

REPORT TO: EXECUTIVE BOARD

DATE: 19th June 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - ENVIRONMENT

SUBJECT: LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL CORE
STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTIONS
REPORT

WARDS: BOROUGH WIDE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the responses submitted by Halton to the publication of Liverpool City Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options (CSPO) Report.
- 1.2 A proportion of the policy content of the CSPO Report has a direct bearing on Halton, while other sections have indirect implications. Some of this policy content required a detailed response from Halton.
- 1.3 This report includes a copy of the responses submitted by Halton BC to Liverpool City Council on 9th May 2008.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) **The content of this report is noted**
- (2) **The officers' responses already submitted to Liverpool City Council be endorsed by Executive Board as appropriate**
- (3) **The Strategic Director for Environment be authorised to send any further amendments and/or comments made by Executive Board, to Liverpool City Council.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 28th March 2008, Liverpool City Council published their CSPO Report for public consultation. The publication of this document followed informal consultation on the Issues and Options stage of Core Strategy production. Halton BC did not participate in that stage of consultation.
- 3.2 The Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy sets out Liverpool City Council's preferred planning options for its overarching spatial strategy, and represents the first formal stage of consultation on the content of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The period for consultation

on Liverpool's CSPO ran for six weeks, starting on 28th March and ending on 9th May 2008.

- 3.3 Appendix A gives the detailed representations submitted by officers to LCC before the end of the consultation period on CSPO. As there was no opportunity to present the representations to members at Executive Board for formal endorsement before the end of the consultation period, they can be confirmed, amended or withdrawn as deemed appropriate after the date of their submission to LCC.
- 3.4 Appendix A takes the form of a table, with reference to specific Preferred Options within the CSPO, and with clear representations made, accompanied by background information explaining why the issues raised are important, and how they relate to Halton. While representations were made on several policy areas throughout the document, concerns were voiced broadly in relation to three areas:

a) Employment Land Figures

The Preferred Option relating to Employment Land is unclear in a number of ways, which is problematic in assessing the content of the Preferred Option. Crucially, the evidence base document, on which the requirement for employment land has been calculated, has not been made available during the consultation period. In addition, the amount of employment land apparently required by Liverpool represents a very large proportion of the sub-regional allocation, with potential impacts on Halton.

b) Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA)

The CSPO contains policies concerning the expansion of LJLA. This includes reference to the eastern access transport corridor between LJLA and the A561 through Halton and the runway extension, also into Halton. For the avoidance of doubt, Liverpool CC is not the relevant planning authority for proposals that lie within Halton.

c) Joint Working

The CSPO contains a good deal of policy content which would have benefited from joint working with other Local Authorities, particularly where cross boundary issues prevail, or where regional/sub-regional allocations are relevant. Liverpool City Council has not been forthcoming with offers for joint working, and suggestions for future collaboration are scarce within the CSPO report.

- 3.5 Within Appendix A, mention is made of the 'tests of soundness', as laid out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. These tests of soundness are criteria that apply individually and collectively to policies in a development plan document, and must be met if the document is to be found to be sound. The tests of soundness which are directly referred to in Appendix A are:
- iv) It is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with the regional spatial

strategy for the region or, in London, the spatial development strategy and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas;

- vi) The strategies/policies/allocations in the plan are coherent and consistent within and between development plan documents prepared by the authority and by neighbouring authorities, where cross boundary issues are relevant;
- vii) The strategies/policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base;

Where concerns have been raised in Appendix A that are related to these tests of soundness, it has been assessed by officers that the content of the Liverpool CSPO is deficient in relation to these.

3.6 Within Appendix A, mention is made of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West. On 20th March 2008, the Secretary of State (SoS) published Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy “The North West Plan”, which is the latest version of the emerging RSS, and sets out the responses of the Secretary of State to the Report of the Panel (March 2007). The Report of the Panel was produced as a summary of the Examination in Public of the Submitted Draft RSS, published in January 2006. In the representations provided in Appendix A, these three documents are referred to as:

- SoS Changes to RSS (March 2008)
- Panel Report on Draft RSS (March 2007)
- Submitted Draft RSS (January 2006)

Although it is confusing to comment on Liverpool CSPO in the light of three different versions of the RSS, the CSPO was prepared with reference to the Submitted Draft RSS and the Panel Report on Draft RSS, and since the SoS Changes to RSS has now been published, it becomes appropriate for Halton to comment in the light of this document too. It is also worth noting that the emerging RSS is not yet adopted, but can be given significant weight as its preparation is nearing completion.

3.7 Halton has previously made representations on St Helens Council’s CSPO, in December 2007. It would be helpful to develop a consistent approach in responding to neighbouring authorities’ CSPOs, particularly where issues requiring a response are similar between documents. Hence, during the preparation Halton’s representations to Liverpool’s CSPO, a view has been taken of the responses to St. Helens’ CSPO report.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 As explained above and in Appendix A, the issue of employment land has policy implications for Halton. The outcome of the consultation on Liverpool’s CSPO and ultimately the amount of employment land

Liverpool require in their adopted Core Strategy, could impact on the quantity of employment land available to be claimed by Halton in the Halton Core Strategy. This is due to the fact that employment land is allocated on a sub-regional basis by the RSS, rather than sub-divided by local authority: hence, Halton, Liverpool, and four other Merseyside authorities need to sub-divide the RSS allocation between themselves. Halton are tackling this problem by undertaking a Joint Employment Land and Premises Study with Sefton, Knowsley and West Lancashire Councils. Liverpool City Council has declined offers of joint working, despite the process being heavily recommended by the RSS. Halton's joint Study will try to address this issue of a lack of joint working, and suggest ways to overcome the problem of individual local authority's claims on the sub-regional employment land allocation. In the meantime however, it is legitimate for Halton to voice concerns over Liverpool's approach.

- 4.2 LJLA is a major cross-boundary policy issue for Liverpool and Halton. The way in which the operation and expansion of the Airport is dealt with in the respective Councils' Local Development Frameworks is important for the successful implementation of the Airport Master Plan.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

No other implications are envisaged.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

N/A

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

If Liverpool City Council are successful in their apparent aim to incorporate a large amount of additional employment land into their adopted Core Strategy, it would have implications for Halton's take of the RSS allocated sub-regional employment land. This is particularly important when St. Helens have already stated in their CSPO that they require a large quantity of additional employment land. Despite the confusion around these proposed allocations, as explained in Appendix B, a serious concern exists that if both Liverpool and St. Helens take a large proportion of the sub-regional allocation of employment land, Halton will be left with a very small amount. The consultants conducting the Halton's Joint Employment Land and Premises Study are dealing with this issue.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

See implications given in section 6.2 in relation to Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No legal or financial risks to the Council can be identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Liverpool City Council Core Strategy Preferred Options Report | Rutland House | Neil MacFarlane |
| Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy "The North West Plan" | Rutland House | Neil MacFarlane |
| Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks | Rutland House | Neil MacFarlane |
| Liverpool John Lennon Airport Master Plan | Rutland House | Neil MacFarlane |