

Public Document Pack

CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Tuesday, 11 May 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities. (report attached) (Pages 1 - 4)
Forward Planning Manager to report.
- **to consider a summary of the key elements of the paper and consider a Council response.**
4. Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives. (report attached) (Pages 5 - 7)
Forward Planning Manager to report.
- **to inform Members of the Government's vision for effective community involvement in planning.**

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting: Economic and Development Services matters

2. Date: 11 May 2004.

3. Title: Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities.

4. Originating Officer: - Alan Mitchell, *Forward Planning Manager, extension 3834, e-mail alan.mitchell@rotherham.gov.uk*

Designated Manager: - Karl Battersby, *Head of Service, extension 3815, e-mail karl.battersby@rotherham.gov.uk*

5. Issue: As part of the Government's programme of reforms to the planning system, this consultation paper has been published setting out the Government's vision for planning and the key policies and principles which should underpin the system. This report summarises the key elements of the paper and recommends a Rotherham MBC response.

6. Summary

The Government's vision for planning, and the key policies and principles which should underpin the planning system --- are built around three themes:

- Sustainable Development – the purpose of the planning system.
- The spatial planning approach.
- Community involvement in planning.

Key policy messages are to integrate the four aims of sustainability, the need for positive planning, the need for plans to establish visions to integrate activities relating to development and regeneration and the need for transparency and participation.

7. Clearance/Consultation

An informative report on this matter has been considered by the UDP Review Members Steering Group. The views of other relevant Programme Areas have been invited.

8. Timing

Comments on the paper are invited by 21 May 2004.

9. Background

The proposals for reform of the planning system were contained in the Government's Green Paper "Planning: delivering a fundamental change" published in Dec 2001. The key legislative changes are now dependent on the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act projected for mid 2004. As part of this comprehensive process of change all Planning Policy Guidance

Notes are being replaced by Planning Policy Statements. The Council has been advised of the appropriate consultation papers and has responded accordingly.

The key features of the paper can be summarised as:

The Government's vision for planning, and the key policies and principles which should underpin the planning system are built around three themes:

- Sustainable Development – the purpose of the planning system.
- The spatial planning approach.
- Community involvement in planning.

Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning policies should seek to achieve where appropriate the following specific objectives for sustainable development and sustainable communities:

- Promoting urban and rural regeneration
- Promoting regional, sub-regional and local economies
- Promoting communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free
- Bringing forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in the right locations
- Giving high priority to ensuring access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities
- Focusing developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail development, in existing centres
- Recognising the need to enhance as well as protect biodiversity
- Promoting the more efficient use of land
- Reducing the need to travel.

Spatial planning

The new system of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) will adopt a spatial planning approach. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

Community involvement in planning

Planning must work as a partnership and involve the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time. Planning affects everyone and all those involved in the system have a role to play in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Sustainable development needs the community to be involved with developing the vision for their areas. Communities should be able to contribute to ideas about how that vision can be achieved and have the opportunity to participate in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be involved in development proposals. The planning reforms require the preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement setting out how the community can participate in the preparation of LDDs. This needs to relate closely to the Community Strategy in leading the processes for community involvement in their areas.

10. Argument

- This PPS is fundamental to planning, setting out principles that are to underpin the system.
- These fundamental principles will help to restore the significance and influence of planning and should be wholeheartedly supported.
- The PPS reinforces the breadth and comprehensive nature of planning.
- The nature of the reformed development planning system needs to be communicated effectively within the authority, to the community and to existing and potential partners and stakeholders.
- When contributing to sustainable development, the possibility introduced in the paper of giving more weight to a particular objective is worrying. It could challenge the important principle of balance in carrying out sustainability appraisal and “play into the hands” of those who wish to promote their narrow interests at the expense of long term sustainability.
- The concept of “spatial planning” is positive and valuable but open to interpretation. This concept together with the key role of planning in relation to sustainable development brings social and economic matters that were hitherto beyond the direct scope of planning into the remit of LDDs and the development control process. It presents the opportunity for planning to extend its influence as a shaping and co-ordinating tool. Planning needs to be recognised as more than a device to control the use of land. However, it can be anticipated that other agencies will have difficulty with the concept of spatial planning and their relationship with it. It would be helpful if the PPS offered more guidance, including the use of examples, of the role of planning in relation to other strategies with spatial implications.
- The principles of improved community involvement can be fully supported but the tensions between more effective community engagement and greater speed in the plan making process remain.
- It is fully agreed that planning policies should be socially inclusive, however specifying an ever-increasing list of disadvantaged groups [as in para 1.19 of the draft] is unnecessary.

11. Risks and Uncertainties

Whilst the Government’s proposals should be wholeheartedly supported subject to the reservations expressed above, there are emerging concerns that the timescale for the preparation of Local Development Documents [LDDs] will be inadequate and that Councils will be strongly encouraged to prepare LDDs that are far from complete. The recommendation from Government Office is likely to be that LDDs should initially concentrate on strategy and core policies and that work on some parts of the plan should follow in succeeding years [a staggered

approach]. This would be complicated, inefficient and very confusing for LDD users especially the public. This is ironic as the reforms are intended to make the system simpler and easily understood. Although this point is not explicitly made in the consultation paper, it is feared that many of the excellent positive messages about planning in draft PPS 1 will be negated by such pressures to produce something by a target date rather than a quality product. It is considered that this point should be made in the Council's response.

12.Finance

More influential planning as outlined needs to be adequately resourced. The Government state that Planning Delivery Grant will be a means of directing greater resources to planning.

13.Sustainability

As indicated above sustainable development is described as the purpose of planning.

14.Wards Affected

All.

15.References

The Government's Green Paper "Planning: delivering a fundamental change" published in Dec 2001.

Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities. ODPM, March, 2004.

16.Presentation

This is a very important Statement setting out fundamental principles that underpin the planning system. It should result in planning being more influential and at the centre of local government and community life. The Council should urge the Government to heed the reservations expressed in this report to ensure that the many positives in these proposals are not negated.

17.Recommendation

That this report be referred to the Cabinet and Planning Board, and that the comments in this report form the basis of the Council's response to the ODPM.

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting: Economic and Development Services matters

2. Date: 11 May 2004

3. Title: Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives

4. Originating Officer:- Noel Bell, *Forward Planning, Ext 3831*

Designated Manager: - Alan Mitchell, *Forward Planning, Ext 3834*

5. Issue

The paper sets out the Government's vision for effective community involvement in planning, to promote a planning system which is transparent, accessible and accountable, and which effectively promotes public participation.

6. Summary

The paper sets out:

- The importance of greater community involvement in planning and how this fits with the Government's broader agenda
- The principles underpinning the approach
- How the reform programme will strengthen community involvement

7. Clearance/Consultation

The consultation paper on revised Planning Policy Statement 1 sets out the Government's policies for planning and seeks comments on the principles of community involvement. Final regulations and new planning policy statements will be published following those consultation exercises once the Planning Bill comes into effect (Summer 2004).

8. Timing

See 7 above

9. Background

The planning system already provides many opportunities for local people to participate in key decisions about their areas. An accessible and transparent planning system, which provides continuing opportunities for local people to participate, is essential to deliver the objective of creating inclusive, accessible, safe and sustainable communities.

10. Argument

The views of local people have always been an integral part of the planning process and the case for the community's voice is clear:

- Involvement leads to outcomes that better reflect the views and aspirations and meet the needs of the wider community in all its diversity.

- Public involvement is valuable as a key element of a vibrant, open and participative democracy.
- Involvement improves the quality and efficiency of decisions by drawing on local knowledge and minimising unnecessary and costly conflict.
- Involvement educates all participants about the needs of communities, the business sector and how local government works.
- Involvement helps promote social cohesion by making real connections with communities and offering them a tangible stake in decision making.

11.Risks and Uncertainties

The barriers to public involvement include:

- The costs of participation for local communities (and for the planning authorities running community involvement exercises)
- The complexity of many of the issues.
- The difficulties of identifying and reaching the different groups within a community.
- The perception that community involvement exercises will be captured by individuals or articulate groups which dominate proceedings.
- Finally, concerns in achieving both more effective consultation and greater speed in the planning process remain significant.

12.Finance

Any future costs incurred in facilitating the involvement of the public within the development of the Local Development Framework will be borne by the Forward Planning section. The first bullet point of the risks and uncertainties section also needs to be reiterated, in that the costs, both in human and financial resources are also by necessity likely to be substantial.

13.Sustainability

Changing the way people think and feel about the planning system is a vital part of the planning reform agenda. As is, the promotion of a positive view of planning as a strategic, proactive force for sustainable development. The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out a vision for sustainable communities. Effective community involvement is central to delivering the Plan.

14.Wards Affected

All

15.References

ODPM (2004) - Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives

ODPM (2003) - Sustainable Communities: building for the future

16.Presentation

For planning to be seen as positive, all sections of the community must believe that the process is legitimate, operates in a timely manner, and that the

outcomes are in the public interest. The process should be simple to follow, and delivered in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. Community involvement is a key part in achieving this.

17.Recommendations

i) That the cabinet member notes the Government's vision for effective community involvement in planning as expressed in "Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives".