

## EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report of the Director of Resources to  
Council

25 March 2021

### **Erewash Core Strategy Review – Revised Options for Growth**

#### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To authorise a public consultation on the Erewash Core Strategy Review – Revised Options for Growth.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council considers the proposals contained within this report and:
- a) Endorses the findings of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix 1 to this report.
  - b) Confirms that the findings of the Statement of Consultation do not require changes to the Sustainability Appraisal at Appendix 2 to this report.
  - c) Approves the Erewash Core Strategy Review – Revised Options for Growth at Appendix 3 to this report for public consultation.

#### 3 Information, issues and options

- 3.1 In January 2020, Council approved consultation on the Erewash Core Strategy Review (Options for Growth) for a period of 12 weeks. On 25 March 2020 the Government announced a national lockdown to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Consequently the consultation was extended to 20 July 2020.
- 3.2 The Statement of Consultation at Appendix 1 to this report summarises the responses to the consultation and the proposed Council responses to them.
- 3.3 In terms of the strategy presented in the Options for Growth, the Statement of Community Consultation considers that there is no need to use an alternative to the Government's standard methodology for calculating the Borough's housing requirement. It also notes that no alternative growth options were presented and does not consider that the sustainability ranking of the growth options should be changed. On those grounds, the conclusion of the Options for Growth that new settlements on major brownfield sites should be pursued for the long term is supported. The conclusion that four large sites in the Green Belt are required for housing, with the preference being for sites on the edge of the Nottingham and Derby conurbations, followed by sites on the edge of the Ilkeston Urban Area is also supported. No changes are therefore proposed to the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 2).

- 3.4 In terms of the proposed sites, there was very little comment on the proposals to provide new settlements of 1,000 homes each at the former Stanton Ironworks and West Hallam Depot. There was substantively more comment on the four housing sites proposed in the Green Belt namely at Lock Lane adjacent to Sawley, Acorn Way adjacent to Oakwood, north of Cotmanhay, and south-west of Kirk Hallam. The site north of Cotmanhay attracted around 80% of all responses.
- 3.5 The issues raised for all four Green Belt sites included the loss of Green Belt, countryside and impact on wildlife. These are inevitable consequences of the strategic conclusion that land in the Green Belt is required for development. The detailed assessment of all available sites concluded that those proposed had the least impact on the functions of the Green Belt. None of the proposed sites are designated for their landscape or wildlife interest. As recorded in the Statement of Consultation, the comments raised in the consultation are not considered by officers to be sufficient reasons to reject these sites in favour of other sites in the Green Belt.
- 3.6 All four Green Belt sites also raised the issue of traffic. Traffic in its own right is often a consequence of economic growth, e.g. the wealthier the economy gets, the more people tend to own cars and drive the cars they own. The Core Strategy Review process does not control primarily the amount of traffic on the roads, but it does have an influence on its distribution. It should be noted that the proposed sites were distributed around the Borough to avoid a concentration of impact in one location. Where there was a cluster of proposals, around West Hallam Depot, land south west of Kirk Hallam and the former Stanton Ironworks, these were supported by a proposed relief road for Kirk Hallam. The detailed assessment of the proposed Green Belt sites found that they all had access to the principal road network, including the B6540 Tamworth Road, the A6005 Raynesway, the A6096 Ladywood Road, and the A6007 Heanor Road. Though residents already find traffic congestion on these roads frustrating, this in itself does not constitute a reason in highways' terms to reject these sites in favour of others. For the sites north of Lock Lane and north of Cotmanhay a specific concern about an increase in traffic on residential roads was raised.
- 3.7 The insufficient supply of other infrastructure, including schools, health services and open spaces, was also raised in response to all four Green Belt proposals. Officers are in contact with the agencies responsible for the provision of these public services. To date none of these agencies have indicated what additional provision will be required. The expansion of such services is dependent on both local population demand and the finance from new development, with strategic developments being better able to provide specifically identified infrastructure needs than smaller scale development. Officers will remain engaged with the relevant agencies throughout the Core Strategy Review process to resolve these issues, but they do not at this stage constitute reasons to favour one site over another.

- 3.8 Responses to the site north of Lock Lane raised the specific issues of flood risk and contamination from land-filling. The vast majority of this land however has been raised and is above the 1:1,000 year flood risk. Building on such land-fill sites can cause technical difficulties with development, but these are not intractable and have been overcome elsewhere in the Borough. There were also concerns that this development would result in the release of pollution. While these concerns are understood officers consider that they could be overcome.
- 3.9 A more relevant consideration for the site north of Lock Lane is the access across a live freight railway line. Consultation responses have drawn attention to the increase in rail traffic on this line as a consequence of the development of the new East Midlands Gateway rail-freight facility at Castle Donnington. They have also revealed existing operational issues on the line that result in trains straddling Lock Lane and closing access for extended periods. Network Rail has not suggested a solution to this problem, and neither has one been proposed by the site promoters. In these circumstances the site cannot be relied upon to deliver much needed housing. Consequently the Revised Options for Growth does not pursue proposals to develop this land.
- 3.10 The recommendation not to pursue development on land north of Lock Lane cannot be made without considering a replacement site in the Green Belt. The consultation process has brought forward a new site for consideration. This site is on the edge of Derby City north of Spondon and is in line with the strategic hierarchy. It is bounded by Spondon Wood to the north and consequently its development would have a relatively limited impact on the Green Belt. It would also have direct access to the A6096. This site is therefore recommended as a replacement proposal for the land north of Lock Lane.
- 3.11 The consultation also brought confirmation in writing that the owner of the four fields east of Cotmanhay Wood does not wish to develop their land for housing. Consequently the Revised Options for Growth no longer pursues the development of land east of Cotmanhay Wood, leaving a smaller proposal north of Cotmanhay restricted to the four fields west of Cotmanhay Wood.
- 3.12 Replacement land for housing adjacent to the Ilkeston Urban Area was offered as part of the consultation for the proposed development south west of Kirk Hallam. This is effectively an extension to the original proposal. This would bring forward most of the land within the proposed Kirk Hallam Relief Road helping to facilitate the delivery of that road. The extension to this site is therefore recommended as replacement proposals for the land east of Cotmanhay Wood.
- 3.13 The new owners of the half of the former Stanton Ironworks site north of Lows Lane have made public their intention to develop that land for employment. Employment development is appropriate on this former employment site and leaves adequate land south of Lows Lane to deliver the 1,000 new homes proposed in the Options for Growth. Consequently the Revised Options for Growth proposes that the land at the former Stanton Iron Works

north of Lows Lane is allocated for employment and that the land to the south of Lows Lane is allocated for housing.

- 3.14 The Revised Options for Growth (Appendix 3) also suggests the inclusion of policies for employment, town centres, green infrastructure and transport in the Core Strategy Review, and asks which if any additional topics should also be addressed.

#### Options

- 3.15 The options available to Council are:

- a) To approve the Statement of Consultation and confirm the Sustainability Appraisal appended to this report, and approve consultation on the Revised Options for Growth also appended to this report. This would enable the council to rapidly progress the Core Strategy Review.
- b) To not approve the Statement of Consultation or confirm the Sustainability Appraisal appended to this report, or approve consultation on the Revised Options for Growth also appended to this report. This would not enable the council to rapidly progress the Core Strategy Review, extending the period of time the Borough is subject to the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and raising the risk of speculative development and planning by appeal.
- c) To approve an amended Statement of Consultation or Sustainability Appraisal, or approve consultation on an amended Revised Options for Growth. Any amendment to the Statement of Consultation or Sustainability Appraisal would have to be reflected as necessary in the Revised Options for Growth. Any amendments to the housing site proposals in the Revised Options for growth would need to either comply with the strategic hierarchy supported by the Sustainability Appraisal, or propose justified amendments to the strategic hierarchy.

#### 4 Risk and financial implications

- 4.1 Should the Core Strategy Review be delayed, subsequent planning appeals could result in significant costs not allowed for in the Council Budget.

#### 5 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to review the Core Strategy, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

#### 6 Personnel implications

- 6.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

#### 7 Alignment to council priorities

## Corporate Plan 2021-2023

- 7.1 The recommendation of this report would contribute towards the Corporate Plan priorities for “a welcoming borough that is clean and safe” and “planning for the future”.

### Background papers

None

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statement of Consultation March 2021

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Appraisal 2020

Appendix 3 – Core Strategy Review – Revised Options for Growth March 2021

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Note: In preparing this report due regard has been had to human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental, efficiency and health considerations as appropriate. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed or is not required. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial, personnel or property implications and comments received are reflected in the report.