development plan documents which forms part of the Local Development Framework. This document will in time replace the Saved Policies of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
- 4.2 The Council is on target to take the Core Strategy to Publication in September this year. The final version will be taken to Council on 13th September with a recommendation to proceed to Publication, which will involve a statutory six week consultation period. Representations made during the Publication stage should only be concerned with the soundness of the document. It is then intended to formally submit the Core Strategy in December to the Secretary of State for examination, with the examination likely to be in April 2011. This timetable is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme
- 4.3 Following comments made during the consultation on *The Proposed Way Forward* document late last year, revised guidance and updates to the Evidence Base, the Council undertook Additional Public Consultation in May / June this year on six amended policies and three new policies. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that key stakeholders were aware of the proposed amendments and to seek to avoid the Council receiving any unexpected objections to the policies. In total we received responses from 14 consultees. Following a presentation to a "Places Matter" panel in June a further additional policy has been drafted on Design. All policies are currently undergoing Sustainability Appraisal by independent consultants.
- 4.4 As members are aware the policies contained in the Core Strategy are supported by an extensive Evidence Base. Members were updated in February this year of the key findings of the studies and have requested an update of how the outstanding studies are progressing (namely the Renewable Energy Potential Study, the Tourism Study and the Employment Land Study).
- 4.5 The **Tourism Study** is nearing completion and a Final Draft is being considered by the Steering Group which comprises of members from Forward Planning, Regeneration and Culture, as well as Lancashire Community Developments Ltd. The study is showing that although numerically, compared to other local authority areas, Rossendale's tourism sector employment is the lowest in the North West, its percentage share of employment linked with tourism (7.1%) is actually commensurate with regional figure, though lower than the Lancashire average (8.4%) and is the second lowest of all the Pennine Lancashire authorities.
- 4.6 Potential sectors for growth have been identified: natural tourism (both passive such as enjoying the scenery as well as more active eg adrenaline sports, leisure learning); accommodation providers (especially caravan and camp sites, accommodation linked to existing attractions, and a modern hotel; local food and drink (which is already strong in the Valley and can complement the other tourism offers); and thematic business clusters, targeting specific types of visitor (to include e.g. a visitor attraction and accommodation provider etc).

- 4.7 It is intended that the Report will be finalised and placed on the Council's website in about a month or so.
- 4.8 Government Guidance in Planning Policy Statement 22 "Renewable Energy" and Supplement encourages local authorities to identify the potential for different types of renewable energy in their area. In November 2009 Rossendale together with the neighbouring authorities of Pendle (who co-ordinated the work), Burnley, Calderdale and Kirklees commissioned consultants Maslen to undertake the **Renewable Energy Study** on their behalf.
- 4.9 The Study looked at wind energy (commercial and domestic), solar, hydro, biomass, ground source heat pumps and combined heat and power as the main technologies. The consultants looked at both theoretical capacity and then a range of practical constraints to come up with figures for each District. Five detailed case studies were then undertaken to examine how this may work on actual sites
- 4.10 Project timescales envisaged completion in April but the work is still being finalised due to a number of technical and presentational concerns that the consultant has been asked to address. All the technologies can make a contribution, in particular combined heat and power schemes and solar. However, by far the greatest resource is wind power with Rossendale identified as having particular potential even when landscape constraints are taken into account.
- 4.11 Other work is being undertaken internally to make sure that the evidence base is up to date for the Publication document. In particular the five year land supply identified within the Strategic Housing Land Area Assessment (SHLAA) is being monitored to ensure it is up to date.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 This represents no change to the planned use of revenue, resources and earmarked reserves.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 No legal comments

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 No human resource implications

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Generally the studies are in the final stages and will be ready to be published on the Council's website shortly. It is not expected that any more studies will need to be commissioned from outside consultants, unless we are advised to as the Core Strategy progresses (e.g. from Government Office for the North West) or as directed to by the Planning Inspectorate. Any further information can be obtained from Anne Storah or in terms of the wind energy and renewable energy studies from Adrian Smith, both from the Forward Planning section

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 This Report is for information purposes only.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Consultation has been carried out on several of the studies as part of the *Core Strategy: The Proposed Way Forward* consultation undertaken in November / December 2009 and in May 2010. Consultation with stakeholders has also been included as part of most of the studies (e.g. the tourism consultants spoke to providers and held a workshop for key organisations (including Rossendale attractions, accommodation providers, food and drink operators, the Tourist Board etc).

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes / **No**

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes / **No**

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes / **No**

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes / **No**

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Background Papers	
Renewable Energy Study	Forward Planning Section, One Stop Shop
Rosendale Tourism Study	Forward Planning Section, One Stop Shop
Local Development Scheme	Council's website / OSS
Report to Overview and Scrutiny (February 2010)	Council's website
Additional Consultation on the Core Strategy : <i>The Proposed Way Forward</i>	Council's website / OSS