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**Report to:** Planning Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 24<sup>th</sup> August 2011

**Subject:** Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation

**Report of:** Alan Young

**Wards Affected:** All

**Is this a Key Decision?** No

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No

**Exempt/Confidential**

No

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### **Purpose/Summary**

To inform Members of the Knowsley MBC Core Strategy 'Preferred Options' consultation, which closes on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

### **Recommendation(s)**

That Members note the key points of the Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation.

That Members endorse Sefton Council's draft response to the consultation.

### **How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?**

	<b><u>Corporate Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Positive Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Impact</u></b>
1	Creating a Learning Community		X	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		X	
3	Environmental Sustainability		X	
4	Health and Well-Being		X	
5	Children and Young People		X	
6	Creating Safe Communities		X	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		X	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		X	

**Reasons for the Recommendation:**

For Sefton to acknowledge and respond to Knowsley's Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

No cost implications

**Implications:**

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Human Resources</b>		
<b>Equality</b>		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Impact on Service Delivery:**

None

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT has no comments on this report because the issues raised have no financial implications for the Council (FD950). The Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 266/11) have also been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

**Are there any other options available for consideration?**

No

## **Implementation Date for the Decision**

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet/Cabinet Member Meeting

**Contact Officer:** Tom Hatfield  
**Tel:** (0151) 934 3555  
**Email:** tom.hatfield@sefton.gov.uk

## **Background Papers:**

The following papers are available for inspection by contacting the above officer(s).

*Knowsley Core Strategy Preferred Options Report June 2011*

## **1. Introduction / Background**

- 1.1 Knowsley Council are currently consulting on 'Preferred Options' for its Core Strategy. This report provides a summary of the key points, and outlines Sefton's draft consultation response for Member endorsement.
- 1.2 Knowsley are slightly ahead of Sefton in producing its Core Strategy. Sefton are currently consulting on Core Strategy 'Options' and will progress to a 'Preferred Options' consultation some time next year.
- 1.3 Many of the planning issues faced by Knowsley are not dissimilar to those in Sefton. Knowsley has experienced a historically declining population, undergone major regeneration initiatives, and is facing a potential shortfall of 'brownfield' development land in the medium term. However, Knowsley is very different to Sefton in a number of important respects, and the approach taken there would not necessarily be appropriate for Sefton.
- 1.4 Many of the studies that have informed Knowsley's Core Strategy have been carried out to a common methodology with studies carried out in Sefton. The following planning studies have been either jointly produced by Sefton and Knowsley or carried out to a broadly common methodology:
  - Green Belt Study (common methodology)
  - Joint Employment Land & Premises Study (jointly commissioned)
  - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (common methodology)
  - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (jointly commissioned)
  - Merseyside Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study (jointly commissioned alongside the other Merseyside authorities)
- 1.5 As a neighbouring authority Sefton are a statutory consultee to Knowsley's Core Strategy. Our response will be taken into account in preparing a revised Core Strategy for publication / submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

## **2. Summary of key Issues**

- 2.1 This section of the report provide a summary of the key topics that are covered in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, including:
  - Approach to land for housing
  - Approach to land for economic development
  - Approach to land in Green Belt
  - Proposals for Kirkby Town Centre

- Development sites adjacent to Sefton

#### Approach to land for housing

- 2.2 Knowsley's annual housing target is currently set by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West. The RSS targets Knowsley to deliver an average of 450 homes per annum (Sefton's target is 500 per annum). Whilst the Coalition Government has stated its intention to revoke the RSS through the Localism Bill, Knowsley are proposing to retain the housing target of 450 homes per annum as part of its Core Strategy. Retention of this target is justified against recent evidence in a 'Housing Technical Paper' which they have published alongside the main consultation documents. Importantly, this amount of housing could not all be accommodated within the existing urban area of Knowsley.
- 2.3 A key part of Knowsley's approach is to continue the regeneration of deprived areas, including Tower Hill (Kirkby), North Huyton. This will involve demolition and re-build schemes similar to those that have taken place in Bootle in recent years.
- 2.4 'Population retention' and meeting development needs in the Borough are key issues that are identified. Additionally, the need to meet affordable housing and specialist housing needs are also emphasised.

#### Approach to land for economic development

- 2.5 Knowsley have identified a need for 216.5 ha of land for 'employment' uses (offices, industry, etc). This is based on the findings of the Joint Employment Land & Premises Study, which was jointly commissioned with Sefton, Halton, and West Lancashire Councils. Importantly, this level of development would involve the identification of development sites in the Green Belt.

#### Approach to Green Belt

- 2.6 The amount of housing and economic development proposed in Knowsley's Core Strategy Preferred Options would require a significant amount of land being taken out of Green Belt. In addition to land required to meet housing and business needs, Knowsley have also identified further 'safeguarded' Green Belt land that could come forward for development in the longer term (beyond 2027). This is justified on the basis that it would make the Green Belt boundary more durable in the long-term, and allow for flexibility if certain sites could not be delivered.
- 2.7 The impact of Knowsley's proposals on Green Belt is summarised in the table below:

	<b>Amount of Green Belt land required to 2027</b>	<b>Additional land identified in Green Belt</b>	<b>Total Green Belt land identified for development</b>
<b>Land for homes</b>	2,884 homes	2,996 homes	5,880 homes
<b>Land for economic devt.</b>	65 hectares	94 hectares	159 hectares

### Proposals for Kirkby Town Centre

- 2.8 Members may recall that Sefton objected to a planning application in 2008 that would have significantly enlarged Kirkby Town centre, linked to the relocation of Everton Football Club to Kirkby. At the time, this proposal was resisted because of concerns about significant detrimental impacts on Bootle Town Centre (we had no objection to the stadium). The application was subsequently refused planning permission by the Secretary of State following a major called in public enquiry.
- 2.9 The Knowsley Preferred Options Report identifies Kirkby Town Centre as a 'Principle Regeneration Area'. It envisages the expansion of the town centre including the provision of a new superstore. These proposals however would be significantly smaller than those proposed in 2008. Importantly, they would not have a significantly detrimental impact on Bootle Town centre at this scale.

### Development sites adjacent to Sefton

- 2.10 One of the Green Belt sites proposed for development is located next to the Sefton boundary. This is the former golf driving range off Bank Lane, Kirkby, which is earmarked for 190 homes. Whilst the site is located directly adjacent to Molyneux ward, its development would have only a very limited impact upon residents or traffic in Sefton. A plan of this site can be viewed at Appendix 1.

## **3. Sefton's Response to the Consultation**

- 3.1 Sefton is a very different Borough from Knowsley, and the approach adopted in Knowsley is therefore not necessarily appropriate for Sefton. Knowsley is one of the most deprived Boroughs in the country, and the aspirations for growth and development set out in the Core Strategy can be seen in this context.
- 3.2 None of the proposed development sites in Knowsley would be likely to have a major detrimental impact on residents or businesses in Sefton. The proposed expansion of Kirkby Town Centre is much more modest than the development proposals that were rejected at a Public Enquiry in 2008, and would not have a major detrimental impact on Bootle Town Centre. Similarly, the proposed housing development site at Bank Lane, Kirkby, would have only a very limited impact on Sefton residents.
- 3.3 In summary, it is suggested that Sefton therefore endorses the Core Strategy Preferred Options as being the right approach for Knowsley. It is based on sound

planning principles and will help to deliver the aspirations of the Borough over the next 15 – 20 years.

Appendix 1 – Former golf driving range off Bank Lane

