
Report to
Cabinet
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

19 December 2006
10 January 2007

Report of
Chief Executive

Title
Developing the City Council's Vision

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to reaffirm the City Council's vision for Coventry; to consult on amending the council's corporate objectives; and to develop and deliver the council's vision through the development of the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework in consultation with local organisations and communities. The report also sets out the regional and sub-regional context within which the council is currently working to deliver the council's vision for Coventry.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the council's vision for *"Coventry to be a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and businesses choose to invest"*
2. Consult on the proposed amendments to the council's corporate objectives to reflect the council's priorities about the city centre and climate change as set out in paragraph 3.5:
3. Develop and deliver the council's vision for *"Coventry to be a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and businesses choose to invest"* through the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework;
4. Note the current activity being undertaken by the council at local, sub-regional, regional levels and with central government, to deliver the council's vision for Coventry.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The council's vision and corporate objectives have been developed through consultation with local people and partners and were adopted by Council in June 2005. The council's vision is for *"Coventry to be a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and businesses choose to invest"*. To realise this vision the council has

identified a set of seven corporate objectives that it aims to achieve and these are set out in the council's three year Corporate Plan. The corporate objectives are:

- To improve the quality and efficiency of services and make it easier to access them
- To ensure the best quality education for all and that children and young people can achieve their maximum potential
- To regenerate the city and ensure people have a good choice of jobs and housing
- To promote health, independence and choice for all citizens
- To create a city where people feel safe and confident and no-one is disadvantaged by the neighbourhood in which they live
- To make the city clean and green
- To actively promote equality so that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities

3.2 Management and review of the council's performance is based on a balanced scorecard that includes a set of corporate management objectives that recognise that the council needs to have a sound financial base, effective processes and trained and knowledgeable elected members and employees if the council is to achieve its vision and corporate objectives. The council's Corporate Plan includes performance measures and targets for each corporate objective and for the supporting management objectives.

3.3 The Corporate Plan is reported on to Cabinet formally twice a year and a separate report on the first six months of 2006/07, and the good progress that is being made, is being considered by Cabinet at this meeting. Coventry City Council is now rated by the Audit Commission as a "three star" local authority, that is "improving well".

3.4 The council's vision for Coventry has informed the council's policy development and decision-making process since it was adopted in June 2005 and will continue to do so. It is not proposed to change the vision. However, to enable the council to respond to national and regional policy planning processes, and to be better able to forward plan for the longer term, it is important the council and the city develops a more detailed understanding about the future growth of the city. This wider articulation of the council's vision needs to be developed with local organisations and local people and will give further clarity to future decision-making. It is proposed that this work should be done as part of the development of the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. This provides the council with the opportunity to articulate the vision and develop policies to deliver it over the next 20 years. This is addressed in further detail in section 4 below.

3.5 Each year the council consults with local organisations on its current performance and priorities to inform budget decisions and the annual review and revision of the council's Corporate Plan, agreed by Council in June each year. Initial work within the council on reviewing the council's corporate objectives has indicated that the council should consider making additions to include two key priorities that might not be considered sufficiently covered by the current wording –the need to ensure the transformation of the city centre and climate change.

3.6 Improving the city centre is a key priority for the council and for local people. The importance of the city centre to the future growth of the city is set out in section 4 below. The council signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change on 23 October this year and has made a commitment to take action to tackle climate change in two ways: to address how we will reduce our carbon emissions (mitigation), and to prepare for the impacts of climate change (adaptation). A council strategy on climate change is being developed and supplementary planning guidance on sustainability is being considered by

Planning Committee and should be adopted in Spring 2007. Work has started on a number of projects aimed at improving energy efficiency as part of the council's programme of Value for Money reviews.

3.7 It is proposed that the suggested amendments (in italics) are considered as part of the public consultation due to take place in January 2007:

- Regenerate the city and ensure that people have a good choice of jobs and housing and *transform the city centre*
- To make the city clean and green and *work to tackle climate change*

3.8 The revised Corporate Plan, including any proposed amendments to the council's corporate objectives will be taken to Cabinet and Council in June 2007. The council will also need to review its Management Objectives to ensure that the organisation remains "fit for purpose" and is able to deliver the council's vision and corporate objectives efficiently and effectively. This is likely to include an increased emphasis on maintaining a good level of performance whilst addressing areas of high cost.

4 Developing the Vision for Coventry – the Local Development Framework

4.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the portfolio of documents that will make up the spatial planning documents for the city. The LDF will gradually replace the Coventry Development Plan as the main planning document for Coventry and will carry forward spatial and planning policies for the next 20 years. The council is currently in the process of producing the Core Strategy which provides the over-arching strategy for the LDF and must consider the shape and role of the city in 2026 relative to surrounding areas such as Birmingham, the sub region and also to the major growth areas in and around Milton Keynes.

4.2 A well-attended visioning event was held with the Coventry Partnership in January 2006 that looked at where we wanted the city to be and what type of city we would like Coventry to be beyond 2011. There were some clear messages from this consultation event – people at the meeting wanted: a vibrant city; a better city centre; a solid economic base; to encourage more affluent people to live in the city and to encourage students to stay along with the incubator businesses that can come from concentration of 2 universities. This was pulled together into a number of statements about Coventry "as a premier city at the leading edge of sustainability, design, equality and diversity" which is:

- Proud of its image and heritage,
- At the heart of its sub-region,
- Well connected and growing,
- Expanding, has a diverse city centre, consists of safe and vibrant communities,
- Where everybody has access to a mix of jobs and housing, in a high quality, built, green and healthy environment.

4.3 An "*Issues and Options*" document was produced in May 2006 and used as the basis for an initial round of public consultation. That document focused on the issue of the scale of growth but despite considerable publicity relatively few responses were received. A further consultation period on the Core Strategy will take place beginning in January 2007 on the options to be considered. Following from this in summer of 2007 the council's preferred option will be developed and the core strategy will be submitted to the government for examination in 2008.

- 4.4 When adopted in 2009, the LDF Core Strategy will set out how the long-term vision for Coventry can be delivered, particularly through physical development and use of land. Two key features of the new planning system introduced in 2004 are: engagement with the local community in developing policies; and the Core Strategy's role as a mechanism for delivery of the local authority's vision.
- 4.5 It is important that the Core Strategy document reflects the long-term priorities of the city. It is being developed with the Coventry Partnership to sit alongside the Coventry Community Plan – which also informs the council's Corporate Plan. The recently issued Local Government White Paper outlines proposals to make the LDF Core Strategy become a formal part of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (the Community Plan).
- 4.6 The role of the Core Strategy is to define how the Council's vision can be achieved through spatial and strategic planning. Ultimately the level of growth to be planned for in Coventry will be determined by the Regional Spatial Strategy (set out in further detail in paragraph 5.2) and the policies of the LDF are required to be consistent with this and national guidance. The choices that will be considered will therefore focus on how to ensure that people will want to live and work and be educated in the city and that businesses will want to invest in the city and will need to address key quality of life issues for local people currently living in the city and to both attract and retain people in Coventry.
- 4.7 The Core Strategy will need to address the qualities and characteristics of Coventry that should be protected and enhanced and the underlying principles that should be established in pursuing growth. The strategy will need to embrace and continue current planning policies that protect many green spaces in the city including the Coundon Wedge and Sowe Valley, premier parks and many areas of nature conservation value that are important to the people of Coventry and protect the city's heritage through designation of conservation areas.
- 4.8 To plan for growth strategically in Coventry, a north-south growth corridor has already been established in planning policies and within this corridor there are many significant developments already planned. The economy of the UK is changing and Coventry is also changing with significantly less reliance on manufacturing than in past decades. There are many challenges in predicting how much employment land to plan for and where it should be located and how transport links should connect it in a sustainable manner. Some obsolete factory sites, for example, may not be suitable for new employment uses but may be well located to provide new housing areas. The role of the city centre as the focus of the city and its success is crucial to the growth agenda and choices will be required to determine the balance of land uses. The city centre is crucial to the growth agenda and improving the attractiveness of the city as a location that people choose to live work and be educated in and for businesses to invest in and choices will be required to determine the balance of land uses. The role of the City Centre as a shopping centre is key to this and further research needs to be undertaken to determine what changes need to be made to the City Centre to improve its performance as a major shopping centre destination in the region.
- 4.9 The challenge for the Core Strategy will be to provide policies that will ensure a quality city and to predict what scale of growth the city can accommodate based on sound evidence, striking a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives. This includes considering the potential impact of growth upon all the council's services – for example a growing city may require more schools and leisure facilities; changing demographics may result in changes of need for social care; and more households will require refuse and recycling collections.

5 The Wider Growth Agenda

- 5.1 Coventry's LDF will be produced within the context of the government's national planning policy and, in particular, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which will set out minimum levels of growth for each area of the region that individual local authorities are obliged to plan for.
- 5.2 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is currently being reviewed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, and the formal consultation process on the Phase Two revision will take place between 8 January and 15 March 2007 and covers the following issues – housing; employment; strategic centres; offices; regional casinos; waste; and transport and accessibility. The RSS review will directly impact upon Coventry's own LDF and the city's plans for growth. In particular the revision of the RSS will consider a range of options for the provision of additional households in the West Midlands for the period 2001-2026 which for Coventry currently range from option 1 -19,000 dwellings; option 2 - 24,400 dwellings; to option 3 - 44,000 dwellings.
- 5.3 Coventry has just been chosen as one of the government's New Growth Points. This gives Coventry a target to provide 24,000 new dwellings by 2026 a growth target that is very similar to option 2 proposed in the RSS review - with an interim target of 9,000 dwellings for the period 2001-2016. Initial capacity studies indicate that this level growth can be accommodated but the council has been awarded £250,000 for studies to establish more precise growth figures and as a growth point, Coventry has the potential to be awarded more major funding to address environmental; transport and infrastructure issues (subject to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007). These studies will also inform the final decisions on the Core Strategy

6 Working in Partnership to deliver the vision for growth

- 6.1 The City Council needs to work in partnership if it is to be successful in delivering its vision for the city. As set out above the council is working closely with the Coventry Partnership to develop a shared long-term vision of growth set out in the Core Strategy through the Local Development Framework process. The consultation process for the LDF is extensive and inclusive – involving a wide range of organisations and communities in Coventry and the wider sub-region and this is set out in the council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 6.2 The City Council is also working closely with other local authorities and organisations at a sub-regional level to deliver the vision for growth and choice. The council has been working with other local authorities as part of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Forum on developing a sub-regional response to the Regional Spatial Strategy and joint representations have been made to the West Midlands Regional Assembly on the Phase 2 Review. As a member of the West Midlands Regional Assembly the council will also be involved in the development of the RSS with central government.
- 6.3 As a partner of Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP), the City Council works and plans at a sub-regional level on a range of economic development and regeneration issues. A number of the council's key partners organisations cover the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region including the Connexions service; JobCentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council. The West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is currently being reviewed and the council is working with a range of organisations including CSWP to respond to the consultation on the strategy being undertaken by Advantage West Midlands (the Regional Development Agency).

6.4 As a further means of promoting Coventry's interests and the council's vision, the council is also currently involved in the development of the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region – a voluntary partnership that is aiming to build on the existing co-operation between the local authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell, Solihull, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton along with regional partners – the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, Learning and Skills Council - and the business community. Focused on delivering growth and prosperity, the city region would work at a strategic level to achieve four key outcomes by 2020:

- Connecting employment and prosperity - high levels of investment by existing, and new national and international businesses and increasing numbers of people in work
- Connecting people with opportunities – a workforce with the right skills for individuals and businesses to succeed in the modern economy
- Connecting the city region – an environmentally sustainable transport system and services that connect people, businesses, towns and cities with opportunities to succeed and prosper in the modern economy;
- Creating a better quality of life – an attractive and popular place in which to live, work and relax, with a growing population.

6.5 The city region approach would be for the partners to develop a number of joint investment plans which would set out how the partners would work together to deliver shared objectives – initially on skills and employment; transport and inward investment. The city region would also aim to take into account environmental sustainability and aim to reduce carbon emissions in its plans. A further report on the proposals for the development of the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region will be taken to Cabinet in the New Year.

7 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

7.1 This report sets out proposals to develop and articulate the council's vision through the development of Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. It also proposes that the council consults on suggested amendments to the council's corporate objectives.

7.2 There are no other options to be considered.

8 Other specific implications

8.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Neighbourhood Management		
Best Value		
Children and Young People		
Comparable Benchmark Data		
Corporate Parenting		
Coventry Community Plan		
Crime and Disorder		
Equal Opportunities		

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Finance		
Health and Safety		
Human Resources		
Human Rights Act		
Impact on Partner Organisations		
Information and Communications Technology		
Legal Implications		
Property Implications		
Race Equality Scheme		
Risk Management		
Sustainable Development		
Trade Union Consultation		
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		

8.2 Developing the vision and the future growth of Coventry has implications for all the council's activities. Trade Unions will be consulted as part of the council's annual consultation on the council's priorities and budget setting process. The development of the council's Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework will meet the council's obligations under planning legislation.

9 Monitoring

9.1 Progress in developing and delivering the council's vision will be reported Corporate formally to Cabinet twice a year through the council's performance management of the Corporate Plan and in the annual performance report to Council and through the Local Development Framework process.

10 Timescale and expected outcomes

10.1 These have been identified in the body of the report.

	Yes	No
Key Decision		√
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)	Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 10 January 2007	
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)		√

List of background papers

Proper officer: Chief Executive

Author: Telephone 024 7683 3741
Jenni Venn, Policy and Performance Manager, Chief Executive's Department
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:

Richard Brankowski – Legal and Democratic Services, ext 3077

Chris Hinde – Legal and Democratic Services ext 3020

Paul Jennings – Finance and ICT, ext 3753

Jasbir Bilen – Human Resources, Chief Executive's Directorate, 3277

Lesley Wroe – City Development, ext 1225

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location

None