

# Planning Committee

A meeting of Planning Committee was held on Wednesday, 21st September, 2011.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Gibson (Chairman); Cllr Mark Chatburn, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Ken Lupton (Vice Councillor Sherris), Cllr David Rose, Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Mick Stoker and Cllr Steve Walmsley.

**Officers:** C Straughan, M Clifford (LD); J Butcher, P K Bell (LD).

**Also in attendance:** One Member of the Public.

**Apologies:** Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Michael Smith and Cllr Andrew Sherris.

**P**            **Evacuation Procedure**

**22/11**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

**P**            **Declarations of Interest**

**23/11**

There were no interests declared.

**P**            **Minutes of the Meetings held on 2nd February, 2nd and 30th March, 20th April, and 8th and 29th June 2011**

**24/11**

The minutes of the meetings held on 2nd February, 2nd and 30th March, 20th April, and 8th and 29th June 2011 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**P**            **10/2549/EIS**

**25/11**

**Land West Of Stillington, Stockton on Tees  
Erection of 4 No. wind turbines (max height 125m) and associated infrastructure to include anemometer masts, access roads, crane pads, control building, substation and temporary construction compound.**

Members were informed that the application had been withdrawn from the agenda as the original decision of the Committee had not been quashed in the High Court.

**P**            **Consultation on Draft National Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Regulations**

**26/11**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined that the government was consulting on two documents which were of significance to the preparation of Local Plans; the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Planning Regulations. The NPPF would also be of significance in the determination of planning applications. The Council's proposed response was attached to the report for Members' information and comment. Brief comments on the Local Planning Regulations were included in the report.

The NPPF was a radical streamlining of existing Planning Policy Statements and some circulars to form a single consolidated document. It condensed almost 900,000 words of national planning policies (over 1,000 pages) into a user friendly and accessible document which could be understood by everyone

who had an interest in shaping the development of their area. When it is published, it would replace all existing planning policy guidance and statements (PPGs, PPS, MPG, and MPS) and some Circulars.

The document was arranged under the following headings; plan-making, development management, planning for prosperity, planning for people and planning for places. The document re-iterated that the purpose of planning was to deliver sustainable development and defined this around three headings:-

- \* Planning for prosperity defined as an economic role;
- \* Planning for people; a social role
- \* Planning for places; an environmental role.

The emphasis was very much on supporting sustainable economic growth and was designed to turn the planning system round from one which focused on barriers to one which prioritised opportunities. Planning would still be plan-led but local plans had to be up-to-date and in conformity with the NPPF. Where a plan was silent, indeterminate or out of date, permission should be granted for development. However development which had a significant effect on sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives would not be considered sustainable under the Framework. Neighbourhood planning would give communities the opportunity to support local development with the power to promote more development than was set out in the local plan.

Developers were expected to respond to the needs of the communities and national incentives and local charges would help ensure local communities benefit directly from the increase in development that the Framework aimed to achieve. Revenue generated from development would help sustain local services, fund infrastructure and deliver environmental enhancements.

The Framework set out some Core Planning principles underpinning both plan making and development management. Planning should:-

- \* be genuinely plan-led with succinct local plans, a positive vision for the area providing a practical framework to give a high degree of certainty and efficiency for decision-making,
- \* proactively support the development that this country needs by identifying and meeting housing, business and other development needs of an area and respond to wider opportunities for growth,
- \* take into account local circumstance and market signals such as land prices, commercial rents and housing affordability.
- \* Take into account the environmental quality or potential quality of land in considering the future use of land,
- \* protect and enhance environmental assets and heritage assets, reduce pollution and where possible to direct development to land of lesser environmental value,
- \* make effective use of land , promote mixed uses and encourage multiple benefits, recognising that open land can perform many functions,

- \* enable the re-use of existing resources, for example through the conversion of existing buildings, and encourage rather than restrict the use of renewable resources,
- \* actively manage patterns of growth that make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus growth in locations which are or can be made sustainable,
- \* support local strategies to improve health and wellbeing,
- \* seek to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.

In addition:-

- \* the default answer to development proposals should be "yes" except where this would compromise the key sustainability principles, plans should set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the draft NPPF. Members comments could be summarised as follows:-

- \* The majority of Members agreed that the response drew out a lot of Member and Officer concerns about the dangers in the NPPF.
- \* A Member felt that the draft NPPF would work and it would give planning more freedom and flexibility. Furthermore he felt that this was an opportunity for Local Authorities to develop their own future and work with local communities.
- \* It was suggested that the NPPF would allow developers to develop any piece of green land and would not need to consider the local infrastructure which was considered to be worrying aspects of the document.
- \* It was considered that there were already documents in place to protect the villages in the Borough.
- \* It was queried whether the Planning Committee had the authority to approve the response on behalf of the Council. Members requested that the response be qualified with the Chief Executive and the issue of Council responses be raised corporately.

RESOLVED that the two draft Officer responses be endorsed as the response for submission to the government in response to the two consultations subject to qualification by the Chief Executive and, if the Chief Executive deemed it necessary, by CMT, as to whether the response be made as the Council's response, officer response or other, and that their decision be final.

**P  
27/11**

### **Draft SHLAA 2011 Report**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined that the first Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was published in 2008 and had subsequently been updated on an annual basis. The 2011 SHLAA update was in the process of being undertaken. It was intended to publish the initial draft

assessment of sites for consultation. The consultation period would be 6 weeks. The report explained the role and purpose of the SHLAA and provided an overview of the process by which the SHLAA report was produced.

The primary role of the SHLAA was to:-

- Identify sites with potential for housing;
- Assess their housing potential; and
- Assess when they could be developed.

The broad methodology for the SHLAA was set out in the CLG Practice Guidance. This required potential housing sites to be tested according to the following framework:-

- Suitability - is the site a suitable location for housing?
- Availability - is it available now or is there a reasonable prospect of it becoming available?
- Achievability - is there a reasonable prospect of housing being achieved on the site?

The status of the SHLAA was that it was a technical exercise that formed part of the evidence base for producing the documents that comprised the Local Development Framework. The SHLAA did not allocate sites for development or imply that planning permission would be granted.

The requirements for producing a SHLAA were set out in more detail in Strategic Housing Land Assessments: Practice Guidance (Communities and Local Government July 2007). There was also a North East England Regional SHLAA Implementation Guide (North East Assembly, March 2008) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: The Tees Valley Guide to Implementing the National Guidance (Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, 2008).

The national guidance advocated a partnership - based to ensure a joined-up and robust approach involving key stakeholders. Consistent with the advocated partnership-based approach, a SHLAA steering group had been established. Membership of the steering group was comprised as follows:-

- A Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Planning (SBC)
- The Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Technical Services (SBC)
- The Development Services Manager (SBC)
- The Regeneration Projects Manager (SBC)
- Two representatives of the Home Builders Federation (HBF)
- Two representatives of Registered Social Landlords
- A land and property agent
- The Director of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

The documents that were being consulted upon consist of the following:-

- An overview report
- The schedule of the draft site assessments undertaken by local authority officers:-

- \* Draft Site Assessments of Core & Urban Extension Sites
- \* Draft Site Assessments of Village Sites
- \* Sites assessed as having zero housing potential

There are two sources of sites for the SHLAA. These were as follows:-

- Sites identified by local authority officers.
  - Sites submitted externally by landowners, agents and planning consultants.
- Each update to the SHLAA includes a "call for sites" inviting submission of new sites.

The process by which the draft schedule of sites was produced was as follows:-

- Two internal highways workshops focussing specifically on highways to assess the SHLAA sites have been undertaken
- Two internal workshops to assess the SHLAA sites within a framework of suitability, availability and achievability have been undertaken

Following consideration by LDF Member Steering Group and Planning Committee the schedule of draft site assessments and the overview report would be published for consultation.

Following the close of the consultation period and the consideration of any contentious sites by the steering group, the SHLAA 2011 Report would be produced. A contentious site was a site on which comments were submitted through the consultation process which differed with the draft internal assessment of the site. The Steering Group then considered the comments and sought to come to a conclusion about the site.

A Member asked if the consultation could be confused with the "Planning for Housing" consultation. The officer responded that a targeted consultation on the SHLAA would be undertaken with Parish/Town Councils, landowners, agents and developers and that this would reduce the possibility of the SHLAA consultation being confused with the "Planning for Housing" consultation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.