

*Welcome to the sixth issue of the Sedgemoor Local Development Framework Newsletter. This issue provides an update on the situation with the Local Development Framework and our new timetable for the Core Strategy since the changes to the planning system recently announced by the government.*

## *What does the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy mean for Sedgemoor's Core Strategy?*

As the key document in the Local Development Framework, the Core Strategy sets out the main development priorities for the District, including the amount and distribution of new housing and major commercial development. The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) means that the Core Strategy will be slightly delayed and we will not be consulting on the draft plan in July as previously stated.

One of the roles of the RSS was to allocate housing and employment numbers to the districts: in the latest draft version of the South West RSS, Sedgemoor was allocated 10,200 new homes, 7,700 of which were to be at Bridgwater. The District was to also provide for 7,500 jobs. After listening to feedback from the public during the Preferred Option consultation, the Council were intending that the Draft Core Strategy would increase the amount of housing growth in the rural areas above that envisaged in the RSS, whilst keeping the Bridgwater housing figure at RSS levels. However the spatial strategy taken as a whole was still broadly in accordance with the levels of growth set out in the RSS.

It may be that these figures are still appropriate for Sedgemoor or the recession may mean that lower numbers are more appropriate. We need to review the evidence in order to ascertain how many houses and jobs the Core Strategy should provide for, without relying on the RSS to tell us. The Council have therefore commissioned an update of the RSS evidence. This will involve updating the population and economic forecasts that the original study was based on. In reviewing housing and employment figures regard will also be had to what other key evidence has told us, including the aspirations and objectives of the Bridgwater Vision, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Economic Masterplan.

We hope to have a report on the new figures in time to update the Draft Core Strategy for the Council's

## **HOT NEWS**

### **REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGIES REVOKED.**

The government has recently written to all local planning authorities confirming that Regional Spatial Strategies have been revoked and will no longer form part of the development plan. This clearly has some significant implications for the Local Development Framework and particularly the Core Strategy (see box opposite), although local authorities have been advised to continue to bring them forward as speedily as possible.

### **NORTH EAST BRIDGWATER GIVEN GREEN**

**LIGHT.** The urban extension at North East Bridgwater has been given outline planning permission by the Council. Over £11 million Kickstart funding has been awarded by the Government to help provide up to 260 new affordable homes and essential infrastructure as part of the development.

### **HINKLEY STAGE 2 CONSULTATION BEGINS.**

EDF have published their Preferred Proposals for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point together with associated development, much of which would be in Sedgemoor. The consultation runs until 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010. More information is available on the EDF website at [www.edfconsultation.info](http://www.edfconsultation.info)

Executive on the 11<sup>th</sup> August. Following the Executive meeting the Core Strategy will be reported to Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> September and published for consultation for an 8 week period from 27<sup>th</sup> September. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of January next year with Examination likely between April and May. This represents a two month delay from our previously stated programme as a result of the RSS issue (an updated timetable is overleaf).

**Other changes to the Core Strategy** as a result of the revocation of the RSS are relatively minor.

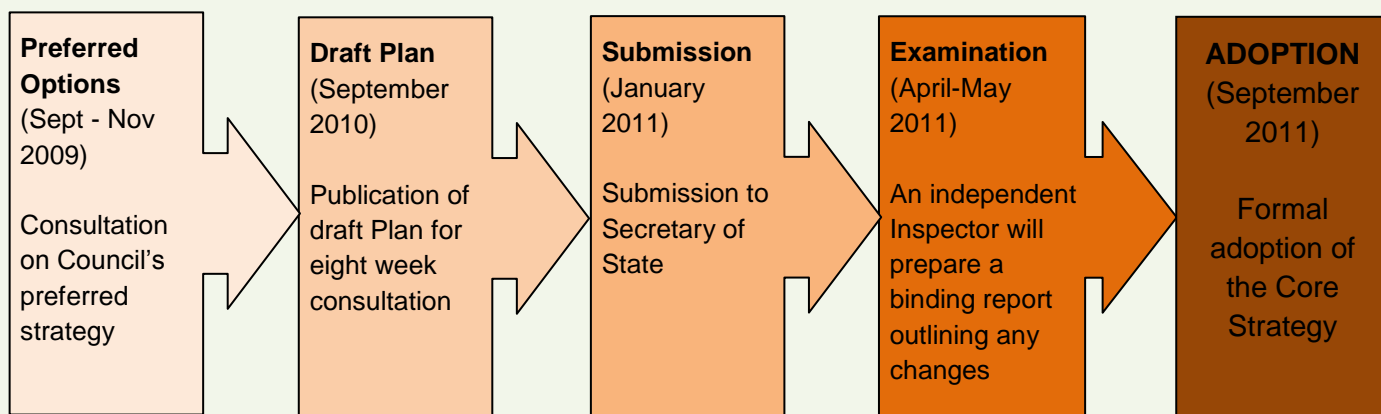
Sections on **climate change and renewable energy** will need some modification since RSS targets have been used. Given that national targets are similar or more ambitious, however, policies are unlikely to be affected.

**Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs** were set out in the RSS, and Local Authorities were expected to provide the prescribed number of pitches. Sedgemoor has already met the RSS targets, and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is due to provide an update on need this autumn. Core Strategy policy acknowledges that the GTAA may indicate further need for pitches and any future allocations will depend on this and on the criteria set out in the Core Strategy. This policy is therefore unlikely to change.

**Other points of clarification** since the government's announcement:

- Planning Policy Statements remain in force (apart from PPS11: Regional Spatial Strategies) although references to RSS are invalid;
- The development plan now consists of the following: adopted Development Plan Documents (e.g. the Core Strategy), saved policies and old style plans that have not lapsed;
- The RSS evidence base is still relevant to the preparation of the LDF and to planning decisions, where it can be justified;
- Local Planning Authorities are now responsible for determining housing targets and still need to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply;

### The updated Core Strategy Timetable



### Finding out more

Please use our website to keep in touch with what is happening.

**[www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf)**

South West Planning Aid provides free, independent advice on planning matters to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. To find out more go to [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)  
Or to find out more about planning generally, go to [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

### Not on our List?

Would you like to receive this newsletter and other information about the LDF regularly? Please let us know if you would like to be on our consultation database – our contact details are opposite.

### Prefer email?

It is more efficient and environmentally friendly to send this newsletter out by email if we can. So please let us have your email address if we don't already.

### Change of address?

Don't forget to let us know if your address or email address changes so that we can keep our database up-to-date.

### Contact us

For any queries not answered on the website, please contact us:

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