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Committee: Planning

Date Of Meeting: 17th December, 2008

Title of Report: Core strategy: Spatial portraits and vision

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This report contains	Yes	No
Confidential information		✓
Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		✓
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?	✓	

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members about the issues raised by the Area Committees & parishes during the consideration of spatial portraits of each area, and to begin to think about the vision for how we want Sefton to change over the next 15 – 20 years – the Core Strategy plan period.

Recommendation(s):

That Members:

1. Note the key findings of the Area Committee discussions; and
2. Endorse the emerging vision for Sefton set out in this report.

Corporate Objective Monitoring

Corporate Objective	Impact		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1 Creating A Learning Community	✓		
2 Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3 Jobs & Prosperity	✓		
4 Improving Health & Well Being	✓		
5 Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6 Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7 Improving The Quality Of Council Services & Strengthening Local Democracy	✓		

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8	Children & Young People	√		
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Financial Implications

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
REVENUE IMPLICATIONS				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

None

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this report

Spatial portraits, reports, & minutes of the Area Committee meetings where the Core Strategy Spatial portraits were discussed.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting on 12th November, Members were asked to note the position the Planning department had reached in preparing the Core Strategy for Sefton, and to agree a slogan to help raise the profile of our work. The report stated that we had taken a 'spatial portrait' to each Area Committee, based on our analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats (a 'SWOT' analysis), which had formed the basis for discussion.
- 1.2 In this report, I have set out the key facts emerging from these discussions, and how these are helping us develop a vision for the Core Strategy, which will set out how we want Sefton to be in 15 – 20 years time. Government guidance and best practice indicates that this must be locally distinctive, as opposed to the 'mars bar' type of vision to make Sefton a great place to live work and visit, which could equally apply to many other places. Our challenge is to pick up on the key issues that make Sefton tick, and result in Sefton being different to anywhere else.

2. The spatial portraits

- 2.1 Spatial portraits have been prepared for each Area Committee area and for the 10 parishes area. These have been discussed with the Area Committees and the parishes over the past 6 – 9 months, both formally & informally.
- 2.2 A booklet containing the plans produced for each Area Committee area will be available at the Committee meeting. This also contains a plan for south Sefton, where we have identified links between many of the cross-cutting issues affecting the area, and also the broader sub-regional area.
- 2.3 We have also produced a spatial portrait plan for the whole of Sefton, where we have identified both generic themes and locally specific issues, as well as links between Sefton and its sub-regional neighbours. Full details of the profiles, including key statistics, the swot analysis for each area, an initial list of key issues and the notes of the discussions can be found at www.Sefton.gov.uk/corestrategy, or are available on CD from the Local Planning team.
- 2.4 As a result of the different character of each area and the differing demographic and socio-economic profiles, the discussions were diverse, and concentrated on what Members felt was important in their areas. There was some debate about whether it was appropriate to compare individual areas with the rest of Sefton, as this could be seen as trying to bring everywhere closer to the norm, rather than raising levels across the whole of Sefton. Our intention is the latter, and we have therefore looked at the wording we have used, to see whether we could convey this better.
- 2.5 A number of common key issues or outcomes were identified as being particularly important across the whole of Sefton. As indicated above, these included how we can continue to narrow the gap between the more deprived parts of Sefton with the more affluent areas, so that everyone benefits by living in Sefton. Other key issues included how we deal with the impact of climate change, which is particularly relevant given Sefton's coastal location and low-lying disposition. We also need to understand what we need to do to meet the needs of an ageing population taking into account population projections, which indicate that by as soon as 2014 there will be more people aged over 65 living here than there are people aged under 20. This will have a massive impact on the type of housing we need, as well as on service provision and the types of facilities that we need to provide.

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- 2.6 Two issues stood out as being critical to how Sefton evolves over the next 15 – 20 years. Firstly, as a result of the housing and employment land studies that are currently being prepared, we know that there is a limited supply of brownfield land readily available in the built up areas, and this will limit where new development can be accommodated without changing the character of our area. Through the preparation of the Core Strategy we will need to identify how we can meet the requirement set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy that we build about 10,000 new homes by 2021, as well as identifying land for new employment, services and the other elements that will make Sefton's communities sustainable.
- 2.7 Secondly, despite most of Sefton being close to train stations and / or frequent bus routes, there are real issues about accessibility to jobs and services locally (e.g. to Litherland Town Hall from much of Linacre & Derby wards), between different parts of Sefton (especially east west links), and with facilities and transport networks in the wider sub-region (access to Southport, Ormskirk, Broadgreen & Aintree hospitals from much of north & mid-Sefton, and the need for improved links from Southport to the national rail & motorway network). What can we realistically do to improve accessibility within Sefton, and help to reduce reliance on the car, and what bodies and organisations do we need to work with to improve accessibility?
- 2.8 The Area Committees also identified a number of specific objectives or outcomes relating to their areas, which reflect the specific and differing needs between the various parts of Sefton.
- 2.9 The impact of these outcomes is that they will influence the scale and type of new development that is appropriate in each area. For example, in Southport, in addition to the common themes of needing to meet housing and employment needs, key outcomes will include promoting Southport as a classic resort; providing opportunities for new retail development; and supporting the improvement of transport links between Southport and the national rail & motorway network. In the south of the Borough, we will need to ensure that the Core Strategy aligns and provides the planning framework for, and delivers the spatial elements of the various initiatives operating in the area, including HMRI, LEGI & working neighbourhoods. We will also need to ensure that an appropriate balance is retained between fostering local businesses and providing more balanced housing markets with a greater choice of housing that meets local needs, and that the role of Bootle town centre is protected and enhanced.
- 2.10 The borough-wide and area-specific outcomes are set out in Section 3 below.

3. Informing the Vision

- 3.1 Our vision for the future must be rooted in the unique opportunities and challenges arising from Sefton's geography and recent history: its inter-connections with a wider Liverpool city region, its coastal location, its distinctive towns and communities and the variety of its economic and environmental resources.
- 3.2 Sefton's geography is one of the key elements that sets Sefton apart from other places. It is markedly different as it is not based around a single town but around 5 main urban areas which are physically separated by open countryside, and there are also considerable differences in terms of socio economic and environmental factors between the north, centre and south of the Borough. Sefton is, however, united by the Sefton coast and countryside that separate and surround the key settlements.

We need to ensure that the vision addresses the needs of, and reflects our aspirations for, the different parts of Sefton.

3.3 In addition to reflecting the outcomes that we wish to achieve over the next 15 – 20 years, our vision also needs to reflect the vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is ‘to make Sefton a great place in which to live, work, learn, visit and do business’. However, this vision doesn’t have a timescale, or any means of determining whether we are succeeding in meeting the vision. It is therefore in the process of being refreshed. We are collaborating with the LSP Manager to ensure that both our Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy are based on a common ‘story of place’, and share a common vision.

3.4 As a result, our vision is that over the next 20 years we will have made changes which result in all our communities becoming better places in which to live, work, learn, relax, visit and do business, with all our people experiencing an improving quality of life – more prosperous and secure in stable communities. If we are successful we will see some significant changes by 2026, based on the following outcomes that have emerged during our discussion with the Area Committees & 10 parishes:

(i) Sefton-wide outcomes:

1. Reducing differences in prosperity, well-being & environmental quality, in order to close the gap, particularly in the more deprived parts of north & south of Sefton, so that everyone benefits from living here;
2. Increasing residential satisfaction with the safety of local neighbourhoods and the quality of local facilities;
3. Making a significant reduction in the level of worklessness in the most deprived neighbourhoods, with a consequential impact on many of the other indices of deprivation;
4. Making an increased contribution to local and sub-regional growth, including the accommodation needs of a prospering port & maritime sector without unacceptable environmental costs to the local community and to the environment;
5. Ensuring that our town and district centres are attractive and vibrant, and contain an appropriate mix of shops, services and leisure facilities to meet the needs of their local population, and can effectively compete with centres in neighbouring areas;
6. Meeting the needs of an aging population by providing appropriate housing and access to services and facilities;
7. Providing a choice of housing (including affordable housing) for existing and new households which is well-located to meet their social, family and employment needs;
8. Managing the increasing natural and human pressures on the Sefton coast so that the range of recreational and leisure opportunities it offers do not harm the diversity of its natural habitats and its regional, national & international importance;
9. Addressing the impacts of climate change by locating all significant development and designing all new development so as to minimise its environmental footprint, and to mitigate the risks arising from flooding in coastal and low-lying areas;
10. Ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided in a timely manner, to meet the needs of the area’s population, and to facilitate movement by rail & public transport;
11. Ensuring that people are able to access shops, facilities & services, and places of employment by public transport, making them accessible to all, whilst at the

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same time reducing reliance on the use of the car.

(ii) Area specific outcomes:

In Southport, (which includes Ainsdale, Birkdale & Churchtown) we will support the creation of balanced communities by:

- meeting local housing and employment needs (including the need for affordable housing), particularly as a result of the development of the Town Lane site for housing and business development;
- promoting Southport as a 'classic resort' and continuing to develop it as a high quality short break leisure destination.
- providing opportunities for retail development that provides more choice and which consolidates Southport town centre and enables it to compete effectively with centres such as Preston and Liverpool in meeting the shopping needs of the north of Sefton, and creating a better gateway into the town centre; and
- supporting the improvement of transport links between Southport and the national rail and motorway network, and improving access to the town centre.

In Formby, we will protect the unique environmental assets, particularly those associated with the coast and the unique flora and fauna and eco-systems which exist there. We will respect the limits to growth and the reduced ability to meet all local needs that this implies.

In Maghull, our key aim will be to make Maghull a more balanced community, by:

- providing more local employment, to reduce the rates of commuting out of the area;
- providing better transport links both within the local area, but also to other settlements and key facilities located in Bootle, Southport and in neighbouring areas such as Aintree Hospital;
- meeting local affordable housing needs; and
- providing a revitalised town centre.

In Crosby, (which includes Waterloo) we will seek to ensure that Crosby continues to flourish, by creating a balanced community by:

- meeting housing needs, including the need for family housing and affordable homes;
- re-building Crosby centre so that it can continue to meet local needs;
- making sure that issues such as air quality and congestion, particularly on the A565 corridor, are addressed;
- building on the economic opportunities provided by the location of Another Place (the iron men), the Observatory & the water centre, and developing this area as a hotspot to take pressure off more sensitive parts of our coast.

In south Sefton, (which includes Bootle, Litherland & Netherton), we will continue to set the planning framework for the various regeneration initiatives that impact on these areas in order to reduce the levels of deprivation that currently exist, to bring these communities nearer to the Sefton norm. We will do this by:

- ensuring that the spatial elements of initiatives such as Local Enterprise Growth Initiative, Housing Market Renewal Initiative & working neighbourhoods are aligned so that the maximum benefits are obtained for the area's residents;
- protecting and enhancing the role of Bootle town centre and other local centres and parades, so that they continue to meet the needs of south Sefton's residents and businesses;
- ensuring that local businesses can grow locally, and are not eliminated by the

demands for new housing;

- creating more balanced housing markets with a greater choice of housing that meets local needs;
- promoting improved transport links to jobs and services, in Sefton & on Merseyside;
- identifying appropriate new uses for derelict and under-used land and buildings; and
- enhancing the role of the canal in regenerating the area and as a recreational asset.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 A number of the studies that we have commissioned or are carrying out, to provide us with the background evidence that will help us make informed choices about how we can meet our future needs (set out e.g. in the Regional Spatial Strategy), are nearing completion. Some are technical and do not need to be consulted on (such as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Retail Strategy Review), but others, such as the housing and employment land availability studies have included advertising a 'call for sites' and stakeholder workshops, and will require further consultation. We will inform Planning Committee of the various studies' recommendations as each is completed. Where appropriate, consultation on the draft studies will take place early in 2009.
- 4.2 Following the completion of the main studies, we will begin the process of developing options that set out different levels of development in different parts of Sefton. These will be rigorously assessed, both through the Sustainability Appraisal process, and also as a result of wider consultation with Members and local communities, including the spatial portrait work that we have already carried out.
- 4.3 Members will recall the Steve Matthews & Ingrid Berry ran a training session for Members in November, outlining the work the Core Strategy team is doing as part of the pre-plan preparation process.
- 4.4 As we move onto the 'issues and options' stage, we intend to work closely with Planning Aid and the CVS in order to ensure that we reach as wide an audience as practical. Our proposals will need to be approved by the corporate Consultation Panel, and we will be informing Members of our proposals early in 2009. In order to ensure that we are sensitive to the differences in the various areas, we intend to hold at least one workshop to an invited audience (including Members) in each Area Committee area, as well as two drop in events in the north & south of Sefton to ascertain wider community views. These events are likely to take place in late spring / early summer, and we will update Members on the various options for accommodating the required levels of growth before we go out to formal consultation.