

UNCOUPLING THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS – Briefing Note

1. At its Full Council meeting on Tuesday 11 July 2017 Newark & Sherwood District Council agreed a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) which set out that rather than submit both elements of the Plan Review (the Core Strategy DPD and Allocations & Development Management DPD) together the Amended Core Strategy would be submitted first. This briefing note explains this decision.

Background to the Review

2. The principal aim of this review is to ensure that the allocations and policies contained within the two DPDs continue to be appropriate, up-to-date and effective. The Inspector who examined our Allocations & Development Management DPD concluded that because the plan had been prepared during the recession that an early review should be conducted to test if the market had recovered enough to continue to deliver the various elements of the plan. Significantly since the Core Strategy was adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been adopted.
3. The first stage was the review of the evidence base which informed the production of an issues paper. The following stages of the review were then undertaken:

Consultation Stage	Consultation Period
Issues Paper	5 October 2015 to 16 November 2015
Preferred Approach Strategy	20 July 2016 to 23 September 2016
Preferred Approach Sites and Settlements and Preferred Approach Town Centre and Retail	12 January 2017 to 24 February 2017

4. Following the review of the consultation responses it was identified that the proposed Gypsy & Traveller allocation was no longer deliverable. The Council then considered what its next steps were.

Uncoupling

5. As the site was no longer deliverable this left the Council with a limited number of options, all of which have risks or negative consequences attached to them:
 - Firstly the Council could carry on and submit the plan with NUA/Ho/2 included within it as a Gypsy & Traveller site. In this instance the Plan would be found unsound as the site identified would not be deliverable, or deliverable enough to ensure that the need was met (as the Council portion could offer a limited level of provision);

- Secondly, the submission of the Plan Review could be delayed to allow further work on identifying other sites to occur. This approach is also judged to be unacceptable as the Council is seeking to have up to date housing and employment targets and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) compliant strategic policies in place as soon as possible and to allocate the strategic site at Thoresby Colliery. Delay would hamper this and put at risk the ability of the Council to manage growth effectively.
- The final option is to uncouple the Core Strategy and Allocations & Development Management elements of the Plan Review. Given that all the important and necessary elements of the Plan Review which we want to achieve are included in the Core Strategy its publication and submission by September and consideration of an Inspector by Christmas would allow the Council more time to find an appropriate site/s to address the Gypsy and Traveller need comprehensively. It should also be noted that most other allocations within the Allocations & Development Management DPD will remain broadly similar and therefore a five year housing supply could be demonstrated with the current DPD in place. Importantly the DPD is already NPPF compliant. The main risk is that the Inspector hearing our Plan Review – Amended Core Strategy Examination is not convinced by the Council’s approach.

6. Given the circumstances Officers recommended to Full Council the uncoupling approach to be the most appropriate option open to the Council. In recommending to Council that the Plan Review – Amended Core Strategy was submitted on its own Full Council resolved to act quickly and decisively to secure alternative Gypsy & Traveller site/s; so that progress could be demonstrated to the Inspector examining the Amended Core Strategy.

7. Therefore Full Council agreed on the 11 July 2017 that:

“the Council take all necessary steps to secure appropriate provision of Gypsy & Travellers sites to meet anticipated need”

This was set out in more detail in the amended Core Policy 5 which was approved at that meeting which sets out:

The District Council will, with partners, address future Gypsy, and Travellers pitch provision for the District which is consistent with the most up to date Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) though all necessary means, including:

- The allocation of new sites through the development plan;
- The granting of planning permission for pitches on new sites in line with Core Policy 5;
- The granting of planning permission for the provision of additional pitches at existing sites through further appropriate intensification of use or expansion of the site in line with Core Policy 5;

- The purchase by the Council, or partners, of new sites for additional pitches;
- Encouraging owners of underutilized sites to allow occupation of vacant pitches;
- The compulsory purchase of existing sites with the benefit of planning permission which are not in use; and

The provision of flood resilience measures to enable the safe expansion of existing sites in partnership with the Environment Agency.