

### Guidance for the Development Strategy Task Force

#### 1. Term of Reference:

The Development Strategy Task Force is responsible for considering all non-strategic matters in relation to the Local Development Framework, Housing Strategy and Local Transport Plan policy preparation.

##### 1.1 The remit of the Task Force will include:

- a. **Local Development Framework for the North (former Mid Beds) area** - to oversee the production of draft Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This will include considering detailed policy and strategy wording, the allocation of specific sites using criteria agreed by Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, relevant supporting technical reports, draft consultation documents prior to consultation and responses to consultation documents.
- b. **Local Development Framework for the South (former South Beds) area** – to consider issues raised in consultation documents and to consider all Joint Planning Committee (JPC) Member Steering Group reports prior to their presentation to the JPC.
- c. **Local Transport Plan** – to consider the detailed wording of strategy and policy documents and draft consultation documents prior to consultation and to agree formal responses to consultations.
- d. **Housing Strategy** - to consider the detailed wording of strategy and policy documents and draft consultation documents prior to consultation and to agree formal responses to consultations.
- e. **Council Response to consultations** – to consider all non-strategic consultation documents that have a lesser impact on Central Bedfordshire

##### 1.2 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will maintain responsibility for considering all strategic matters in relation to the Local Development Framework, Housing Strategy and Local Transport Plan policy preparation. **Annex A** sets out guidance on those matters that are considered 'strategic' and 'non-strategic'.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item is strategic or non-strategic this will be agreed by the Chair of the Sustainable Communities OSC in consultation with officers and the Chairman of the Task Force.

## **2. Membership of the Development Strategy Task Force:**

- 2.1 The Membership of the Task Force will be agreed by the Chair of the Task Force and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Membership of the Task Force for 2009 – 10 shall be as follows:
- Councillor Snelling (Chairman)
  - Councillors Aldis, Birt, Gale, Gammons, Johnstone, Kane, C Turner and Williams
- 2.2 Named substitutes have been permitted for the Task Force, during 2009 – 10 they are Councillors A Graham, Barker and Brown.
- 2.3 Training will be arranged for Members on matters relating to the work of the task force prior to the commencement of meetings and as required during the year. All task force Members are strongly encouraged to attend all training in relation to task force matters that is provided.
- 2.4 The work programme for this Task Force is expected to be onerous, both in volume and complexity. In inviting Councillors to be members of this Task Force, the Chairman of OSC was explicit about the workload involved in carrying out this function. Membership of the Task Force is dependent on a willingness to undertake the considerable preparation and full contribution to the work of the Task Force. Should Members feel unable or unwilling to play a full part in that work, the Chair of the Task Force and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider making an alternative appointment.

## **3. Working Principles for the Task Force:**

- 3.1 The task force will invite guidance from the relevant portfolio holder(s) at every meeting but will not be bound by the advice they are given.
- 3.2 The task force should be responsive in order to provide advice in a timely manner, it should be able to reach rapid outcomes in light of the evidence received in meetings.
- 3.3 Outcomes reached by the task force should be formal and robust in order to provide definitive advice to officers and the portfolio holder(s).
- 3.4 Members will be required to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in regard to the business to be transacted by the task force and take appropriate action with regard to that interest. Guidance on what constitutes a personal or prejudicial interest will be provided to Members.
- 3.5 The working principles of the task force may be amended by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.

## **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 Agendas and reports will normally be distributed to Members of the task force at least 5 clear working days before the meeting.
- 4.2 Meetings will be held monthly, approximately three weeks prior to each meeting of the Sustainable Communities OSC, to ensure effective and timely input to meetings of the Sustainable Communities OSC, the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee and any other bodies as necessary. The Group should anticipate meeting on a monthly basis but on occasion will be required to meet more frequently to ensure that milestones are met. Additional meetings will be agreed by the Chair of the Development Strategy Task Force and a timetable of meetings and items for discussion will be maintained, which will be reported to the Sustainable Communities OSC on a regular basis. A draft schedule of meetings and agenda items will be maintained by the Task Force.
- 4.3 It is important that the task force be able to provide advice to the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee in a timely manner so that considerations can be taken into account in the decisions the Committee makes. In developing the work programme for the task force the work programme of the Joint Committee will be taken into account.

## **5. Reporting and Progress**

- 5.1 Four-monthly reports on progress and the work programme of the task force will be presented to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information purposes. The work programmes will be agreed as far in advance as possible but officers will be able to amend the work programme of the task force in consultation with the Chair of the Sustainable Communities OSC and the Chair of the task force.
- 5.2 All recommendations agreed by the task force with regard to the Gypsy and Traveller sites will subsequently be considered by the Sustainable Communities OSC.
- 5.3 All recommendations agreed by the task force that are considered to be controversial, by which Members feel there is substantial public interest in the matter which merits discussion in public session, will be received by the OSC to ensure full public scrutiny of important decisions.

## **6. Elected Member and Public Involvement**

- 6.1 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Constitution any elected Member will be permitted to attend meetings but will only be permitted to speak at the discretion of the Chairman. It is anticipated that the relevant Portfolio Holder will be invited to attend each meeting of the Development Strategy Task Force.
- 6.2 Meetings will not normally be held in public but the Chair of the task force will have discretion to ask people to attend to give evidence on

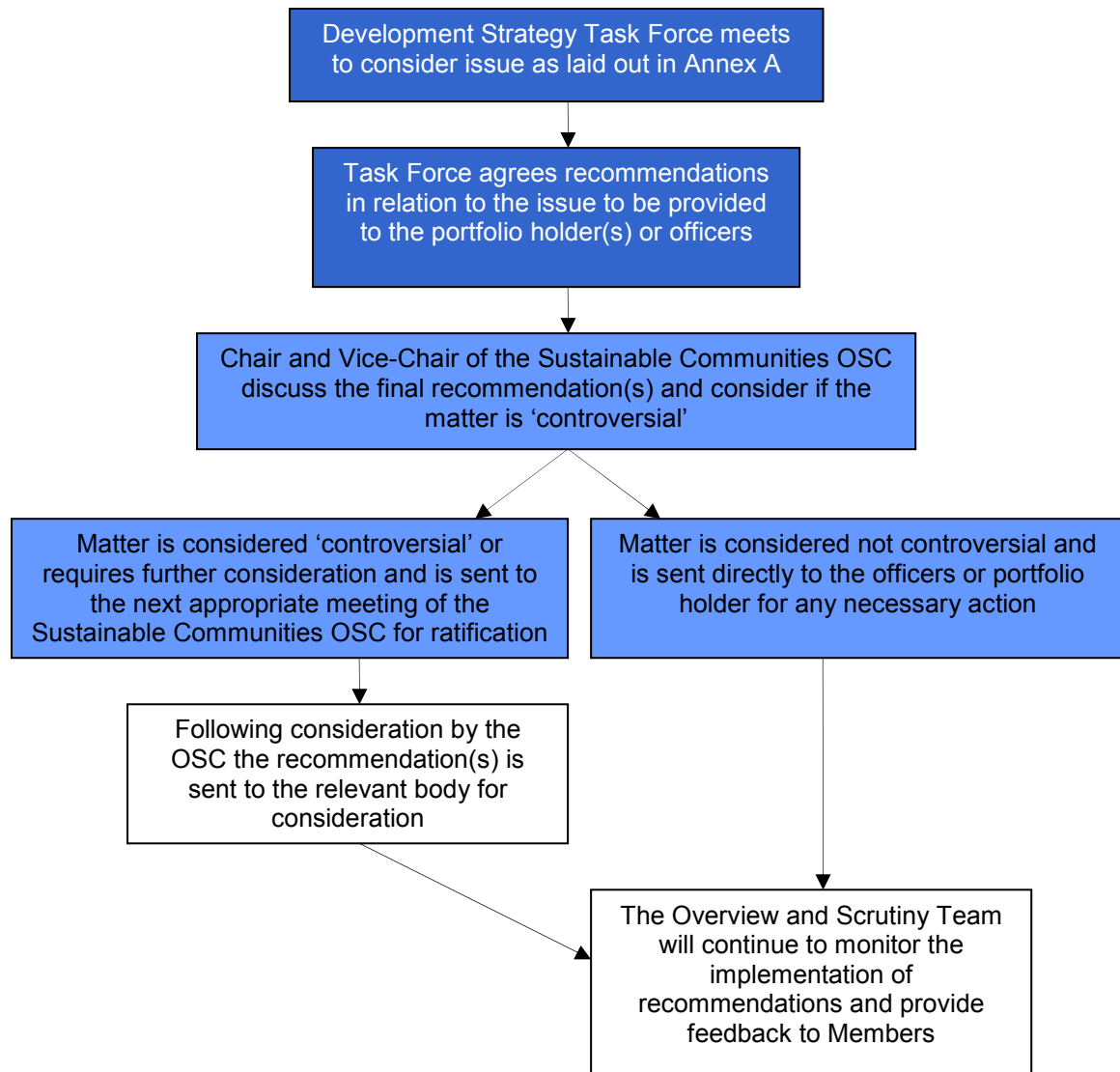
issues at meetings where he considers this might be helpful. Agendas, reports and notes of the task force meetings will usually be published within 10 working days following the meeting except where they are considered confidential or exempt under the Council's Constitution (Part G2). Where the Chairman of the Task Force feels it is appropriate the Chairman of a relevant Town or Parish Council will be invited to attend the meeting to provide evidence on behalf of residents within their area.

- 6.3 Those items that are considered to be controversial (*see section 7*) will be submitted to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. Members of the public will have an opportunity to comment on proposals and recommendations agreed by the task force if those proposals are subsequently agreed to be brought to the Sustainable Communities OSC. In some cases items will not be presented to the OSC but will be submitted to the Executive prior to a decision being taken. Meetings of the Executive are held in public unless there is such reason that they should be held in private.

A further guidance document on public involvement and communication will be approved by the Task Force.

## **7. How will the Task Force agree Recommendations?**

- 7.1 The task force will have powers to make recommendations to officers or the portfolio holder as it deems necessary. Where recommendations are made by the task force the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Communities OSC will be responsible for agreeing these recommendations in consultation with the Chair of the Task Force. If the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Communities OSC deem that the issue to which the recommendation refers is controversial or requires further consideration those recommendations will be provided to the Sustainable Communities OSC as laid out in figure 1.
- 7.2 A standing item will be placed on the agenda of each Sustainable Communities OSC agenda to enable the receipt of any recommendations from the task force as required.
- 7.3 If the issue to which the recommendation refers is not considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Sustainable Communities OSC to be controversial the recommendation will be sent directly to the relevant person or body for which it is intended. A record of these recommendations will be maintained for information and circulated to Members of the Sustainable Communities OSC.



**Figure 1: Process for agreeing Recommendations of the Development Strategy Task Force**

**Appendices:**

**Annex A:** A guide to strategic and non-strategic items

**Annex A – schedule of ‘strategic’ and ‘non strategic’ business for OSC and Task Force**

Example project	Strategic issues (for OSC)	Non-strategic issues (for Task Force)
<b>Site Allocations DPD (for former Mid Beds area)</b>	Approval of site selection criteria and sign off of final draft submission DPD prior to consideration by Executive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of site selection criteria and selection of sites.</li> <li>• Consideration of detailed wording of draft consultation documents and agreement for consultation.</li> <li>• Consideration of formal response to consultation documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Gypsy and Traveller DPD (for former Mid Beds area)</b>	Approval of site selection criteria and sign off of final draft submission DPD prior to consideration by Executive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of site selection criteria and selection of sites</li> <li>• Consideration of detailed wording of draft consultation documents and agreement for consultation.</li> <li>• Consideration of formal response to consultation documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Strategy</b> or other policy document <b>(for former Mid Beds area)</b>	Consideration of headlines/key themes emerging from consultation, “direction of travel” reports and sign off of final draft submission DPD prior to consideration by Executive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of detailed policy and strategy wording</li> <li>• Consideration of detailed wording of draft consultation documents and agreement for consultation.</li> <li>• Consideration of formal response to consultation documents.</li> </ul>

<b>Supplementary Planning Documents</b>	Consideration of scope of SPD, broad objectives and overall approach, 'direction of travel' etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of detailed SPD wording prior to consultation</li> <li>• Consideration of consultation responses and sign off of draft final SPD prior to consideration by Executive.</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Reports</b> e.g. landscape studies, employment land studies	None	Consideration of technical reports
<b>Council's response to consultations</b> e.g. regional planning and transport consultations	Consideration of consultation documents for key strategic issues for Central Bedfordshire e.g. review of the East of England Plan etc	Consideration of non-strategic consultation documents that have a lesser impact on Central Bedfordshire but that still warrant a Council response e.g. East West Rail, regional transport consultations from Highways Agency etc.
<b>Local Development Scheme</b> (the timetable for producing LDF documents)	Consideration of overall timetable for LDF production and potential new DPDs (would require Executive approval following OSC)	None
<b>Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (covering the former South Beds area) produced by the Joint Planning Committee</b>	Consideration of all DPD documents published for formal consultation prior to consideration by Executive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-consideration of issues raised in the consultation DPD documents prior to formal consideration by OSC.</li> <li>• Consideration of reports to Joint Planning Committee Member Steering Group (MSG) prior to their formal presentation to Joint Planning Committee.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Local Transport Plan</b></p>	<p>Consideration of headlines/key themes emerging from consultation, “direction of travel” reports and sign off of final draft LTP prior to consideration by Executive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of detailed policy and strategy wording</li> <li>• Consideration of detailed wording of draft consultation documents and agreement for consultation.</li> <li>• Consideration of formal response to consultation documents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supplementary Local Transport Plan documents/strategies &amp; action plans</b></p>	<p>Consideration of scope of supplementary LTP strategies prior to commencement, setting broad objectives and overall approach, ‘direction of travel’ etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of detailed document wording prior to consultation</li> <li>• Consideration of consultation responses and sign off of draft final document prior to consideration by Executive.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing Strategy</b></p>	<p>Consideration of headlines/key themes emerging from consultation, “direction of travel” reports and sign off of final draft Strategy prior to consideration by Executive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of detailed policy and strategy wording</li> <li>• Consideration of detailed wording of draft consultation documents and agreement for consultation.</li> <li>• Consideration of formal response to consultation documents.</li> </ul>