

ROTHERHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP  
Friday, 19th November, 2010

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor McNeely), Austen, Dodson, Pickering, R. S. Russell, Whelbourn and Whysall.

together with:-

Andy Duncan	Strategic Policy Team Leader
Ken Macdonald	Solicitor
Tracie Seals	Sustainable Communities Manager
Ryan Shepherd	Senior Planner

**1. INTRODUCTIONS/ APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

Tracie Seals, Sustainable Communities Manager (Interim), introduced herself.

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Steering Group:-

Councillor Jack	Chair, Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Lakin	Cabinet Member, Safeguarding and Developing Opportunities for Children
Councillor St. John	Cabinet Member, Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism
Councillor Sharman	Deputy Leader
Councillor Walker	Senior Adviser, Regeneration & Environment

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2010**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**4. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader, relating to the requirement for the Council to produce an Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Framework.

It was explained that the Annual Monitoring Report covered the financial year preceding December publication and the submitted report (the 6th AMR) therefore covered the period 1st April, 2009 to 31st March, 2010.

The report covered the monitoring of the framework for the Local Development Framework and its attached documents, the effects of policies and performance indicators. However, reference was made to the confusing position in respect of the Regional Spatial Strategy following the Cala Homes Judicial Review.

(It was noted that the draft 2010 Annual Monitoring Report had been made available electronically and hard copies placed in the Members' Room prior to the meeting.)

Resolved:- That the Steering Group approves the submission of the 2010 Annual Monitoring Report to Government.

## **5. EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, relating to Rotherham's Employment Land Review. It was explained that the review had been undertaken to form part of the evidence base which would support and inform preparation of the Local Development Framework, and inform planning decisions. The review took stock of Rotherham's current economy, and looked at likely future economic changes and requirements. The review also considered the amount of land likely to be required to be allocated for development to help meet these needs.

Reference was made to:-

- the background to the review and number of sites reviewed; amount of land likely to be required
- consultation that took place between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2010 and responses received
- changes made to the document as a result of comments received
- Employment Land Review Headlines: Rotherham's current employment rate; labour market; key economic sectors; existing stock: the current economic climate and recession
- Proposed allocation of employment land for new economic development
- Amount of land to be considered for allocation as employment development sites
- Amount of land currently allocated for employment use that could

- be considered for re-allocation to alternative uses
- next steps: further consultation beginning in 2011

It was pointed out that the Employment Land Review was a key document contributing to a robust evidence base for preparing the Local Development Framework.

The attention of the Members of the Panel was drawn to the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and to the outcome of the judicial review. It was noted that an addendum to the Review was proposed by way of explanation.

Resolved:- That the Steering Group note the content of the report and the final version of the Employment Land Review.

## **6. LOCAL GROWTH WHITE PAPER**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Ryan Shepherd, Senior Planner, relating to the publication by Government of a White Paper setting out its approach to local growth.

The report summarised the proposals, including how the Government intended to reform the planning system.

Reference was made to the following key themes:-

- shifting power to local communities and businesses by creating dynamic Local Enterprise Partnerships
- increasing confidence to invest
- focused investment by tackling barriers to growth that the market will not address itself

The White Paper also related to:-

### **(i) Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP):-**

An explanation was given to the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships, including a possible planning remit (as outlined in the submitted report) and particular reference was made to the Sheffield City Region LEP.

### **(ii) New Homes Bonus Scheme:-**

This was expected to start in 2011-12. The scheme proposed to match fund the additional council tax for each new home and property brought back into use for each of the six years after that home is built. It was noted that consultation on the details of how the scheme would operate would commence shortly.

### **(iii) Planning Reforms:-**

These centred around 5 key elements (detailed in the submitted report). Reference was made to already existing Neighbourhood/Community

plans and the need for these to be taken into account, and for closer working with Parish Councils, Area Assemblies and local groups.

Implications for Rotherham and anticipated changes to the Local Development Framework were outlined. Further consultation in respect of the proposed planning reforms was expected.

It was pointed out that the Council had opportunities to bid into the Regional Growth Fund with other partners or via the LEP. It was confirmed that the Forward Planning team were already working with officers in Sheffield on housing requirements for the Rotherham/Sheffield housing market area.

It was noted that the white paper would be followed by the publication of the Coalition Government's Localism Bill.

Resolved:- That the Steering Group notes the content of the report.

## **7. HIGH COURT RULING ON REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS) REVOCATION**

Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader, reported on the High Court ruling in respect of the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The position now in the light of the decision of the Administrative Court was that the decision of the Secretary of State to revoke RSS had now been quashed by the Court. The effect was that the decision of the Secretary of State itself was now of no effect, and therefore RSS (now known as the Regional Strategy) remained part of the statutory development plan for the time being.

However, Government had signalled its clear intention to bring forward legislation to withdraw RSS as soon as possible, and the Secretary of State had invited local planning authorities to have regard to that intention as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (letters dated 27th May and 10th November, 2010).

It followed that whilst planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of the development plan (which includes RSS) unless material considerations indicate otherwise, the weight to be given to such policies must be tempered by the fact that Government intends to withdraw RSS as soon as practicable.

It also meant that the previous RSS housing target was also reinstated. This in turn meant that the Council may have to reconsider the interim housing target approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 8th September, 2010. Officers would consider this issue in light of any further guidance forthcoming and report back to Elected Members in due course.

Reference was made to:-

- the ensuing confusion
- a period of transition whilst awaiting further clarity from the Localism Bill
- the weight afforded to the RSS policies may have to be tempered by the fact that Government was intent on removing regional planning
- the validity of the Council's Interim Housing target
- advice from Planning Inspectorate
- implications for the planned consultation on the core strategy
- timescales

Those present discussed the impact of the decision and what it meant for Forward Planning and the Local Development Framework.

It was agreed that there needed to be a report to Cabinet in due course re the implications of the Judicial Review decision.

In the interim work would continue on planning to consult on a local housing target next year.

Resolved:- (1) That the position be noted.

(2) That an update report be submitted to Cabinet.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following issue was raised and discussed:-

(i) Houses in Multiple Occupation

Reference was made to Circular 08/10: Changes to Planning Regulations for Dwellinghouses and Houses in Multiple Occupation that was published on 4th November, 2010 –

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1759707.pdf>

in that landlords will no longer need to apply for planning permission if they want to convert a dwelling house to a House in Multiple Occupation. It was explained that this if this was linked to housing benefits reform the Borough may see an increase in HMO's and possibly an increase in unfit housing.

Information was provided in respect of the planning aspects and the use of Article 4 Directions.

Resolved:- That a briefing note on Houses in Multiple Occupation, together with the planning aspects, be provided for all Members of the

Council and the three local M.P's. in due course.

**9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group be held on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 at 10.00 a.m. – Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.