

DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

11 July 2007

AGENDA ITEM 8

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| Subject: | A PLAN FOR SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS - DRAFT SPD |
| Report by: | DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES |

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| Purpose | |
| <p>The purpose of this report is to present to Members the draft Plan for South Woodham Ferrers, with the objective to obtain Committee followed by Cabinet authorisation for public consultation.</p> <p>After consultation and amendment, the plan will be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> | |
| Recommendation | |
| 1. | That Members approve the draft document and authorise the Director of Planning and Building Control Services to issue the Plan for South Woodham Ferrers for formal public consultation in accordance with Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. |
| 2. | That the Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to make any minor amendments that are necessary to improve the content and presentation of the document before or after public consultation. |

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| Corporate Implications | |
| Legal: | To ensure compliance with statutory Development Plan Regulations |
| Financial: | Public consultation will be undertaken within existing budgets |
| Personnel: | None |
| Risk Management: | None |
| Equalities and Diversity: | None |
| Health and Safety: | None |
| IT: | None |
| Other: | None |

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| Consultees: | CBC - Housing Services CBC - Leisure and Cultural Services CBC - Parks Services |
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| | ECC – Highways and Transportation ECC – Built Environment SWFTC - Development and Regeneration Steering Group |
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Policies and Strategies

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the Council:

Emerging Local Development Framework Documents;
 Core Strategy and Development Control Policies - Submission Development Plan Document.

The Chelmsford Borough Local Development Framework takes into account all published strategies of the Borough Council, together with the Community Plan published by The Chelmsford Partnership.

Corporate Priorities

The report relates to the following corporate priority/priorities [tick the relevant box]

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| Social Inclusion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Excellent Customer Services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Regeneration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Value for Money | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Environment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

1. The purpose of the Plan

- 1.1 The Plan is a community led initiative which provides guidance for regeneration and improvement across the town, the country park and riverside, in the town centre and around the station and industrial areas. It seeks to coordinate the various public and private agencies with an interest in the town. The draft Plan supports the policies contained within the Submission Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) relating to South Woodham Ferrers.
- 1.2 South Woodham Ferrers is the borough's second town supporting 17,000 residents and a dispersed rural population for shopping and community needs. It is defined by coastal countryside of great ecological significance. Infill development potential is very limited in the new town where brownfield sites are scarce. The town centre has stresses arising from vacant shops, car parking demand and a tired physical condition with responsibilities split between public and private land interests.

2. The plan making process

- 2.1 A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers is listed as proposed SPD in the Local Development Scheme.
- 2.2 The Plan has been prepared through a local steering group (Development and Regeneration Steering Group) supported by South Woodham Ferrers Town Council and Chelmsford Borough Council, drawing its membership from the two councils as well as business and community representatives in the town. This group acted as an effective scrutiny body for the draft document.
- 2.3 There was a successful issues and options consultation with the community in 2006.
- 2.4 The draft document was accepted by South Woodham Ferrers Town Council on 21st May 2007 and referred to the Development Policy Committee.
- 2.5 The local working group will scrutinise amendments following consultation.

3. Policy context

- 3.1 The Plan links with Core Strategy policies on spatial strategy and the town centres. It also links with Development Control Policies on shopping frontages, development quality and town centre enhancement.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy states:
- 3.3 'The Borough Council believes that there should not be any major developments within or around South Woodham Ferrers ... This recognises the major environmental and planning policy constraints which exist on much of the land adjoining the town, including the existing approved Metropolitan Green Belt and Coastal Protection Belt and land covered by national and international nature conservation designations.' (para 2.61)

3.4 'The key focus for change within South Woodham Ferrers up to 2021 will therefore be on securing improvements to the town by the redevelopment of a small number of 'brownfield' sites to provide additional housing, retail and business opportunities, and by securing environmental improvements to important public areas. To this end, the Borough Council is working in partnership with the South Woodham Ferrers Development and Regeneration Steering Group to prepare a Planning Document to guide these regeneration initiatives.' (para 2.62)

4. Relationship to Site Allocations Document

4.1 This draft document anticipates the forthcoming Site Allocations Document issues and options stage, and suggests proposals in respect of defining policy areas for protected shopping frontage and neighbourhood centre and possible site allocations for future consideration by committee.

5. Key issues

5.1 Consultation with the community and stakeholders has shown the key issues around which the Plan has been produced. These include recreation and open space, shopping choice, car parking, movement infrastructure and public realm condition. The plan sets out practical guidance on these issues and identifies the agencies that may have a part to play in achieving improvements.

6. Non-planning related issues

6.1 Some of the issues identified can only be addressed or delivered outside of the planning system. This is reflected in the separate Topic Papers which list actions which may be implemented through community initiatives and partnership working.

7. Sustainability Appraisal

7.1 An independent sustainability appraisal has been carried out on the Plan and a small number of changes will be made as a result, including:

- Reference to the Sustainable Development SPD regarding local energy sources and resource efficiency in buildings;
- Relating recreational use of river with protection of its ecology;
- Implications of certain uses on water consumption and surface water discharge;
- Farming practices in Marsh Farm to be sensitive to countryside character;
- Suggest time targets for options to car travel in school travel plans;
- Reference to the EA Roach and Crouch flood management strategy;
- Water quality of rivers and promotion of sustainable drainage added to topic papers.

A copy of the Sustainability Appraisal is available to view.

8. The next steps

8.1 Preparations are being made for formal public consultation for 6 weeks (to comply with Regulation 17) which will commence as soon as possible after Cabinet on 17 July 2007. Corrections and clarifications identified by Members will be made prior to publication. The current schedule of minor changes is attached.

9. Conclusion

9.1 A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers is now ready for formal public consultation and is recommended to Members for approval to consult.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – The draft document: A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers.

Appendix 2 – Schedule of changes to be made prior to publication.

Background Papers

Nil.