

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

16th August 2001

PRESENTATION:-

Labour Group

Councillor Southerd (Chair), Councillor Taylor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Brooks, Pabla, Rose, Shepherd and Whyman.

Conservative Group

Councillors Bale, Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Shaw).

In Attendance

Councillor Lemmon (Conservative Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Carroll (Labour Group) and Councillors Douglas and Shaw (Conservative Group).

DS/6. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th July 2001 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

DS/7. **BRETBY CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Brethby Crematorium Joint Committee held on 23rd May 2001, attached at Annexe 'A' were received.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

DS/8. **SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

Further to Minute No. DS/2 of 5th July 2001, the Committee received a detailed report on the implications of Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3 (PPG3) relating to housing. The document aimed to guide decisions about new allocations in Local Plans and superseded policies contained in existing Local Plans. The Guidance referred to a search sequence which recognised that urban areas were the most sustainable locations due to available local services and the opportunity for reducing travel needs. Priority was afforded to redeveloping brownfield land whether within existing urban areas or, if these were not sufficient, identified urban extensions.

The Swadlincote urban capacity study dealt with potential sites within the main urban area of the District. It indicated a need for further development on the edge of the existing urban area, preferably on brownfield sites. There were a number of villages throughout the District which contained facilities and services and possibly had brownfield land suitable for redevelopment.

In monitoring housing land availability, authorities had previously made allowances for "windfalls" which were small sites not specifically identified as

available. The new guidance stated that no such allowance should be made which implied a presumption against permitting planning applications on greenfield sites, however small. PPG 3 referred to urban areas such as towns and cities, but for rural areas such as those in South Derbyshire, larger villages would also be treated as urban for the purposes of undertaking the search sequence. To establish which settlements were considered sustainable and had a range of services and facilities to support some small housing development, an assessment had been undertaken. The results of the assessment were appended to the report. It had been necessary to determine a level below which a settlement was not considered to be sustainable. Conveniently, there had been two recent appeal decisions where the Inspectors had determined that the villages of Rosliston (in the Swadlincote sub-area) and Egginton (in the Derby sub-area) were not considered sustainable. The scores allocated to these villages were therefore used as a cut-off point for the Swadlincote and Derby sub-areas.

In considering the report, Members referred to the weightings applied, the accuracy of data used and the results of the settlement hierarchy assessment. A specific comment was made about the weighting applied to a primary school as compared to the combined weighting of infant and junior schools. It was questioned whether PPG3 would apply to developments outside village confines or to other developments with a residential element. It was considered that the Government had used PPG3 to address other residential development problems at the national level and that this guidance was not applicable to districts such as South Derbyshire with large rural areas. Consideration was given to the lobbying which might be undertaken to seek a variation to the guidance, but it was noted that PPG3 had now been introduced and its requirements must be complied with. Members felt the guidance would restrict further development to those specified areas and would have an adverse effect on the future sustainability of the remaining villages in South Derbyshire which fell beneath the threshold. A number of Members echoed these sentiments referring to specific villages in their respective areas. Consideration was also given to the public transport issues associated with sustainability and the view was expressed that securing an effective public transport service in rural areas would be difficult to achieve.

The Committee discussed the implementation of PPG3 and the lack of consultation undertaken. Reference was also made to the imminent review of the Local Plan and it was questioned whether adoption of PPG3 could be delayed. Members were advised that, should the Council fail to address the requirements of PPG3 it could be open to challenge at Public Inquiry. It was also questioned how other authorities similar to South Derbyshire had interpreted this guidance and Members were advised of the regular officer meetings which took place to seek a consistent approach to interpreting such guidance. Several Members sought the deferral of this item to enable further research, but were reminded of the possible challenge for failure to have an adopted settlement hierarchy. It was therefore felt prudent to adopt the settlement hierarchy proposed and to give Members the opportunity of submitting further data or representations about the weightings used in undertaking the assessment for the settlement hierarchy.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the settlement hierarchy submitted be approved in the interim for the purposes of determining planning applications in accordance with the search sequence in Planning Policy Guidance Note no. 3 – housing, pending the adoption of the revised Local Plan and subject to resolutions (2) and (3) below.***
- (2) That Members be invited to submit details regarding data accuracy and/or the weighting values applied to the Planning Services Manager not later than 23rd August 2001.***
- (3) That the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Chair of the Development Services Committee to approve any minor modifications to the data accuracy and/or the weighting values contained in the hierarchy.***

DS/9. **RESPONSES TO DRAFT TOURISM STRATEGY**

Under Minute No. PED/36, the Planning and Economic Development Committee approved the Draft Tourism Strategy for public consultation. Details were provided of the circulation of the Draft Strategy, the press release and other publicity undertaken to seek views on the document. A tourism awareness day had been held on 16th February to provide an opportunity for discussion of the strategy. In addition, some forty-six representations were received which were summarised in an Annexe to the report. Generally, responses to the draft strategy were positive and no major changes had been made to the document. A copy of the questionnaire circulated to seek views was reproduced and a summary of the responses received to the consultation exercise was included in the report.

Since the draft strategy had been prepared, the English Tourism Council had published three major national strategies and details were provided. For the tourism strategy, the next stage would be to prepare an action plan for 2002/03 setting key milestones, against which progress in delivering the Strategy could be measured. This would be reported to a future Meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee endorses the proposed changes and adopts the amended document.

DS/10. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)****RESOLVED:-**

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of

Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

AD-HOC LIST OF CONTRACTORS – PROVISION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY SURFACING (Paragraph 10)

The Committee approved an ad-hoc list of contractors for this contract.

T. SOUTHERD

CHAIR