

REPORT TO: Environmental & Development Services Committee
DATE OF MEETING: 13th November 2003
REPORT FROM: Deputy Chief Executive
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: Gill Hague (595821)
SUBJECT: Draft Planning Policy Statement 11 Regional Planning
WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

AGENDA ITEM:
CATEGORY: DELEGATED
OPEN
DOC:
REF:
TERMS OF REFERENCE: ES03

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be informed that the Council:
- (i) welcomes the inclusion of planning at the regional level into the statutory framework;
 - (ii) awaits with interest the mechanisms that will emerge for determining District levels of housing and the opportunities for the Council to influence the process;
 - (iii) requires clarification as to how appropriate amounts of land for employment uses will be identified at District level.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To advise Members about Draft Planning Policy Statement 11 – Regional Planning (PPS11) (copy available in the Members Room) and seek approval of a consultation response to be sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 16th January 2004.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 It is the Government's intention that PPS11 will replace PPG11: Regional Planning with regard to procedural policy for preparing planning documents at the regional level. This is part of the planning reforms to be introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- 3.2 Regional Planning Guidance will be replaced by statutory Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) with which the Local Development Documents (LDDs) to be prepared by Local Planning Authorities must be in conformity.
- 3.3 The aim is to ensure that future changes to the RSS are produced on an inclusive basis of partnership working and community involvement, the documents should be

more regionally and sub-regionally specific with a focus on implementation and better integrated with other regional strategies.

- 3.4 The RSS should provide a broad spatial development strategy for the region for at least a fifteen year period. It will identify the scale and distribution of new development such as housing and priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals extraction and waste treatment and disposal.
- 3.5 The RSS will be produced by the Regional Planning Body (RPB) which is the Regional Chamber but emphasis is placed on partnership working and community involvement and there is a requirement to set out how this has been achieved.
- 3.6 The statement acknowledges that both Local Planning Authorities and County Councils have important survey responsibilities which include provision of information which should assist the RPB in preparing draft revisions to RSS. All authorities including the Districts are expected to assist the RPB in preparation of the RSS including through the assistance of their staff and other resources. It is also stated that it may be appropriate for a Local Planning Authority to lead on a sub-regional study. Local Authorities as one of the stakeholders will also be involved in the process of determining the numbers of houses that reflect the strategic objectives of the region.
- 3.7 In the past the Council's involvement in the regional planning process has been limited. This has largely been due to other work commitments such as producing the local plan and because given the District's location on the edge of the region and with the focus of the sub-regional strategy being on the three cities much of the content has been of little direct relevance. However, given that in future there will no longer be a Structure Plan, it is important that the District increases its involvement at the regional level in order to at least attempt to positively influence the RSS. This is particularly important as the RSS will provide the spatial framework to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents and as part of the development plan will be a material planning consideration for determining planning applications.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 It is understood that the Planning Delivery Grant has in part been distributed to authorities on the basis of the level of assistance provided to RSPs. However, such funding only covers work undertaken on behalf of the RBP it does not cover work undertaken for a District Council itself such as ascertaining the impact of proposed regional policy on it's District or it's representations at the Examination in Public.
- 4.2 The increasing level of information required to enable the monitoring of policies at all levels has implications for the District Council in terms of time and human and financial resources.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The RSS will draw together and influence the implementation of the land use activities of various regional strategies that in turn influence the preparation of local housing, economic development, tourism, community and other strategies prepared by the Council.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 Historically the more strategic and less site specific a planning document is the lower the level of interest generated from the community. Whatever methods are used it is highly unlikely that many additional individuals or organisations other than those who have in the past taken an interest in planning at the regional level will be persuaded to participate.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The District Council will not be responsible for preparing the RSS but needs to ensure that it is sufficiently involved in the process given that the LDDs it will prepare are required to be in conformity with it.
- 7.2 It is considered unlikely that the new procedures will significantly increase community involvement in planning at the regional level. Financial costs will be incurred by public participation not just by the Council but by voluntary groups and organisations that may require professional advice and support.
- 7.3 A particularly important aspect of the revisions to RSSs will be the distribution of housing down to district level and the opportunity for the District Council to become involved in and influence the determination of appropriate numbers for the District. It was previously the Structure Plan, that broke down to District level the County figure contained in the Regional Planning Guidance.
- 7.4 Under the old system Regional Planning Guidance did not set out figures for the provision of land for business, general industry and storage and distribution. However provision at District level was established in the Structure Plan. Whilst the draft PPS states clearly that the RSS will 'identify scale and distribution of housing' it merely states that it will identify 'priorities' for economic development. It is therefore unclear what mechanism will be used to establish whether or not land should be identified for employment use in the new LDDs.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 None other than referred to in this report.

