

Local Development Framework Steering Group

A meeting of Local Development Framework Steering Group was held on Tuesday, 27th May, 2008.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg (Vice Cllr John Fletcher), Cllr Roy Rix and Cllr Mick Stoker

Officers: D Bage, M Clifford, J Dixon, Miss L Edwards, Mrs J Elliott, Mrs R Young (DNS); Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr J Fletcher, Cllr C Leckonby, Cllr S Nelson, Cllr R Patterson, Cllr S Walmsley, Cllr M Womphrey

LDF 21/08 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

LDF 22/08 Minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

LDF 23/08 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A verbal report was presented to the Member Steering Group detailing the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and informing Members of the methodology behind the process. It was also explained that the final report would consist of several documents including a schedule of sites without planning permission, a schedule of sites of 10 dwellings or more with planning permission and a summary report. The schedule of sites with planning permission would help demonstrate how Stockton has a 15-year supply of housing land. Draft maps were circulated to give an indication of the distribution of the sites without planning permission.

Officers advised that a number of the sites had been put forward externally i.e. had been the subject of representations from their owners or consultants/agents acting on their owners behalf. Officers explained that they had to consider these sites even though they may not be suitable for housing as there needed to be an audit trail to show that the sites had been assessed and to show how they had been assessed.

It was explained that approval would be sought from the July Cabinet for the study (when complete) to become the subject of public consultation. Members expressed concerns that the public could easily misinterpret the study. Members were particularly anxious that the public might not readily understand that the Council was assessing sites as required by national guidance and not promoting them itself.

In the light of these concerns Members requested that a press briefing be held and that a seminar be organised and all Members invited. The seminar would

enable Members to be briefed on the study and be made aware that it would become accessible to the public, not only through the consultation process, but also in advance of this through the E-Agenda system.

Members also requested that a location plan and also an aerial photograph showing the site boundaries accompanied each site in the schedule of sites without planning permission. Members felt that this would make the document more user-friendly to the public.

Concluded that:-

1. The report be noted.

2. A press briefing be held and a Members Seminar be organised for all Members.

3. Members to receive location plans with aerial photographs showing the site boundaries for each site without planning permission shown in the schedule of sites.

**LDF
24/08**

Stockton-on-Tees Villages Study -Proposals for Further Consultation.

Members were provided with a report which outlined the follow up to the initial consultation on the "Planning the Future of the Villages in Stockton" document. It would take the form of a follow on consultation exercise within each village. Members' views on progressing the study in order to inform emerging policy were welcomed.

In order to establish the levels of facilities available within the Borough's rural villages, an audit was carried out earlier this year. A consultation exercise on the document was undertaken and feedback was given to Members on 10 March 2008. Previously a Local Development Framework training event was held for Ward Members and Parish Councillors and Clerks, which included a session discussing villages, their role and function.

Following the initial consultation, it was identified that it would be useful to carry out further consultation in each individual village in order to gain a greater understanding of resident views and opinions on the future planning context of the villages. The research was intended to inform emerging policy as part of the Local Development Framework.

67 written responses were received to the initial consultation in February 2008, and were discussed at the meeting held on 10 March 2008. The majority of residents were against further development, with residents of Maltby and Thorpe Thewles dominating responses. There were three interested parties recommending that more development should be allowed at Wynyard.

It was evident from the feedback received that there was not a fair representation from all the villages and that there was a need to clarify the role of "development limits," as there appeared to be a misunderstanding amongst residents who responded.

Following consideration of the comments and views received, it was decided to take the study forward by undertaking a further consultation exercise in the first

two weeks of July. In order to gain a clearer understanding of each village and give the residents a formal opportunity to comment, it was proposed that Officers undertook drop-in-sessions in all of the fifteen villages covered in the study.

Officers had identified an appropriate venue within the majority of villages. Where there was not an appropriate venue officers would use the Council's exhibition trailer to host the drop-in-session. In order to allow as many residents as possible in the village to attend a session officers would hold the drop-in-sessions between mid afternoon and early evening.

To publicise the sessions officers would distribute posters and leaflets within each village, and place advertisements in local newspapers and on the Council website (other advertisement opportunities were also being investigated). Additionally notification letters would be circulated to Parish Councils, previous respondents, other interested groups such as the Rural Community Council, Members and other contacts held on the Local Development Framework consultation list.

The drop-in-sessions would allow an opportunity for one to one discussions with residents in a more informal and relaxed manner where there could be clear dialogue. Officers would set up an exhibition which would include an introductory poster to explain the purpose of the event; a village map detailing existing planning policy; posters summarising the village audit results, and previous feedback if relevant. A feedback questionnaire would be made available so that residents could put their views forward, and would give a clear method to analyse and compare results. Planning officers would be available to explain and clarify issues throughout the event.

The study would form part of the evidence base to understand how Core Strategy Policy 1, Spatial Strategy, would be applied in smaller settlements, and would help to inform the Regeneration Development Plan Document, should it be decided that development sites needed to be allocated in smaller settlements, to "enhance or maintain their sustainability".

A briefing report was circulated, illustrating how officers had categorised the villages, in four tiers from sustainable to unsustainable.

Member's provided feedback to officers and particular discussion took place with regard to infrastructure and transport issues. The following points were raised:

- Capacity of the road infrastructure in and around villages needed to be addressed through the study;
- More detail relating to the frequency and times of bus services was required;
- The reinstatement of the bus service between Long Newton and Darlington was doubtful;
- The study needed to recognise the recent position in relation to post office closures;
- Members and Parish Councillors should be circulated a note of the proposed dates, times and venues for the drop-in sessions.

Concluded that the report be noted.

LDF Streamlining Local Development Frameworks

25/08

Members were informed of proposed changes to the process of producing Local Development Documents, which were expected to be introduced in June 2008, and which would impact on the next stage of the Core Strategy.

The Department for Communities and Local Government had recently announced that the changes proposed in the consultation document "Streamlining Local Development Frameworks" to speed up the production of Development Plan Documents, were to be introduced in June 2008. A revised Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) Local Development Frameworks with an accompanying "Planning Manual" and Regulations were expected to be published at the end of May 2008.

The new procedures would come into effect for documents, which were due to be submitted under the existing system after 31st August 2008. This included the Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy, which was timetabled for Submission to the Secretary of State in September 2008.

The most significant change relating to the Core Strategy was that instead of proceeding to submission in September, it would first go to Publication and would subsequently be submitted. There would be a consultation period associated with Publication but there would not be a further consultation period at submission. There was also flexibility about the length of the consultation period with the regulations specifying a minimum consultation period of six weeks.

Before the full implications of these changes could be assessed, officers needed to have sight of the new PPS and regulations. However, at this stage, it appeared that the implications for the Core Strategy would be as follows:

- First Publication - September 2008
- Consultation Period (8 weeks) October – November 2008
- Assessment of Representations and Minor Changes – December 2008
- Submission to Secretary of State - January 2009
- Pre-Examination Meeting - February 2009
- Examination - April 2009
- Inspector's report - June 2009
- Final Check - July 2009
- Adoption - September 2009.

A revised Local Development Scheme would be required once the new PPS and regulations had been published and the full implications of the changes for all of the documents comprising Stockton's Local Development Framework had been fully assessed. A further report would be made to the Steering Group at that stage.

Concluded that the report be noted.

LDF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK : UPDATE ON THE EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW STAGE 3.

26/08

A report was considered which updated Member's on the Employment Land

Review, which was an important part of the evidence base for the production of Local Development Framework documents. Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners and Storey SSP were commissioned to undertake Stages 2 and 3 of the study after the Council had completed Stage 1. Members were made aware that stage 2 was recently finalised and viewed by the Council's Planning Committee and Cabinet earlier this year.

Stage 3 was currently being finalised with a draft report received from Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on the 7th May 2008, Council officers were assessing the report. A copy of the report had already been sent to Planning Committee for consideration.

Employment land review stage 2 concluded that 340.3 hectares of general employment land was required within the borough to provide a 25 year supply of employment land. The purpose of the Stage 3 study was to review the suitability of existing sites and present a balanced portfolio of employment land to support the Local Development Framework.

The report identified that there was a significant oversupply of employment land within the borough when the amount of available land was compared to the stage 2 figure. However, it was concluded that a number of sites "restricted" for particular purposes, such as airport and port related uses and the chemical and steel industries, should be considered as additional land over and above that identified by the demand forecasts. This echoed the approach in the latest draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy. As a result 317.68 ha of land had been identified by the consultants for "restricted" use.

Before undertaking detailed site assessments the consultants identified sites that they considered were suitable for retention without any further surveys being undertaken. These sites totalled 167.41 hectares and were, Billingham House; Bowesfield Lane; Bowesfield South; Cowpen Lane; Malleable Industrial Estate (part of the former Corus site); North Shore; North Tees Industrial Estate; Portrack Interchange; Portrack Lane; Preston Farm; Stillington; Teesdale; Wynyard Business Park and Wynyard (Former Samsung Site).

Retaining these sites left a requirement to identify a further 173 hectares to meet the employment land forecast. Each site was assessed individually with a detailed justification provided in the stage 3 report. Following the site appraisal, Urray Nook, Durham Tees Valley Airport, Chemplex North & Central, Belasis Technology Park, Durham Lane Industrial Estate, Oxbridge Foundry and Teesside Industrial Estate were all identified for retention. The retention of these sites would result in a total forward supply of 323.3 hectares of employment land. This was slightly below the identified need for 340.3 hectares identified by economic forecasting but above historic take up of employment land within the Borough.

Sites not recommended for allocation were Bowesfield North, Eaglescliffe Inward Investment Site, Former Cable Ski site, Smiths Farm, land adjacent to Synthonia Ground, Tees Marshalling Yards and Eaglescliffe Logistics Centre (Allens West). In addition the Belasis Avenue North and South site was recommended for de-allocation.

Council officers would consider the content of the report and provide comments

to Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners. It was expected that a final report would be received before the end of May 2008. The completed study would be used as an important part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework documents.

Concluded that the report be noted.