

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 11 September 2012

### Councillor Williams

#### Adoption of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy

The Executive has recently considered the proposed adoption of Taunton Deane's Core Strategy as part of the statutory development plan for the district.

The Core Strategy has been prepared over a number of years and sets out a long-term strategic vision and spatial policies to guide planning decisions in Taunton Deane up to 2028.

Earlier in the year, the Government's Planning Inspector considered issues that had been raised in representations and made verbally at the hearing sessions. This included the need for any 'Main Modifications', which he considered necessary in order for the plan to be considered 'sound' and recommended for adoption. In addition, a number of further consultations had been held to address the publication of new national planning policies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy Inspector's Report was received on 3 July 2012. This report identified a number of Main Modifications which are outlined below:-

- Clarifications to Policy CP3 to define the geographical extent of town centres and the operation of the 500 m<sup>2</sup> threshold for impact assessment;
- Additional text following Policy CP4 to set out the process for advancing sites into the five-year housing land supply;
- Removal of a reference in Policy CP7 to an interim policy pending the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule;
- Amendment to Policy SP1 relating to housing allocations in minor rural centres to allow greater flexibility;
- Numerical corrections to the housing provision figures in Policies SP4 and SS1;
- Removal of the requirement for the allocation of strategic housing sites within the identified 'broad locations' (Policies SS6 and 7) to await a Core Strategy Review in 2016 and substitution of reference to allocation in the Site Allocation and Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) by 2015; and
- Re-wording of Policy SS8 (Broad location for Taunton Strategic Employment)

to provide a clear criterion-based context for site identification in a future DPD.

In addition, a new Policy (CP1) has been introduced as a main modification to ensure that the plan properly reflected the presumption in favour of sustainable development introduced in the NPPF.

The incorporation of these changes means that the Plan can be considered sound and capable of adoption. A Core Strategy document for adoption has now been prepared.

Should Members resolve not to adopt the Plan, they need to know that there would be no up-to-date development plan to provide the framework for decision-making in Taunton Deane beyond the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Taunton Deane Local Plan which the Core Strategy supersedes is technically time-expired (it ran from 1991 – 2011) although a number of its policies have been saved by Secretary of State Direction.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that the Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028, incorporating the Inspector's recommended modifications, be formally adopted.