Wyre Forest District
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy Examination

District Council’s response to the
Inland Waterways Association
Representation

22nd June 2010
Question received from the Inspector:

Could the Council give a considered response to the three alleged document deficiencies identified in IWA/Mr Welch's composite Representations letter of 17 February.

Background
The representation received from Inland Waterways Association IWA (17th February) identified three alleged document deficiencies, these were:

1. Water Framework Directive (EU) as developed into the River Severn Basin Management Plan (EA)
2. Waterways for Tomorrow (ODPM 2000) – as updated in Waterways for Everyone (DEFRA 2010 – draft)
3. River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan (EA)

The full representation made by the IWA can be viewed at Appendix 1

The Council have provided a response to each of the above matters in turn below.

1. Water Framework Directive (EU) as developed into the River Severn Basin Management Plan (EA)

1.1 Paragraph 6.17 of the Core Strategy identifies the main policy drivers for considering water resources within the District, this specifically references the Water Framework Directive and its objectives; to improve the ecological health and prevent further deterioration of the whole water environment; promote the sustainable use of water; and reduce water pollution.

1.2 Policy CP02 has built on these requirements as it requires new developments to conserve and enhance the ecological value of the water environment, implement the use of SUDS and improve their water efficiency. The Policy therefore proposes a 'step-change' to water use for new developments and it is considered that CP02 has taken full account of the aims and objectives set out within the Water Framework Directive.

1.3 The Policy has also been developed having regard to the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the River Severn (Paragraph 6.19). The RBMP seeks to achieve the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment along the River Severn. It is considered that CP02 complements and reflects this approach via a number of measures, specifically through ensuring new development conserves and enhances the ecological value of the water environment.
Overall, the Council considers that Policy CP02 has been shaped and informed by the documents in question and it is considered that the extra level of detail provided by this policy will help to deliver on the aims and objectives included within both the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan at the local level.

2. Waterways for Tomorrow (ODPM 2000) – as updated in Waterways for Everyone (DEFRA 2010 – draft)

2.1 Although not specifically referenced within the text of the Core Strategy the Council considers that the proposals identified within the document are in conformity with the objectives of Waterways for Tomorrow (ODPM, 2000)

2.2 Waterways for Tomorrow seeks to promote the role of inland waterways, encouraging a modern, integrated and sustainable approach to their use. The Government wants to see the waterways maintained and developed in a sustainable way so that they fulfil their social, economic and environmental potential. Some of the key policy areas for meeting this aim are identified as:

- Leisure, recreation, tourism and sport
- Heritage, the natural environment and education
- Regeneration
- Transport

2.3 The Council considers that the Core Strategy, through various measures has sought to build on the aims and policy areas for the Inland Waterways as identified by Waterways for Tomorrow. The importance of the waterways within the District is specifically recognised by CP16: Regenerating the Rivers and Canal. This Core Policy identifies the importance of these features as:

- Tourist attractions;
- Sustainable transport corridors;
- Recreation assets;
- Regeneration opportunities; and
- Green Infrastructure Links

2.4 There are additional references to the role of the waterways within other Core Policies. This includes reference in CP09: Sustainable Tourism which outlines that the strategy is to support the tourism industry through “Encouraging developments, projects and initiatives that assist in promoting the waterways as a tourist attraction.” There is also additional reference to the potential opportunities that the inland waterways present for sustainable transport, referenced in Paragraph 8.52.

2.5 Taking into account the above information, the Council considers that it has actively sought to build on the ideals included within the Waterways for Tomorrow Document. The inland waterways within the District are
seen as a key feature to conserve and enhance through the plan period. The commitment to this is underlined through the inclusion of a Strategic Policy within the Plan to specifically cover the District’s Waterways (CP16).

2.6 The updated version of the guidance, Waterways for Everyone (2010) is currently in draft form and has undergone public consultation during the first few months of 2010. Given that the document has only recently been published and the fact that it is in draft form the Council considers it difficult to use this document to shape the policies included in the Core Strategy. However, the objectives included within this document are similar to the previous manifestation of the document. These include the importance of the waterways for:

- Place making and shaping
- The Natural Environment
- Climate Change
- Health, well-being, recreation and sport
- Sustainable transport
- Tourism

2.7 As has been evidenced above, the Core Strategy includes policies which seek to deliver on all of the above areas, indicating the value of the Waterways within the District.

2.8 Overall, the Council considers that the Core Strategy has taken account of the aims and objectives included within these two documents through various measures included in the Core Strategy. This is particularly evident in CP16: Regenerating the Rivers and Canal.

3. River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan (EA)

3.1 Policy CP02: Water Management, has also been developed having regard to the River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) as identified at Paragraph 6.19 of the Core Strategy.

3.2 The CFMP for the River Severn identifies appropriate policies for addressing flood risk along this river corridor. The District Level Strategic Flood Risk Assessments provide more localised information for considering flood risk and these have been undertaken having regard to the CFMP and in partnership with the Environment Agency. By taking this approach, the Council considers that flood risk has been adequately catered for and CP02 provides the local policy approach to deal with the flood risk issues.

3.3 Policy CP02 identifies the importance of addressing flood risk within the District and the Council considers this will complement the information and objectives included within the CFMP.
Dear Sirs

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act - 2004

Thank you for notifying IWA of and inviting comment on, your consultation regarding the publication version of the Council's draft Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is a registered charity, founded in 1946, which advocates the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways for the public benefit; it also manages the Celmer & Blackwater Navigation through its subsidiary Essex Waterways Ltd. IWA around 18,000 members whose interests include boating, towpath walking, industrial archaeology, nature conservation and many other activities associated with the inland waterways of this country. This letter forms the Association's response to the Planning Application and is written by its West Midlands Region, for its Birmingham, Black Country and Worcestershire Branch that forms part of the Region, on behalf of its ruling Board of Trustees

Generally IWA considers the document to be as well written and clear. However it still appears to have ignored two mandatory planning documents, one being a EU Directive, and also failed to accredit (but may have considered the policy) another Government planning document. These are (in the same order): -

1. Water Framework Directive (EU) as developed into the River Severn Basin Management Plan (EA)
2. Waterways for Tomorrow (ODPM 2000) – as updated in Waterways for Everyone (DEFRA 2010 – draft)
3. River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan (EA)
As before we can of course only comment on issues that are within our remit and offer the following comments on the Core Strategies &, where appropriate, the justification texts. We note therefore following points: -

1. CP1 – There is no mention of the types of green generation that are available and, given the historic environment of the borough, the preferences that might be considered given the visual effect that some, especially in the western half of the borough, might have on the environment. The preferred options included for a hydro scheme in the River Severn using inflatable weirs that would also be adjustable to aid flood control (see CP2) that would also benefit the reinstatement of navigation.

2. CP2 – There is no mention of the Water Framework Directive and the associated River Basin Management Plan so it is impossible to ascertain if this bit of European legislation, which applies in the UK, has been allowed for within the policy.

3. CP11 – We welcome the justification in para. 8.52 to consider the use of the Waterways for movement of freight.

4. CP13 – Welcome the proposal for a Severn Valley Heritage Park however, unlike the preferred Options report, it does not indicate the extent of it and thus if it would go into Shropshire Unitary Council and Wychavon/Malvern Hills District; and a commitment to work with these authorities in its creation.

5. CP16 – Whilst we welcome the proposals to use the canal corridor to aid regeneration it is clear if the Council wishes to honour its Core Policy on the Historic Environment that this should take into account and compliment, in design terms, the existing historic structure that form the waterway corridor (that of course includes the canal itself) and that to achieve this iconic structures should be discouraged.

Finally in the "Jargon Guide" we are pleased to note that you have now included a specification for Scheduled Ancient Monuments as well as Listed Buildings and thank you doing so.

Thank you for consulting the Association and would of course be pleased to answer any questions that you may have in respect of our comments. We would welcome in due course a copy of the submitted version of the LDF when it is published.

Yours faithfully

Vaughan Welch
Region Chairman