CABINET

1st February 2012

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

TAMWORTH CORE STRATEGY/LOCAL PLAN

EXEMPT INFORMATION
N/A

PURPOSE

To seek Cabinet's recommendation to Council that the Publication Draft Core Strategy be approved and published, in accordance with Regulations 27 & 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. The report also seeks authorisation for officers to make minor changes to the Publication Draft Core Strategy and carry out any necessary further consultations with key stakeholders, prior to submitting it to the Government for Public Examination, in order to ensure a sound Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1)That the Core Strategy is recommended to Council for approval for Pre-Submission Publication and following consultation on soundness for Submission to the Secretary of State , in accordance with Regulations 27 & 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (subject to recommendation (1a))

> **(a) Subject to no fundamental objections to the soundness of the Core Strategy being made during the Pre-Submission Publication Stage, the Core Strategy is approved for Submission; and**

2) Authority is delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and Development Plan Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Enterprise, to make any typographical and formatting (including the insertion of photographs) amendments to the Core Strategy prior to the Submission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Development Framework or LDF is a collection of documents which collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for an area. The key document in Tamworth's LDF is the Core Strategy, which is a Borough wide plan that identifies the key strategies and policies for its future development. Following adoption by the Council, it will replace the Tamworth Local Plan, which was adopted in 2006.

The Borough Council has been working on the Core Strategy since 2006 and has produced a number of consultation documents, including the Issues and Options in 2008, an Option report in 2009 and most recently the specific Housing Policy document during early 2011.

During this period the council has undertaken a number of consultation exercises with the communities of Tamworth, along with other stakeholders including developers, landowners, infrastructure providers to identify and agree a series of issues and options for delivering future development within the borough. This has influenced the current version-the pre-submission publication Core Strategy.

In addition to the consultation responses, the Core Strategy is required to be based on

evidence. Specialist studies and existing and developing strategies have together built a comprehensive evidence base. Throughout the production process, the Council has created and updated evidence covering a range of topics including employment land availability, strategic housing land availability and needs, linkages between the town centre and Ventura/Jolly Sailor Retail Parks, open space, water infrastructure, flooding, retail, renewables and affordable housing viability. These have been used to justify the approach taken by the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy is considered 'sound' to progress to the next stage in the regulatory process. The next stage is the Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 27). This involves publishing all the Core Strategy documentation that the Council intends to formally submit to the Government for a six week period on the Council's website, sending the documents to specified statutory bodies, depositing the documents at the council offices and libraries and writing to consultees and everyone else who has written in about the Core Strategy to inform them of the availability of the documents. The Publication Draft Core Strategy agreed by the Council should be the document that, if there were no representations to it, the Council would be happy to adopt as its finalised Core Strategy.

The six week Pre-Submission Publication period is an opportunity to comment only on the soundness of the Core Strategy. Soundness is the basis of the Local Development Framework (LDF) system and is defined as meaning that a plan must be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. It must also satisfy the legal procedural requirements and, looking to the future, conform to the government's proposed 'Duty to co-operate' requirements. Meeting these requirements will be the Planning Inspector's main consideration when examining the Core Strategy.

Once the six week Pre-Submission Publication period is completed then the comments need to be summarised as part of the submission arrangements. If any fundamental issue of soundness is identified then further consideration to the progress of the Core Strategy will be made with the advice of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). If, as anticipated, no fundamental soundness concerns are raised then the Core Strategy documentation will be formally submitted to Government during the summer.

Following formal submission an Inspector from PINS will be allocated to hold a public examination into the soundness of the Core Strategy. It is programmed that the examination will take place during Autumn 2012. Subject to the Inspector finding the Core Strategy sound then it is programmed to be adopted in February 2013 and will then be used to determine all planning applications in the borough.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
There are no financial implications arising from this report. A budget already exists for the production of the Core Strategy/Local Plan and, as part of a separate report; members will be asked to approve the creation of a Temporary Reserve to be used during 2012/2013 to ensure sufficient resources are available to cover the costs associated with finalising its production including the examination costs.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND
The statutory procedure governing the preparation and adoption of Development Plan Documents is contained in the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 and Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2008. Failing to adhere to these requirements could result in the Core Strategy being found 'unsound' at examination. This could result in previous stages of the Core Strategy's production having to be repeated.

It is critical that the procedural progress of the Core Strategy is maintained both in order to comply with the requirements of the statutory Local Development Scheme (the LDF programme plan) and the development and regeneration aspirations of the borough.

The most substantial risk identified relates to the fact that the strategy for delivering Tamworth's future growth relies on neighbouring local authorities to deliver without a formal agreement currently being in place. Officers and members have attended several

meetings with counterparts from adjoining authorities and, whilst there is agreement to explore issues, a formal agreement to meet Tamworth's needs has not yet been reached. Officers will continue to push for a formal agreement but are of the opinion that Tamworth has done all it can to secure agreement and feel that that strategy is in accordance with evidence and therefore the risk of being found unsound on this basis is reduced.

There is a considerable risk that not having an up to date Core Strategy in place, planning decisions in Tamworth will be assessed against the government's emerging National Planning Policy Framework leading to 'loss of control' over development and impinging on the Council's ability to deliver key spatial objectives.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS
The Core Strategy policies have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. This has ensured that sustainability issues are given full consideration in the preparation and adoption of refining policies. The Sustainability Report will be published alongside the Core Strategy.

A Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report was published alongside the Preferred Options document. In addition, the Housing Policies Consultation Document was also subjected to an appraisal. Further appraisal work has been undertaken during and to inform the process of finalising policies for the Publication Draft Core Strategy, so that the policies that appear in Appendix 1 have taken account of the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal.

A separate Equalities Impact Assessment will accompany the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Publication accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment. The latter will appraise the impact of delivery of Core Strategy policies on delivering borough specific health objectives.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
This is included on the following page.

REPORT AUTHOR
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
N/A

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: The Tamworth Core Strategy for Pre-Submission Publication
Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

Core Strategy Background Paper

1. Scope of Core Strategy

1.1 The Borough Council has been working on the Core Strategy since 2006 and has produced a number of consultation documents, including the Issues and Options Report in 2008, a Proposed Spatial Strategy in late 2009 and most recently, a Housing Policy Paper in 2011.

1.2 The Core Strategy sets out the basic principles and policy direction for planning and development in Tamworth up to 2028 and which will be locally distinctive. It is part of a portfolio of documents that together will form the Local Development Framework for Tamworth. It covers a range of topic areas, including housing, employment, green spaces, biodiversity, leisure and retail. It is considered that it represents the most appropriate way of achieving the spatial vision and objectives for the borough whilst delivering identified future development needs in the most appropriate and sustainable way.

1.3 The current Publication Pre-submission document represents the latest iteration of the Core Strategy and has evolved in response to consultation responses and an updated evidence base. The latter includes an updated Housing Needs Study to ascertain the number and type of housing required for the borough along with Retail Study to identify the amount of future retail floor space, an updated employment land review, Water Cycle study, Habitat Regulations Assessment and the continuing Sustainability Appraisal.

1.4 In addition, a change to the scope and content of the Core Strategy has arisen in response to government amendments to the proposed scope of Local Development Frameworks. Previous guidance recommended Local Development Frameworks to consist of a suite of documents including a Core Strategy, Site Allocations Document and a Development Management Document. The government now expects LPAs to produce one over-arching planning document-The Core Strategy/Local Plan. Consequently, the Core Strategy's remit has been broadened to include site allocations, and policies have been revised to increase their usability by development management officers.

2. Format of Core Strategy Document

2.1 The Core Strategy is divided into a number of chapters. The first of which includes a spatial portrait and vision for the borough. It sets out the key characteristics of Tamworth and identifies the key issues and challenges facing the borough that the Core Strategy seeks to address. The vision sets out the type of place Tamworth should become by 2028. It takes into account existing plans and strategies produced by both the council and its partners. The vision results in a set of 12 strategic objectives which are set out in relation to the key themes to which they relate.

2.2 The policy chapters include policies to guide how the spatial vision and strategic objectives; summarised in 4 over-arching chapters: a prosperous borough, stronger neighbourhoods, a better connected borough and improved environmental quality, will be achieved in practical terms. The spatial strategy policies set out how much development there will be, broadly where it will go, when it will take place and who will deliver it. The Core Policies contained within each theme chapter seek to deliver the vision and strategic objectives and should be interpreted within the context of the spatial strategy policies.

2.3 The Monitoring and Delivery chapter sets out how the policies will be monitored and delivered. It contains a Monitoring Framework which includes setting out a series of monitoring indicators and targets against each policy to measure their delivery. The indicators will be monitored regularly and if it is shown that targets are not being achieved then contingency measures, also set out in the framework, will be implemented.

2.4 The Core Strategy's success will depend on effective implementation of the policies. Whilst the council will play a main role in implementing the policies, through its statutory planning functions, implementation will also rely on a range of partner organisations including the Tamworth Strategic Partnership, County Council, statutory service providers, developers, Registered Social Landlords and infrastructure providers amongst others. As such, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan is included setting out what infrastructure is required, when, how it is going to be delivered and by whom.

3. Summary of Key Headlines

3.1 The revised evidence base proposes that Tamworth, through the Core Strategy, should seek to accommodate at least 5500 new dwellings, 36 hectares of employment land, 20,000sqm of office floorspace and 31,000 sqm of comparison retail floorspace up to 2028.

3.2 The proposed spatial strategy remains broadly similar to the approach set out in previous consultation versions of The Core Strategy. The one strategic housing site-the Anker Valley Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood remains albeit with an extended site boundary. The Strategic employment sites previously identified are also carried forward along with the existing network of local and neighbourhood centres. The existing green belt boundaries, together with designated biodiversity sites are retained.

3.3 Tamworth Town Centre is reinforced as the focus for new retail, leisure, tourism and cultural, office and high density residential development resulting in a number of strategic development sites being allocated to accommodate future growth. These include the Gungate proposal, Arriva Bus Station, Jewsons amonst others. This is supported by a proposed restriction on further floorspace expansion at the out of centre retail areas. In addition to new development proposed, the town centre linkage proposals are supported along with a number of environmental enhancements to the town centre.

3.4 Whilst the spatial strategy seeks to accommodate as much development within Tamworth's boundaries, not all of it is capable of being accommodated without impacting negatively on the quality of life of Tamworth's communities. The scarcity of developable land within the borough (as a result of constraints such as flood risk areas, biodiversity designated sites, greenbelt designation and a general lack of brownfield land) restricts the amount of new dwellings that Tamworth is capable of delivering within its boundary to 4500. This results in land outside the borough's boundary, to the north of the borough in Lichfield district and to the east in North Warwickshire being identified for up to 1000 dwellings; based on the Joint Infrastructure Study previously commissioned by the three authorities. An agreement is currently being sought between the 3 authorities on an agreed approach to delivering this need.

3.5 The reliance on one Greenfield strategic housing site-Anker Valley Sustainable Urban Extension has resulted in a number of sustainability related disadvantages. To overcome these; and to ensure that the borough makes the most efficient use of land, a series of regeneration priority areas are now proposed. These include The Wilnecote Regeneration Corridor; focusing on a comprehensive approach to housing and employment led regeneration and in the Post War Social Housing Estates. The latter builds on the current Locality Working initiative to support housing led regeneration within some of the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods.

3.6 With the overall goal of reducing the need to travel by locating transport generating development in sustainable locations and/or supporting a measures to encourage sustainable modes of transport, the transport policy aims to deliver priorities to tackle congestion hot spots contained within the Local Transport Plan (namely the respective Upper Gungate-Anker Valley and Ventura Park-Town Centre Transportation Packages) and junction improvements along the A5. Other key objectives relate to supporting the cycle and pedestrian cycleways across the borough and expansions to the capacity and appearance of the two railway staions.

3.7 Existing high quality open space is retained; to deliver the character of the borough as 'Urban Green'. Green and blue (rivers and canal) linkages are emphasised to both project a positive image of the town and deliver health related benefits.

3.8 Existing historic assets remain protected and a policy requiring high quality design of new development is included.

3.9 The previously proposed strategic allocation of a new leisure centre either within the east of the borough or within the town centre's leisure zone is removed as a result of uncertainties surrounding its delivery. Wording has been amended to allow a future proposal to be located in a sustainable location within the borough.

3.10   The policies are summarised as below:

Policy Description	Remit
SP1: Spatial Strategy for Tamworth	Provides a guide to how the spatial vision and strategic objectives will be achieved in practical terms. The role of the spatial strategy is to set out how much development there will be, broadly where it will go, when it will take place and who will deliver it. It emphasises the 'centres first' objective, spatial direction for delivering housing and employment needs whilst identifying key spatial priorities for infrastructure and environmental improvements.
SP2: Supporting investment in Tamworth Town Centre	Identifies strategic sites and opportunities for retail, leisure, culture/tourism & office development along with encouraging higher density residential and improved linkages within the town centre and to the out of centre retail areas. It also identifies the key gateway sites and introduces design and conservation principles.
SP3: Supporting investment in local & neighbourhood centres	Sets out guidance for achieving environmental and accessibility improvements and where applicable linked to delivering community regeneration objectives.
SP4: Sustainable economic growth	Identifies the employment land requirement along with main employment sites, and introduces a proposed two tiered approach; 'strategic sites' and 'local sites' to ensure Tamworth has sufficient capacity to serve need whilst offering a degree of flexibility over allowing future housing development in the more poorly performing local sites. The policy also sets out environmental and accessibility related improvements required to regenerate and enhance employment sites.
SP5: Housing delivery	This policy will set out the overall future housing need release of land to achieve a balanced delivery over the plan period to meet identified housing need including the criteria for achieving high quality development in sustainable locations.
SP6: Anker Valley Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood	Includes a criteria based policy for delivering the proposed strategic housing site including the housing numbers and associated infrastructure required to deliver a new sustainable neighbourhood.
SP7: Regeneration Priority Areas	Identifies Regeneration Priority Areas: Post War Social Housing areas, and the Wilnecote Corridor as a result of them demonstrating high levels of deprivation and/or a poor quality environment. Sets out a series of priorities to address in each area and commits the council and its partners to work in partnership to deliver spatial interventions to improve the physical environment and deliver social and economic renewal.
SP8: Environmental Assets	Maps green and blue infrastructure and identifies a series of priority areas and schemes and policy principles to deliver enhancements and improvements. These include improving and enhancing the network of green linear linkages across the town, and to the, canal and river network.
SP9: Sustainable	Identifies key strategic locations for transport improvements

transport	including to A5 junctions, Anker Valley Linkages, Tamworth & Wilnecote stations, cycle and pedestrian routes along with general principles for improving accessibility and sustainability.
CP1: Hierarchy of centres	Reinforces the 'centre first' approach to delivering identified future convenience and comparison retail need and defines the hierarchy of centres and sets out acceptable uses in each tier of centre. Sets out the approach to retail & leisure proposals outside of centres including floor space thresholds as a basis to undertake impact assessments. Sets out restrictions on future retail/leisure expansion at out of town retail parks.
CP2: Economic Growth & Enterprise	This policy defines the acceptable uses within the employment areas- B1 (b,c), B2 & B8.Provides detail of environmental and accessibility improvements. Promotes preferred location for offices as being the town centre and edge of centre locations and refers to identified strategic sites. Also introduces Local Development Orders as potential delivery mechanisms for strategic sites.
CP3: Supporting growth in culture & tourism	Sets out support for tourism and culture led development; in particular related to the town centre and its proposed leisure zone. Identified supporting infrastructure including hotels and accessibility improvements including to Drayton Manor
CP4: Affordable Housing	This policy will establish thresholds and the level of developer contribution towards the provision of affordable housing target.
CP5: Housing needs	The policy will establish standards for new housing development including the size and type of units, specific types based on evidence arising from the ongoing update of the Housing Needs Study.
CP6: Housing density	This will contain a banded density target for particular borough wide locations including a higher density target for centres, transport nodes and a lower target for elsewhere whilst respecting the local context
CP7: Gyosy &Traveller provision	Whilst not allocating specific sites, this policy establishes criteria for assessing applications for site proposals.
CP8: Sport & Recreation	This provides and promotes a network of high quality sport and recreation facilities across the borough to meet needs. whilst aiming to protect existing facilities..
CP9 Open Space	This seeks to protect the existing network of high quality open space across the borough and sets out criteria for assessing proposals which involve a loss of open space.
CP10: Design of new development	This policy introduces a number of principles to achieve high quality buildings and places.
CP11: Protecting historic Assets	This includes a list of principles to be considered when proposing development which impacts on the historic environment including listed buildings, Conservation Area & scheduled monuments.
CP12: Protecting and enhancing biodiversity	This aims to preserve sites and species, reinforce links between habitats and ensure appropriate consideration to development depending on status of sites i.e. national and local. It also encourages habitat restoration and creation, with emphasis on community led initiatives and list priority schemes.
CP13: Sustainable Development & Mitigating the effects of climate change	This supports measures to achieve carbon zero development including renewable energy proposals and resource management.
CP14: Water management	This policy requires new development to consider areas susceptible to fluvial and pluvial flooding including the application of SUDs and sustainable urban design
CP15: New development to be accessible by sustainable transport modes	The policy sets out priority measures for improving accessibility and linkages, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling on a borough wide basis and to/from strategic development sites. and sets out the criteria for the requirement for transport assessments and travel plans.
CP16: Providing and protecting community infrastructure	This sets out support for community facilities and infrastructure to be located in accessible locations and encourages dual use to be considered where appropriate in sustainable locations.
CP17 Infrastructure & Developer Contributions	This policy includes the key infrastructure required to deliver the strategy and introduces the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

4. The evidence base for the Core Strategy

4.1 The evidence base to date is set out below:

Southern Staffordshire Districts Housing Needs Study and SHMA Update (January 2012)
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Part 1 with Appendix A, **Appendix B**, **Appendix C**, **Appendix D1**, **Appendix D2**, **Appendix D3** (September 2011)
Tamworth Town Centre and Retail Study Part 1, **Town Centre and Retail Study Part 2 Maps** (July 2011) & **Update Addendum** (December 2011)
Town Centre Links Project to support Core Strategy and SPD (February 2011)
Green Infrastructure Background Paper (March 2010)
Staffordshire County-wide Renewable/Low Carbon Energy Study (September 2010)
Outline Water Cycle Study (July 2010), **Outline Water Cycle Study Addendum** (April 2011)
Phase 1 Surface Water Management Plan (July 2010), **Phase 1 Surface Water Management Plan Addendum** (April 2011), **Phase 2 Surface Water Management Plan** (July 2011)
Affordable Housing Viability and Policy Study (February 2010)
Offices Background Paper (December 2009)
Employment Land Review Part 1, **Review Part 2**, **Review Part 3** (August 2009)
Tamworth Infrastructure Study Part 1, **Study Part 2**, **Study Part 3**, **Study Part 4**, **Study Part 5**, **Study Part 6**, **Study Part 7**, **Study Part 8** (July 2009)
Joint Sports Strategy Part 1, **Part 2**, **Part 3** (May 2009)
Local and Neighbourhood Centres Healthcheck (2008)
Tamworth Town Centre Healthcheck (2008)
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (December 2008)
Phase 1 Habitat Survey Part 1, **Survey Part 2** (September 2008)
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Part 1, **Part 2** (February 2008)
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (February 2008)
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2008, updated in September 2009)**September 2009 update**, **north east update map**, **north west update map**, **south update map**, **climate change update map**
Employment Land Study (2008)
Open Space Position Statement (July 2007)

In addition the following pieces of evidence are currently being finalised:

Open Space Review, Habitat Regulations Assessment