

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

**THURSDAY, 29TH MAY 2008, AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, S. R. Colella, G. N. Denaro, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., R. Hollingworth, Mrs. J. D. Luck, S. R. Peters, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, E. C. Tibby and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. P. Street, Mr. D. Hammond, Mr. A. Coel, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mrs. R. Williams, Ms. S. Lai and Ms. R. Cole.

1/08 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Mrs J. Dyer M.B.E. be elected Chairman of the Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

2/08 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor P.J. Whittaker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

3/08 **APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

4/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 13th December 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

5/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

6/08 **REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY PHASE 2 PREFERRED OPTION UPDATE AND PHASE 3 LAUNCH**

The Working Party considered a report which set out in detail the latest position regarding the revised Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), the consultation exercise and the process of making representations to the submitted version of the strategy.

The Strategic Planning Manager referred to an additional report which had been submitted as part of the consideration of this item. The report related specifically to the commissioning of an additional Redditch Growth Study. It was intended that the study would identify how the requirements of Redditch growth as proposed in the RSS Phase 2 revision should be split between the Districts of Bromsgrove and Stratford on Avon together with a determination of the priority of sites to be developed. This study would enable the Authorities involved to develop their respective core strategies and would provide a robust technical evidence base to be presented at the RSS Examination in Public. At a meeting on 19th May 2008 the Leaders of the respective Councils had agreed that this work was required in order to address the issue of Redditch related growth.

It was noted that the cost of the study would be approximately £50,000 and the funding of the study was to be split between this Council, Worcestershire County Council, Stratford District Council, Redditch Borough Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. It was likely therefore that this Council's contribution would be up to £10,000 which could be met from within existing budgetary provision. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the reports be noted.

7/08 **CORE STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Working Party considered a report on the current position regarding the preparation of the Preferred Options Core Strategy. The progress made on various studies which would assist with the provision of an evidence base to support policies within the Core Strategy was considered.

Consideration was also given to the draft Spatial Vision and it was reported that it was intended to consult on this vision at the forthcoming Town Hall meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership on 9th July 2008. It was felt that there should be a reference to the development of the Longbridge site within the vision document.

**RESOLVED** that the progress made on the preparation of the Preferred Options Core Strategy be noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Spatial Vision be approved for consultation subject to the inclusion of a reference to the Longbridge site.

8/08 **BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

The Working Party considered an updated report on the Issues and Options document in relation to the Town Centre Area Action Plan together with the consultation process to be undertaken.

It was reported that the Issues and Options stage of the Area Action Plan process was intended to provide an opportunity for the public to express both positive and negative opinions about the Town Centre. In order to focus responses on the aspects of the Town Centre redevelopment which could be affected by the planning system, the document contained a number of significant issues and options to overcome each issue although respondents were also encouraged to suggest alternative options. The document was intended to trigger discussion around certain key areas.

There was some concern that all Members of the Council had not received a copy of the document and that the vision contained within Section 2 of the document was not the same as that agreed by full Council as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It was also felt that it would be helpful in future for the minutes of the Town Centre Steering Group to be submitted to this Working Party. Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that subject to the vision for the Town Centre being replaced with the vision agreed by Council as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010, the document be approved for consultation purposes as an "issues" paper only and circulated to all members of the Council;
- (b) that the questionnaire currently being developed to accompany the consultation document be considered at the next meeting of the Town Centre Steering Group and that the questionnaire be extended to ensure there is focus on key issues and additional options are included in respect of those key issues;
- (c) that the minutes of the Town Centre Steering Group be submitted to the Local Development Framework Working Party for information; and
- (d) that it be made clear on the Council's website that the consultation document is a draft document at present.

9/08 **RURAL EXCEPTION HOUSING SCHEMES**

The Working Party considered a report on the role of rural exception sites in delivering affordable housing and the development of the policy background in respect of these sites. It was reported that rural exception sites could provide additional housing within or adjoining villages where normally development would not be allowed e.g. within the green belt. This would need to be on the basis of meeting identified local housing needs.

Members of the Working Party expressed views on this issue in the light of their knowledge of particular circumstances within the wards which they represented. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that officers note the feedback received and utilise it in the preparation of a revised rural exceptions policy for inclusion within the Core Strategy.

10/08 **NEW PLANNING POLICIES**

The Working Party considered issues contained in a paper produced by Members on particular issues of concern. The paper was intended to encourage discussion on possible changes to planning policies in the light of national projected population figures, including an increase in the number of elderly people requiring various categories of housing and care and the number of young people living at home but requiring an element of independent living.

**Affordable Housing**

The Head of Planning and Environment reminded Members that the results of the Housing Market Assessment would be available at the end of July 2008 and that these results would provide robust evidence for revision of the policy relating to the provision of affordable housing and the proportion of affordable housing to be provided within new development schemes. Officers accepted the intentions behind the proposals to ensure that the provision of affordable housing was maximised.

**Categories of Care for the Elderly**

The Head of Planning and Environment stated that in relation to extensions to Care Homes in the green belt, there could be conflict with national green belt policy which would mean the Council's Core Strategy would be unsound. It was acknowledged that whilst Members had the option of overturning officers' recommendations at Planning Committee in relation to applications for extensions to Care Homes, this was not a particularly satisfactory approach. It was noted that the results of the Older Persons Housing Survey would be available in December 2008 and this would assist in identifying gaps in provision. Officers undertook to seek information from other Authorities within the Council's "family group" in relation to the issue of extensions to care homes within the green belt.

It was reported that the Head of Strategic Housing had undertaken to arrange for Members to visit a Care Village and a "Care at Hand" facility together with a presentation from officers representing social services and supporting people to assist with the identification of gaps in service provision and the type of accommodation the Council may wish to encourage in order to meet the needs of older people within the District.

**The 40% Rule**

In relation to the possible increase in the floor area on which present policy is based, the Head of Planning and Environment undertook to report back to a future meeting with plans illustrating examples of various floor areas together with suggestions for a base date from which extensions could be calculated.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the paper together with the subsequent discussions be taken into account by officers in formulating new policies and

that officers report back with the additional information referred to above as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman