

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

3 September 2008

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLANNING THE FUTURE OF RURAL VILLAGES IN STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH

SUMMARY

1. This report informs Members of the completion of the 'Planning the Future of Rural Villages' study prior to it being submitted to Cabinet and Council. The study will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF).

RECOMMENDATION

2. Members are recommended to: -
 - i) note the content of the report
 - ii) advise of any amendments prior to submission to Cabinet and Council.

BACKGROUND

3. A study of the rural villages within Stockton-on-Tees Borough has been undertaken, to underpin and support policy development within the Local Development Framework (LDF) and to give clarity in the implementation of Core Strategy Policy 1 (CS1) point 5; *'In catering for rural housing needs, priority will be given to the provision of affordable housing in sustainable locations, to meet identified need. This will be provided through a rural exception site policy'*.
4. In order to establish the levels of facilities available within the Borough's rural villages, an audit was carried out. A consultation exercise on the initial findings was undertaken, ending on February 29th 2008. At the beginning of the consultation, an LDF training event was held for Ward Members and Parish Councillors and Clerks, which included a session discussing villages, their role and function.
5. It was evident from this feedback that there was not a fair representation from all the villages and that there was a need to clarify the role of planning policies covering the villages as there appeared to be a misunderstanding amongst residents who responded. Therefore, to progress the study and improve the evidence base, it was decided to undertake further analysis and consultation.
6. Following consideration of the comments and views received, it was decided to take the study forward by undertaking a further consultation exercise in all villages included in the study in early July 2008. The consultation was based on further research into the sustainability, role and status of the villages within the Borough.

7. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) states that “planning authorities should seek to provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, whilst recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas”. A traffic light scoring system was used to rank each village in terms of their sustainability under the following categories:
- Employment
 - Health
 - Education
 - Shops
 - Leisure
 - Ancillary facilities
 - Access
8. From the results of the traffic light scoring system a village hierarchy was established. The purpose of this assessment was to spark debate about the villages and obtain information regarding services and facilities available to villages which had not been yet recorded. Through the response questionnaire residents were also asked a number of questions regarding future policy considerations, such as the limits of development.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE VILLAGES CONSULTATION

9. Through the response questionnaire residents made the following representations.

10. **Question 1-** Does your village require additional development (this term is generally accepted to mean housing development) to support the services currently provided?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
203	31	2	236

11. **Question 2-** Do you think there are any existing services that might be under threat due to lack of supporting development? What evidence is there of this?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
203	28	5	236

12. **Question 3-** Is any of the following required within the Village to support services?

1) More employment and jobs?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
178	30	28	236

2) More housing to meet general purpose needs of the village?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
183	27	26	236

3) More housing to meet local needs?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
187	21	28	236

4) More housing to meet affordable housing needs?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
184	27	25	236

13. **Question 6-** Is infill development appropriate within the village?

No	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
172	60	4	236

14. **Question 7-** Is there a need to retain development limits

No	Revise Boundary	Yes	No Answer	Grand Total
38	18	166	14	236

REPORT DETAIL

15. The findings of the village's facilities audit and the sustainability study have been compiled into one report in order to give a clear representation of the villages within the borough. A Executive Summary of the report is attached as Appendix A and the full report is as Appendix B.

16. The structure of the report follows the following outline:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Audit of Services and Facilities
- 3.0 Facilities Audit Consultation Responses
- 4.0 Sustainability Study
- 5.0 Sustainability Study Consultation Responses
- 6.0 Information gathered and Policy Considerations
- 7.0 Policy Recommendations

17. The facilities audit for each village has been updated to reflect the current position.

18. The traffic light scoring system used within the consultation session has been replaced by points based scoring system. This has provided a clear hierarchy of sustainability amongst the villages; as set out below.

	Village	Sustainability Score
Tier 1 (40 points plus)	Port Clarence	43
	Stillington	41
Tier 2 (30 to 39 points)	Long Newton	36
	Carlton	33
	Maltby	33
	Kirklevington	32
	Wolviston	30
Tier 3 (25 to 29 points)	Redmarshall	29
	Hilton	28
	Elton	27
	Thorpe Thewles	25
Tier 4 (24 points and less)	Whitton	21
	Wynyard	22
	Cowpen Bewley	20
	Aislaby	12

19. As an evidence base for policy documents emerging as part of the LDF the report has made a number of recommendations:
- 1) Development limits should be maintained around all villages.
 - 2) Infill development will be appropriate within Tiers 1 and 2. However, it will not be supported in Tiers 3 and 4 where residents have a greater reliance on the private car to access facilities.
 - 3) Emerging policy should promote the development of shopping facilities and additional amenities as infill development to meet the needs of the villages.
 - 4) Where a need for affordable housing has been identified through the rural exceptions policy it will be essential that these are located in areas where facilities are present or can be accessed by sustainable means, this will allow occupants of affordable housing to be able to access the services and facilities they require to live and not become marginalised.
 - 5) It is suggested that a limits of development be placed around Wynyard in order to define the boundary of the village and create a policy stance in accordance with Hartlepool Borough Council (which has a limits of development in place around the section of Wynyard which lies within the Borough). As Wynyard lies within tier 4 further housing infill development would not be supported until services and facilities were in place to rate the village within tiers 1 or 2 and thus reducing reliance on the private car.
 - 6) Update of the facilities and services audit will be undertaken in conjunction with Parish Councils in order to reassess the hierarchy of villages and direct development away from the least sustainable locations.

THE NEXT STEPS

20. Following consideration by Planning Committee it is anticipated that the final 'Planning the Future of Rural Villages in Stockton-on-Tees Borough' Report will go to Cabinet on 9 October 2008 for endorsement of the recommendations to inform the Regeneration Development Plan Document (DPD). Once the study has received Cabinet endorsement a letter will be sent out advising all those responding the consultation questionnaire that the document is completed and is available to be viewed.

RECOMMENDATION

21. Members are recommended: -
- i) note the content of the report
 - ii) advise of any amendments prior to submission to cabinet

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Background Papers - Planning the Future of Villages in Stockton on Tees Borough, Consultation Draft February 2008.

Financial Implications - None

Environmental Implications – None.

Community Safety Implications – None

Human rights Implications – The provision of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 has been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward and Ward Councillors – N/A.