

Date of meeting: 28 January 2010

Agenda Item: 6

A Partnership Approach to Infrastructure Planning

Issue

Recent Government guidance highlights the need for LSPs and their constituent partners to take a joined-up approach to planning for new infrastructure. This report proposes that a South Derbyshire Partnership Infrastructure Group be established as a means of developing and maintaining an Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the District.

Detail: the Need for Co-ordinated Infrastructure Planning

Government policy demands a more integrated approach to 'place shaping' and the delivery of public services. LSPs have a new duty to oversee the planning and alignment of resources and LSP partners now have a "duty to co-operate" in achieving this.¹

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is the cornerstone of the policy and is seen as the means for setting the local vision and priorities. These should be delivered through the **Local Area Agreement** (LAA), which has a short term revenue spend focus, and the **Local Development Framework** (LDF) with its longer term development and capital investment focus.

The provision of new and improved infrastructure will be essential in achieving SCS objectives in areas such as sustainable development, transport, vibrant communities, economic growth and improving health. As part of this, infrastructure will be needed around transport, schools, open space, community, health and leisure services and other areas such as green energy and utility services. Infrastructure is provided by a wide range of organisations and sources of funding and there is a need for these to be properly integrated. Infrastructure planning is therefore the process of identifying and planning for the community's infrastructure needs in the context of strong housing and population growth.

Government guidance indicates that the LDF Core Strategy should orchestrate the social, physical and green infrastructure needed to support growth and create sustainable communities. The Core Strategy therefore needs to include an agreed delivery strategy outlining what infrastructure will be needed and how it will be delivered.

¹ See in particular the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

A further reason for a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure is the 'Single Conversation' recently initiated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). This process seeks first to establish the housing and regeneration ambitions of the area, and then identify proposed investment from partners and responsibilities for delivery. The aim is to agree a Local Investment Plan by the Autumn of 2010. The HCA wishes to proceed on a sub-regional basis and is engaging collectively with the local authorities covered by the Derby Housing Market Area (HMA) i.e. Derby City, Derbyshire County, South Derbyshire and Amber Valley Councils.

In summary, therefore, the benefits of joint working through the LSP are that it will help to direct the right level of growth and housing development to the right places and create scope for greater efficiencies in the delivery of individual service strategies and LAA priorities.

Proposed Arrangements for Infrastructure planning

Whilst the Government expects the LDF Core Strategy to orchestrate the capital infrastructure needed to support growth, this is not something planners alone can do. There is a need to co-ordinate plans for investment across all relevant sectors. The South Derbyshire Partnership is the place where key partners come together in support of SCS objectives and it therefore presents an opportunity to develop a collaborative approach to infrastructure planning.

Recent Government guidance and related advice from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) set out good practice on joint working between LSPs and local authorities on this. One of the key early steps recommended is to set up an Infrastructure Group as part of the LSP. This should be:

“A formally constituted group with direct responsibility for infrastructure co-ordination and its on-going management. It will have a clear focus on delivery and maximising use of resources and public sector assets for existing and new development and community needs”.

The infrastructure planning process recommended by PAS, which would be co-ordinated by the LSP Group, would involve the following:

- Gathering evidence, including a review of resources and existing capital commitments;
- Identifying infrastructure standards and current deficits;
- Preparing a 10-15 year infrastructure delivery plan and programme;
- Implementing and monitoring infrastructure delivery programme;

The appendices to this paper identify a list of potential participants and a set of possible key purposes for an LSP Infrastructure Group. Some participants could be involved on an *ad hoc* basis as necessary. Membership would need to reflect a fully cross-cutting group with a sufficiently high profile to reflect the importance of this issue.

Some liaison with neighbouring areas, particularly Derby, will be required in co-ordinating infrastructure in areas where there are substantial cross boundary or sub-regional dimension. Similarly, liaison on County Council and health functions such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Building Schools for the Future will need to be co-ordinated carefully as those partners are also likely to be involved in infrastructure planning in neighbouring areas.

As the activity of infrastructure planning demands new ways of working across sectors, PAS have offered support to the LSP in setting up the arrangements in the Derby Housing Market Area and Janice Morphet, a consultant, will be providing an overview to the South Derbyshire Partnership Board on 28th January 2010.

It is being proposed that a subsequent, more detailed, training session be convened for the newly constituted LSP Infrastructure Group in early March.

The precise terms of reference and membership of the group would be a matter for further discussion, but would broadly be along the lines set out in the appendices.

Recommendations

To note the need for a joint approach to infrastructure planning and to endorse the principle of establishing an Infrastructure Group along the lines set out in this report and appendices.

Contact: **Ian Bowen, South Derbyshire District Council**
Tel. (01283) 595821
Email. Ian.Bowen@south-derbys.gov.uk