

**CABINET**

**29TH JUNE 2006**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVISIONS  
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING**

**(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It is proposed to make a number of further changes to the Local Development Scheme (LDS). Key changes are in respect of the timing of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and a future revision to it and the introduction of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for West Huntingdon. There are also a number of changes to the timetable for the preparation of various documents taking the latest information available into account. Cabinet's approval is sought for the revised LDS to be submitted to GO-East for the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 Members are requested to agree for consultation a draft of the Affordable Housing SPD, taking into account a number of factors including the Government's Draft PPS3 on Housing, the issuing of a revised Statement of General Conformity with the Structure Plan by the County Council and the publication of the District Council's updating of the Housing Needs Assessment.

**2. THE CURRENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

- 2.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It sets out the range of planning documents which the Council will produce under the new system. As well as informing the community and other stakeholders of what to expect, the LDS is designed to assist with project management.
- 2.2 In March 2005, Cabinet approved the first Local Development Scheme (LDS) to be submitted to the Government. Go-East confirmed it had no objections to the scheme. A number of subsequent amendments have been agreed by Cabinet:

- September 2005 to allow the preparation and adoption of Supplementary Planning document (SPD) on Wind Power. This amendment was also agreed by GO-East
- February 2006 to include two SPDs for Affordable Housing and Planning Contributions. These SPDs would replace a Development Plan Document (DPD) originally intended to cover both aspects. This was not submitted to the Government as the timetable for the Affordable Housing needed to be revised taking into account the 2006 updating of the Housing Needs Survey.
- March 2006 to make amendments to the timetable in respect of the Core Strategy and Planning Proposals DPDs to take account of advice from the Planning Inspectorate on the programme.

### **3 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

- 3.1 It is inevitable that regular reviews will be required because of the many factors that can affect the need and timetable for producing planning documents (the principal risks are listed at paragraph 5.4 of the LDS). The changes recommended in this report include both changes to the programme and changes to the lists of documents to be produced.
- 3.2 A copy of the revised LDS is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.3 The current proposed amendments include:
- Priority to be given to the Affordable Housing SPD (which is the subject of the second part of this report) and the inclusion of a revision to this SPD when the Core Strategy becomes the statutory Development Plan
  - The introduction of an AAP for West Huntingdon to guide the development of an area where significant change is expected as a result of the redevelopment of land west of the town centre, the changes to road access which will flow from the improvements to the A14 and a need to establish an appropriate policy for the Hinchingsbrooke area
  - Revisions to the timetable for the Gypsy & Travellers Sites DPD
  - A number of other minor programme amendments, including rolling forward the base date of the LDS to exclude past events such as those for the Wind Power SPD which has now been completed
  - The LDS also expresses concern about the risks to the programme as a result of posts in Planning Policy remaining unfilled because of the shortage of suitably qualified and experienced applicants. In

particular, Members will note that the key post of Development Plans Team Leader remains unfilled.

- 3.4 The need to set out the Council's policies on Affordable Housing is considered the more urgent of the two SPDs and has therefore been programmed as the first to be the subject of consultation. The Planning Contributions requires more evidence gathering, including work on open space requirements which is being commissioned from consultants as required by PPG17, and therefore is programmed slightly later.

#### **4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD**

- 4.1 Attached as Appendix B to this report is the Draft SPD on Developer Contributions towards Affordable Housing.
- 4.2 SPD has to be based on the existing Development Plan policies which in this case are those in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002 (LPA), Policies AH1- AH4, rather than the policies which the Council has recently approved in the LDF Core Strategy because that will not become the Development Plan until it has completed its adoption process including Independent Examination.
- 4.3 The LPA states a target of 29% Affordable Housing to be achieved through developer contributions. However, the County Council issued in February 2006 a Statement of General Conformity in respect of the LPA which states that it is NOT in conformity with the Structure Plan as the Structure Plan policy P9/1 requires a target of 40% or more in the Cambridge Sub-Region. In these circumstances the Structure Plan policy prevails over the LPA and this is the policy approach which should now be applied to negotiations on Affordable Housing. The SPD includes a policy, SAH/1, which sets out this position i.e. that 40% or more will be sought in that part of the District in the Cambridge Sub-Region whilst 29% will be sought in the remainder of the District which lies in the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Sub-Region.
- 4.4 The SPD cannot introduce new thresholds establishing the scale of developments at which Affordable Housing contributions will be sought and therefore the thresholds set out in the LPA will continue to be applied. The Government's draft PPS3 on Housing reduces the indicative national minimum threshold from a site size of 25 dwellings to 15 dwellings. The LPA threshold is 25 dwellings in settlements larger than 3,000 population, but the requirement applies to all sites in settlements of 3,000 or less which is consistent with current Government policy. It is understood that the PPS3 revised threshold could be applied in Huntingdonshire once PPS3 has been approved in its final form by the Government.
- 4.5 The SPD also includes a policy, SAH/4, which indicates that, in the circumstances where no grant is available from the Housing Corporation or other body, the Council may negotiate a capital contribution so that the developer can meet the obligation of meeting the required target of Affordable Housing.

- 4.6 The Housing Needs Survey has been updated very recently (April 2006) and this is summarized in the SPD. It confirms that the priority Affordable Housing need is for social rented accommodation rather than intermediate (i.e. other forms of subsidised housing including key Worker and shared equity) housing and so the SPD sets the required split as being 70% social rented and 30% intermediate. A cascade mechanism explains the priorities the Council will apply in negotiations with developers. The first priority is to secure grant to provide Affordable Housing to the required target with the 70%/30% split. Where grant is not available, the next option is for the developer to provide the housing in this proportion for transfer to a RSL or, failing that, for the developer to provide a capital contribution to provide the required housing. The next stages in the cascade apply where the developer has clearly demonstrated that the site would not be viable if these provisions were applied. In these circumstances the first option will be to provide a different tenure mix, then fewer Affordable Homes than the target and finally, and only in exceptional circumstances, a financial contribution in lieu of provision on site.
- 4.7 The SPD will need to be published for public participation for a six week period consistent with the principles established in Statement of Community Involvement which has been recently approved by the Council. The SPD will need to be revised in the light of comments which have been made during the consultation period before the document can be formally adopted. It will then become a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.
- 4.8 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the SPD is required, to be published for consultation alongside the document. It is proposed that this be undertaken on the document as approved by Cabinet at this meeting, and that the Executive Member for Planning and Transport be given delegated authority to approve the SA.
- 4.9 As has been set out above in respect of the LDS, the Affordable Housing SPD will need to be revised when the Core Strategy has been adopted on a statutory basis so that the SPD conforms to it.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees:
1. The proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State
  2. The Draft SPD on Developer Contributions towards Affordable Housing be published for public participation and that the Executive member for Planning and Transport be given delegated authority to approve its Sustainability Appraisal.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Report and Minutes, Cabinet, 17th March 2005

Report and Minutes, Cabinet, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Huntingdonshire Local Development Scheme, September 2005

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, ODPM

Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing, December 2005

Statement of General Conformity with the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan – Non-Conformity Respects, Cambridgeshire County Council, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002

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