

Local Development Framework Steering Group

A meeting of the Local Development Framework Steering Group was held on Tuesday 30th October, 2007.

Present:- Councillor Cook (Chairman), Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Fletcher and Rix.

Officers:- J. Elliott, R. Young, D. Bage, R. Richardson (DNS); S. Johnson (LD).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Leckonby, Nelson, Stoker, Patterson, Walmsley and Womphrey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest in the item entitled Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document due to being a member of the Tees Active Board.

Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options Regeneration Development Plan Document Issues and Options Launch Feedback

Members considered a report that provided feedback on the Launch Event held on Friday October 5, relating to consultation on the Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options and the Regeneration Development Plan Document Issues and Options.

It was noted that consultation on the Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options and the Regeneration Development Plan Document Issues and Options documents began on 28 September 2007.

For the Core Strategy, this was a six week statutory consultation period, which had to be carried out in accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. This involved making copies of the documents available at principle offices and libraries, publishing them on the Council's website, sending out documents to consultees and advertising the consultation in the local press.

Members were advised that consultation on the Regeneration Development Plan Document Issues and Options paper was a less formal stage than Preferred Options. However, both had to be in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. It was noted that the consultation period ended on Friday 9 November 2007.

Members were advised that a "Launch" event was held on Friday 5 October 2007, at Stockton Central Library. This comprised two sessions – one in the morning for officers and Ward Councillors, and one in the afternoon for members of the public, Parish Council representatives, statutory consultees, representatives of Stockton Residents and Community Groups, LSP and Themed Board members.

The event consisted of a presentation given by the Spatial Planning Manager, relating to the two documents, their role within the Local Development Framework, and how people could get involved in their preparation by letting the Council have views and comments.

An exhibition was also set out in the Lecture Theatre, and those who attended were invited to have a look round and discuss issues with officers of the Spatial Planning Team who were on hand to answer questions.

It was reported that in all, both events were well attended with over 50 people present at each session. Members were advised that feedback from the event was positive:

- 19 feedback forms were returned following the afternoon's event
- The majority of those attending gave scores of 3 or more to the various categories (the possible score were from 1 being the lowest score to 5 being the highest score). In all, attendees were asked to score 9 items. 94% of attendees gave the launch an overall score of either 4 or 5 (41% rating the event as a 4, and 53% as a 5)
- The few constructive comments related to refreshments (either not really necessary, or could have been served at the end of the session to ensure a prompt start); the room could have been bigger; and that Friday was not the most convenient day to hold such an event.

It was explained that other means of raising awareness amongst residents of the Borough about the consultation included:

- Exhibitions in the local libraries (2 days in each, with a staffed afternoon/evening session at each) between Monday 8 October and Saturday 27 October
- Exhibition in Stockton Town Hall (Wednesday 31 October)
- Exhibitions in supermarkets (Tesco Extra at Durham Lane on Monday 29 October, Sainsbury's on Bishopton Lane on Tuesday 30 October, and Tesco at Ingleby Barwick on Thursday 1 November)
- Mobile trailer exhibition at Wynyard on Friday 2 November
- Visits to Parish Council meetings (Grindon and Egglecliffe)

In addition, there had been a number of articles in the local press.

Members were advised that further sessions had been arranged at Billingham Forum and the Clarence's Centre.

The officer advised that it was difficult to estimate how much interest there had been in the sessions and advised that at each of the staffed sessions, less than half a dozen members of the public had been sufficiently interested to view proposals, and talk to officers.

Members discussed that it would be useful for officers to review the consultation process in terms of what worked well and what didn't work so well in order that the results could be used for the planning of future consultation.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Annual Monitoring Report 2006/07

Members considered a report that outlined the findings of the Annual Monitoring Report 2006/07, prepared in relation to the performance of local plan policies and the Local Development Scheme.

It was explained that review and monitoring were key aspects of the Government's "plan, monitor and manage" approach to the planning system. They were crucial to the successful delivery of the spatial vision and objectives of the local development framework and should be undertaken on a continuous, pro-active basis. By identifying outputs and trends, these techniques would enable local planning authorities to build a comprehensive evidence base against which local development document policies and implementation mechanisms could be assessed. It was noted that Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 required local authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report to assess:

- the implementation of the local development scheme
- the extent to which policies in local development documents were being achieved.

Members were advised that Annual Monitoring Reports had to be based upon the period from 1 April to 31 March, and submitted to the Secretary of State no later than the end of the following December.

It was explained that the AMR sets out the Council's progress in meeting the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). During the year 2006/07, key milestones were met. Three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were adopted during this period – Boathouse Lane Planning and Design Brief, Parking Provision in New Developments and the Conservation and Historic Environment folder. It was noted that only the adoption of the Parking SPD was delayed beyond the acceptable 2 – 3 months (anticipated adoption June 2006, actual adoption November 2006) as a result of negotiations to satisfy concerns of the Government Officer North East Transport Division. The Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation met its May/June 2006 target.

Work also commenced on the Regeneration Development Plan Document (DPD), the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan, the Joint Minerals and Waste DPDs and a Planning Obligations SPD, in accordance with the LDS.

The officer advised Members that looking forward to the key milestones set in the Local Development Scheme 2007, targets for consultation on issues and options for the Joint Minerals and Waste DPDs, the Regeneration DPD, the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan and Preferred Options for the Core Strategy were on target, as was the Planning Obligations SPD. However, it would be necessary to assess the timetable contained in Local Development Scheme, both to roll it forward another year, and to ensure that existing targets were achievable.

In relation to the performance of policies, information was available for most of the Core Indicators prescribed by Government. Collection of housing data had improved as a result of the preparation of six monthly monitoring reports which were enabling the Council to track new housing provision more closely.

It was noted that as a result of an additional piece of work undertaken as part of last year's AMR, the Council had received confirmation from the Secretary of State as to which Local Plan policies were to be saved beyond September 2007 until replaced

by policies in the Local Development Framework. Including the policies in Alteration Number 1 (which would continue for three years from adoption until March 2009) about 50% of policies from the Local Plan continued to be relevant. A schedule of "saved" policies was attached to the AMR.

Members were provided with a draft copy of the AMR and were advised that once finalised, a copy would be emailed to Members of the steering group.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document

Members considered a report that provided an outline of the purpose of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document, demonstrated progress made to date and identified future tasks necessary for the production of the document.

It was explained that the document was designed, in line with Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation, to set local standards for open space and recreation provision. These standards would then be used to provide certainty to developers and assure the council of a strong position when negotiating open space and recreation contributions through Planning Obligations.

Members were advised that in order to ask for contributions through Planning Obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, certain criteria had to be met. They had to be relevant to planning, necessary to make the development acceptable, directly related to the development, fairly and reasonably related in scale, and reasonable in all other respects.

To achieve its purpose the document would contain standards to indicate what level of open space was required to make development acceptable, indicate reasonable scales of provision and demonstrate what was acceptable as directly relating to the document. The standards would relate to the quality and quantity of provision as contributions could be asked for both. It was noted that a robust evidence base was essential to set local standards and ensure that the criteria for planning obligations were met.

The document was relevant to a number of different sections in the council. In light of this a briefing session to outline the document and to set up an officer's steering group, had been arranged for early December. Representatives from Care for Your Area, Stockton Sports Development Team, Tees Active, Arts and Culture and Urban Design had been invited and the response to date had been positive.

It was explained that an Open Space Audit was completed in 2005, which contained details of over 1000 sites across the borough. This audit however, only provided a snapshot in time and needed to be updated to include changes that had occurred over the last two years.

Members were advised that the Guidance for the preparation of the document, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: a Companion Guide to PPG 17, suggested that built provision should be included in the audit. Currently the Open Space Audit only included outdoor provision, so this would also be updated in cooperation with Tees Active and by using information supplied by Sport England.

The officer explained that the evidence of existing provision of open space and recreation facilities provided by the audit would then be analysed to identify areas that had deficiencies in or surplus open space and recreation provision. The analysis

would also explore the distribution of different types of open space and recreation sites. Accessibility would be a key consideration in the analysis.

In order to set local standards, existing local open space and recreation provision had to be assessed against evidence of local need. It was noted that a Local Needs Assessment was another essential part of the evidence base for the document. Local need would be assessed through a public consultation.

It was explained that in order to get the maximum value from the consultation and avoid consultation fatigue the Council were collaborating with Countryside and Greenspace Team, as they needed to conduct a similar consultation for their Green Infrastructure Strategy. Existing evidence would also be used to inform the consultation.

A targeted approach would be used to ensure that the Council reached more than just the 'usual suspects' through the consultation. The aim was to target area based groups such as residents associations, social groups such as older people and children, and groups which could have a particular interest in open space and recreation provision such as sports teams and ramblers groups.

It was advised that local standards, to be used for negotiating contributions from developers and creating high quality developments, would be based on the assessment of need and the audit of existing provision. Evidence base was therefore key to the production of the document.

Members were presented with a timetable for the production of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Employment Land Review Stage 2 – Employment Forecasts and Land Requirements

It was explained that the Council completed stage 1 of the Employment Land review in October 2006. This work involved an initial fitness for purpose study of all of the major employment sites within the borough as well as sites put forward by developers and landowners. The report recommended that 2 sites (Urlay Nook and Belasis Avenue North and South), which were allocated in the local plan, be considered for de-allocation through the LDF.

It was noted that following completion of this work the Council prepared a brief for stage 2 of the work and sought expressions of interest to undertake the task. Following the tendering process NLP were appointed to undertake the task. Part of this agreement involved NLP utilising the market knowledge of Storeys:SSP.

Members were advised that in order to build a comprehensive picture of the current economic picture in Stockton-on-Tees Borough and across the Tees Valley as a whole, NLP interviewed various stakeholders and information holders to seek their views on the future economic picture of the borough and where appropriate, statistical information to feed into their research.

NLP also undertook a postal business survey in order to help determine land and property requirements in the borough. The survey included questions on business background; current premises; future growth; relocation requirements and; Stockton as a business location. It was noted that of 300 surveys posted 86 replies were received, a response rate of 29%. NLP considered that the survey undertaken was

successful as the response rate was higher than some previous studies they had undertaken.

The final stakeholder session involved a visioning event where NLP explained their initial findings to representatives of the business community. Workshops were then held which tested the reality of the scenario developed.

It was explained that the report itself reviewed the work undertaken by the Council in Stage 1 and provided an Economic and Planning Policy context which the study could build on. This provided a number of messages which included, Stockton's increasing population; the decline of manufacturing; growth in distribution, warehousing, hotels and administration sectors; amongst other issues.

The officer advised that the Council were preparing feedback on the stage 2 report and a final report was expected in the near future. This would be put forward for consideration by Cabinet members. On completion of the work, the Council would begin work on stage 3 of the Employment Land Review. It was noted that this would involve finalising the employment sites portfolio which would be taken forward in the Regeneration DPD.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.