Rochdale Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation on Issues and Options

INITIAL SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE SIX SPATIAL OPTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 'Sustainable development' is defined as development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The principles and priorities for sustainable development are now established by the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future', and it is important that the key decisions and activities, plans and strategies of Rochdale Council align with these principles and priorities. In order to ensure this is the case, a 'Sustainability Appraisal' process takes place, whereby the proposed plan or strategy is assessed against a range of key objectives which have been developed locally and which align with the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

1.2 In this case, an initial Sustainability Appraisal of the six Spatial Options outlined in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report has been carried out. This exercise been undertaken by a panel of Council Officers with responsibilities in the areas of sustainability and economic and environmental affairs (none of the panel were involved in the preparation of the options). They have taken a professional judgement of the likely impacts of the options. The assessment has been made the assumption that all of the 'development options' identified in each of the Spatial Options will be realised, i.e. that all potential sites are developed; this may not be the case in reality.

1.3 This initial sustainability appraisal has been undertaken to provide a broad overview of the sustainability or otherwise of the options. Once a 'preferred option' is selected, a more detailed Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out and there will also be appraisal of preferred policy approaches and development sites proposed by the Council and others.

1.4 The options themselves have not been altered as a result of the findings of this initial sustainability appraisal, but these findings have been used to inform the Issues and Options document, in particular the descriptions of key advantages / disadvantages for each option have been amended to align better with the findings, and the descriptions of the impacts of each option have also been amended.

2. INITIAL SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF 6 SPATIAL OPTIONS

Explanation: The Appraisal objectives derive from the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and are aligned with the Borough Community Strategy: Pride of Place.

For more details of the Spatial Options, please see the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report.

The comments represent a summary of the panel discussion.

Key:

	Excellent: makes a close to optimal contribution to the objective
	Good: makes a significant direct contribution to the objective
	Fair: makes some direct or significant indirect contribution to the objective
	Weak: makes a minor, indirect contribution to the objective and is a missed opportunity
	Poor: does not contribute to the objective and is a missed opportunity
	Undermining: has potential to significantly undermine the objective
	N/A

Appraisal Objectives	Spatial Options						Summary of panel conclusions
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Better access to healthcare services, reducing health inequalities, promoting health and well-being throughout the borough's neighbourhoods and communities	yellow	light green	pale yellow	orange	orange	orange	Increased traffic generation and loss of green space of higher growth options may have negative health impacts.
Increasing sport and leisure activities and greater access to the countryside and other open spaces to help promote healthier lifestyles	yellow	light green	red	red	red	red	The higher growth options result in pressure for the development of greenfield sites and also some loss of countryside.
Improving lifelong education and training, enabling people of all ages to acquire knowledge and skills	light green	light green	light green	light green	light green	light green	Initiatives in respect of this objective are already taking place, especially in regeneration areas, and these initiatives are likely to remain in place for all the options
Supporting and retaining the borough's local businesses, promoting a competitive and dynamic business environment, providing local people with more and better paid jobs	pale yellow	orange	light green	light green	light green	dark green	Low growth options may result in businesses in regeneration areas being displaced by housing. The higher growth options, on the other hand, provide new employment development opportunities.
Redeveloping the borough's town centres, attracting new retail investment to the primary shopping areas	light green	light green	light green	yellow	yellow	red	Options 1 to 3 include initiatives in respect of town centres, and whilst options 4 to 6 do also, they could potentially encourage out-of-centre retail which could damage the viability of town centres.
Achieving a locally and nationally well-connected transport system, particularly in terms of public transport	pale yellow	pale yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	orange	Although options 3 to 5 have advantages over 1 and 2, such as the promotion of East Lancs railway, new roads could be negative in terms of this objective and option 6 is likely to lead to increased traffic problems.
Conserving and enhancing the Borough's diverse built and natural heritage	pale yellow	pale yellow	yellow	orange	orange	red	The higher growth options, with loss of green space, could have a very negative impact.
Raising the profile of Rochdale within the North West region, attracting more investment and opportunities for local people	pale yellow	yellow	light green	light green	light green	orange	Higher growth options can be good for the Borough's profile, however option 6 could lead to a more negative image because of the visual and environmental impact of less restrained development
Further reducing crime and the fear of crime	white	light green	light green	light green	light green	yellow	The options that focus on regeneration perform well against this objective, with regeneration initiatives tackling this subject. However, option 6 has less focus on regeneration.
Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and habitats and providing opportunities for new habitat creation	yellow	yellow	orange	red	red	red	There are some initiatives in connection with regeneration programmes. Higher growth options, however, mean loss of green space / countryside and negative impacts on habitats / biodiversity.

Objective	Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3	Opt 4	Opt 5	Opt 6	Commentary
Ensuring a reduced impact upon the local and global environment; reducing pollution and waste and saving energy and water to within empirically tested environmental limits	Red	Light Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Red	All the options could have a negative impact unless policies address these issues. Increased land take and traffic generation of the higher growth options meant they scored particularly badly.
Tackling climate change through reducing local carbon dioxide emissions and energy use, contributing to national and regional targets related to mitigation	Yellow	Green	Light Yellow	Light Yellow	Orange	Red	Option 2, with its focus on regeneration, was felt to align with the high regeneration standards in this area as well as minimising increased traffic. Growth options involving new roads were felt to have a negative impact on this objective.
Achieving effective climate change adaptation	Yellow	Green	Light Yellow	Light Yellow	Orange	Red	Increased land take up can increase the urban heat island and greenfield development leads to increased run-off. Option 6 potentially allows development on flood plains.
Ensuring that flood risk is minimised	Light Yellow	Orange	Light Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red	Some regeneration initiatives are in flood areas, and this potential problem needs to be addressed. With the higher growth options, increased run-off is an issues and their was particular concern in respect of the British Vita site.
Protecting or improving inland waters	Light Yellow	Yellow	Light Yellow	Yellow	Light Yellow	Orange	None of the options were felt to have significant benefits for this objective, and this needs to be picked up at further stages. Higher growth options, with increased land take, could cause flood pulses.
Reducing the need to travel and promoting walking, cycling and public transport	Light Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Regeneration areas are generally close to public transport and some of the possible development areas are also. It was felt that much depended on the details of implementation, although option 6 was likely to lead to residential areas some distance from employment.
Creating decent, warm, safe and secure houses cutting energy use, with choice of location, size and tenure	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Yellow	Light Yellow	Light Yellow	Whilst it was felt that regeneration initiatives were improving the situation in respect of this objective, it was felt that the higher growth options might impact negatively on accessibility, and therefore choice, of locations for some groups.
Ensuring that the future development of the Borough benefits all sectors of the community and all ethnic groups	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Yellow	Whilst regeneration initiatives, to some extent, seek to benefit some sectors of the community, it was felt that more needed to be done. Growth points in higher growth options appear to be focused on less diverse areas.
Ensuring sustainable communities by improving the local environment	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Policies will need to ensure that opportunities are taken in regeneration areas. Option 6 might be particularly negative as there will inevitably be less focus on regeneration areas.