

# ITEM NO 9

COUNCIL

26 FEBRUARY 2013

## CHRISTCHURCH AND EAST DORSET CORE STRATEGY – SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

### 1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Purpose of Report:** To inform members of the response to consultation on the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Schedule of Proposed Changes, and to seek member approval to formally submit the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State.

**Recommendations:** It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes the responses received during the consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Changes, and approves the Submission of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy to the Secretary of State. Any minor textual amendments required subsequent to this Council meeting to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders of the Councils.

**Lead Members:** Councillor Ray Nottage, Leader Christchurch Borough Council  
Councillor Mrs Margaret Phipps, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Christchurch Borough Council.

**Contact Officer:** Judith Plumley, Head of Community & Economy.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Core Strategy is the primary document in the Local Plan, setting out the Councils' major planning strategy and policies for the period up to 2028.
- 2.2. The Core Strategy is a joint document covering Christchurch and East Dorset. A large proportion of policies within the document will apply in both areas, with others being specific to each Council.
- 2.3. The document has been through 4 significant consultation stages:
  - Issues & Options – March – May 2008
  - Options for Consideration – October 2010-January 2011
  - Pre-Submission – April – June 2012
  - Schedule of Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Document – November – December 2012
- 2.4. This represents a total of 40 weeks of consultation, including many exhibitions, roadshow events, meetings and deposit of documents at Council offices, libraries, and online.

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### **3. CONSULTATION ON THE SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED CHANGES**

- 3.1. This latest consultation was limited to a series of changes proposed to the Pre-Submission document, and took place on the advice of the Planning Inspectorate.
- 3.2. Only representations relating to a change proposed in the schedule were accepted as duly made.
- 3.3. A total of 158 people made representations on the schedule of proposed changes with around 500 individual comments received. These are set out in Appendix A, including an officer response. The main issues attracting representations were as follows:
  - Objections that the revised joint approach to housing delivery is inappropriate and results in under provision of housing.
  - Additional 100 houses on the urban extension in Christchurch not supported.
  - Objection to the deletion of the New Neighbourhood at North East Verwood.
  - Removal of reference to allotments north of the railway line at Roeshot Hill not supported as no alternative site is mentioned.
  - Comments both supporting and objecting to changes of wording to the affordable housing policies.
  - Support for Colehill being included in the affordable housing exception sites policy.
  - Objections to reduction in the renewable energy target in new developments being reduced from 15% to 10%.
  - Objections to removal of text from the Vision regarding a new community facility in Christchurch town centre.
  - Concern from English Heritage regarding development near Dudsbury Camp.

### **4. SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

- 4.1. Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Local Planning Authority to submit its Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for his or her approval.
- 4.2. The Secretary of State will appoint an Inspector to conduct an Examination into the soundness of the Core Strategy. This examination will include formal sessions where the Inspector will discuss the major issues of interest to him or her, as well as considering representations received, and possibly asking for further written statements.
- 4.3. All duly made representations at both Pre-Submission stage and to the Schedule of Proposed Changes, will be sent to the Inspector for consideration.
- 4.4. The Examination is likely to take place in the summer.
- 4.5. There is a clear message from the National Planning Policy Framework that local authorities should take a lead role, with their communities, in developing

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planning strategies for their area. Where this does not happen, or such strategies are not based on sound plans, the NPPF cautions local authorities against standing in the way of development and growth. It is important therefore to stress that there are significant benefits to completing the remaining stages of the process and having an adopted Core Strategy.

- Enabling housing and economic growth as part of a sustainable strategy, developed on robust evidence and minimising impact upon the environment.
- Having a clear plan for delivery of much needed infrastructure, and supported by a CIL charging schedule adopted in line with the Core Strategy.
- Development of well planned new neighbourhoods, and of key town centres and employment sites including Bournemouth Airport and Ferndown Industrial Estate.
- At the same time reducing the potential for a planning vacuum, which might lead to “rogue” planning applications for major development in less sustainable locations where environmental impact would be greater.
- Development of robust new policies securing better quality development through provision of affordable housing, open space, high quality design, and low carbon homes, through the development process.
- Setting a framework upon which to develop further planning documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents, and for communities to bring forward their own Neighbourhood Plans.

4.6 In formal terms, the Submitted Core Strategy comprises the Pre-Submission document from April 2012, together with the Schedule of Proposed Changes from November 2012.

4.7 In addition, the following documents are appended to this report (circulated separately):

- Appendix A – Schedule of Representations and Responses received at Schedule of Changes consultation stage.
- Appendix B – Consolidated version of the Submission document showing any text changed as part of the Schedule of Changes, and any minor typographical changes or corrections.
- Appendix C – Core Strategy Key Diagram.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS

### Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

5.1. As the Core Strategy policies cover almost all aspects of future planning and development within Christchurch and East Dorset, they impact on all the Corporate Plan themes and Council Priorities set out in the shared Corporate Plan for Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council.

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### Legal

- 5.2. The Core Strategy forms part of the statutory Development Plan, and its production is therefore a requirement of the planning acts. Submission of the document to the Secretary of State represents an important milestone in the preparation of the document.

### Environmental

- 5.3. There has been thorough assessment of the environmental impacts of the policy options contained in the Submission document, and these assessments will form part of the documentation to be approved for submission.

### Financial and Risk

- 5.4. There are no specific financial implications in this report. There will be costs associated with the Examination, including the employment of a dedicated Programme Officer. These costs can be met from existing budgets.
- 5.5. In term of risk, two matters need to be noted at this stage:
- Firstly, any further amendments to the document made at this stage are likely to require further consultation. No amendments are however proposed by officers.
  - Secondly, the Core Strategy is now well advanced and ensuring it is submitted for Examination will be the final stage in its development, hopefully leading to adoption, and therefore establishment of robust new planning policies and strategy for the next 15 years in Christchurch and East Dorset. Further changes will introduce delay and may lead to a risk of major planning applications being received in the absence of an up-to-date planning strategy for the area.

### Equalities

- 5.6 An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Core Strategy has been prepared and concludes that the policies and proposals do not have a negative impact.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Core Strategy has now completed its lengthy consultation and development stages and is now ready for Submission to the Secretary of State.
- 6.2 Duly-made representations received at Pre-Submission stage, and to the Schedule of Proposed Changes, will all be sent to the Inspector for consideration as part of the Examination.
- 6.3 Members are now invited to formally endorse the Core Strategy for Submission to the Secretary of State.

### Background Papers:

**Christchurch & East Dorset Core Strategy: Pre-Submission, April 2012.**

**Christchurch & East Dorset Core Strategy: Schedule of Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Document, November 2012.**