

# **Committee: Borough Plan Advisory Committee**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009**

Agenda item: 4

Wards: All

Subject: The Draft Core Strategy Public Consultation

Lead officer: Head of Sustainable Communities, James McGinlay

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Planning and Traffic Management; Cllr William Brierly

Forward Plan reference number: n/a

Contact officer: Valerie Mowah, Spatial Planning Policy Team

---

## **Recommendations:**

- A. To inform members on the progress of the 2009 Draft Core Strategy that is currently out for consultation and on emerging responses.
- 

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. Following Member agreement in June/July 2009, public consultation is currently underway on the Draft Core Strategy. This consultation commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> September and ends on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. This report informs members on the progress of this consultation and the next steps following on from this consultation.
- 1.2. 67 responses have been received to date including one from a statutory body (Thames Water Utilities).
- 1.3. The Greater London Authority has advised that they will be submitting a response in early November to ensure feedback given takes account of the Draft London Plan which will be published at the end of October.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. The Draft Core Strategy is subject to a six-week period of public consultation between 7th September and 16 October 2009. The Draft Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision, in the form of strategies and policies, for the development and use of land in Merton for a period of 15 years and is an essential part of the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy is the first in the suite of planning documents and together with the London Plan will be the new development plan for the London Borough of Merton.

- 2.2. The Draft Core Strategy consultation was promoted by:
- issuing a press release and a public notice in the Wimbledon Guardian (local newspaper);
  - issuing a press release on Merton's web page and having a dedicated web page to Merton's Draft Core Strategy;
  - internal communications using the netpresenter, posters (in lifts, parks, and all council owned properties), and the staff bulletin;
  - a stand in the planning foyer space at the civic centre with hard copies of the consultation document and questionnaire;
  - notification message on the Merton Connected Website.
- 2.3. Around 1,800 emails and 200 letters were sent out to notify and invite responses from the public, local community and other key stakeholders on the Draft Core Strategy. These included residents associations, friends groups, business organisations, utility companies, Statutory Bodies such as Government Office for London (GOL), Greater London Authority (GLA) and English Heritage; the neighbouring local authorities (Sutton, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Kingston and Richmond), and developers. Notification letters and emails were sent to all libraries in the borough. Hard copies of the consultation documents and questionnaire are available in all libraries.

#### Responses received so far

- 2.4. As part of this consultation exercise officers have attended 27 meetings with a number of different groups. These include residents associations, community and voluntary groups and the Green Building Council. A list of the meetings attended is located in Appendix 1. In addition officers have undertaken follow up telephone calls to approximately 30 different groups from which we have had a low response rate in the past (known as "hard to reach") to encourage responses on the consultation from all sections of the community.
- 2.5. 67 responses have been received to date. The main themes of responses include open space, nature, leisure and recreational provision; and issues concerning tall buildings, density; business growth and housing targets.

#### GLA response

- 2.6 The GLA have advised that they will be submitting a response in November after the consultation deadline to ensure feedback given takes account of the Draft London Plan, which is scheduled for consultation at the end of October.
- 2.7 Government Guidance requires that in order for Development Plan Documents, such as the Core Strategy to be considered sound they must take account of and be in conformity with the latest Regional Plan, which for London is the London Plan.
- 2.8 The forthcoming draft London Plan will be published three months after Merton's 2009 Draft Core Strategy. The GLA have advised that they will

clearly acknowledge this fact in their formal response to Merton's 2009 Draft Core Strategy.

### Next steps

- 2.8 Responses from this consultation and results from on-going research will be carefully considered and feed into preparation of Merton's Core Strategy final draft. The results and analysis of responses received will be reported to BPAC in January 2010.
- 07 January 2010: Borough Plan Advisory Panel: analysis of research, including draft London Plan, responses received and influence on final Core Strategy;
  - 25 February 2010: BPAC: final Core Strategy to submit to Secretary of State;
  - 15 March 2010: Cabinet: approval of final Core Strategy to submit to Secretary of State;
  - 24 March 2010: full Council: approval of final Core Strategy to submit to Secretary of State;
  - May 2010 (after local elections): submission of Core Strategy to Secretary of State preceded by six weeks public consultation.
  - Autumn / winter 2010: public examination of Merton's Core Strategy by an independent planning inspector
  - Spring 2011: assuming Core Strategy passes examination, it can then be adopted by Merton Council.

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Government planning legislation requires the replacement of existing development plans with a Local Development Plan (LDF). The Core Strategy is a key component of the LDF as it sets out the 15 year spatial strategy for the borough. There are alternative options around delaying production of Merton's Core Strategy. In this case, planning decisions in Merton would be made on Merton's UDP 2003 and the London Plan for longer. Delaying production of Merton's Core Strategy would impact on the production of other Local Development Framework documents, such as moreMorden Area Action Plan, which must follow from the Core Strategy..

## **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. The Core Strategy was preceded by consultation on
- Key Issues (Nov 2005 - Jan2006);
  - Options (Feb-April 2006);
  - Spatial Options (Nov 2006 – Jan 2007);
  - Preferred Options Consultation (June-July 2007).

Responses and feedback from all previous LDF consultations in conjunction with government guidance and research have fed into the preparation of this draft Core Strategy.

- 4.2. The Borough Plan Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Cabinet have been consulted at all stages in the plan making process and approval sought prior to the Draft Core Strategy public consultation.

## **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Merton's Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations sets out the requirements for Development Plan Documents. (Please also refer to para 2.8 above).

## **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are resource implications in that the small spatial planning policy team of 7 officers will need to be fully staffed to properly service this new planning policy system. In 2010/11 a public inquiry will need to be funded which could cost approximately £200,000, an issue which will need to be considered in the 2010/11 budget round.

## **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Regulation 26 of the Town and Country (Local Development [England]) Regulations 2008 requires Local Planning Authorities to consult on any proposed Development Plan DPD and to take into account any representations received before submitting the DPD to the Secretary of State for examination. Failure to comply with this requirement could render the DPD open to challenge at examination or risk being found "unsound" by the Planning Inspectorate.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. Principle objectives of Merton's draft Core Strategy includes promoting social cohesion and bridging the gap between disparate communities. Internal consultation processes have included Human Rights and Equalities inputs.

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. Merton's draft Core Strategy includes design requirements that contribute to crime reduction objectives.

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. Risks are those concerned with legal challenges and loss of grant income should the timetable set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme for the preparation of the Core Strategy not be met.

## **11 APPENDICES**

- 11.1. Appendix 1 – List of meetings attended as part of the Core Strategy consultation exercise.

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The papers use to compile this report were:

- (1) Draft Core Strategy 2009 (that was sent out for public consultation in September 2009).
- (2) 'Our Plan Our Future' Summary Document 2009– (Summary Document and Questionnaire that accompanied the Draft Core Strategy 2009)

All Ward Councillors were notified and provided with hard copies of the consultation documents and response form by post. Copies are also available in the Members Resource Room and can be viewed electronically at [http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/core\\_strategy.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/core_strategy.htm)

## **Appendix 1: Borough Plan Advisory Panel 22 October 2009**

### **Meetings attended for Core Strategy consultation Sept-Oct 2009**

17 Aug-09	Dept Communities and Local Government; Dept Energy and Climate Change (Core Strategy climate change policy)
31-Aug-09	Merton and Wimbledon Lions Summer Fair
08-Sep-09	Willow Lane BID group
	Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership
10-Sep-09	Raynes Park Association
	Wimbledon Society
14-Sep-09	Abbey Ward Multi Agency Group
17-Sep-09	Mitcham Partnership
	Connexions Centre Wimbledon (ongoing)
17-Sep-09	Merton Priory Trust AMG
21-Sep-09	MERHAG (Merton's RSLs)
22-Sep-09	Colliers Wood Community Forum
23-Sep-09	Mitcham Community Forum
24-Sep-09	Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association
28-Sep-09	Merton Youth Partnership Forum
02-Oct-09	Ethnic Minority Community Input Workshops
03-Oct-09	Longthornton Redevelopment Working Party
05-Oct-09	Environment subgroup of the Merton Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership
	Merton Park Residents Association
06-Oct-09	UK Green Building Council
07-Oct-09	Mitcham Youth Centre
08-Oct-09	INVOLVE Meeting
	Wimbledon Community Forum
13-Oct-09	Merton Priory Trust Group
	Older People's Housing Strategy Team
26-Oct-09	Sustainable Communities Housing Sub Group