

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
20 JUNE 2011	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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Planning Policy Updates

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Rural Commission has expressed for some time a keen interest in planning policy matters. It received a comprehensive update report on 2 November 2010, and today is a further update.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the update on the various planning policy activities are noted.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Planning Policy cuts across all four priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 **Design and Development in Selected Villages Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Adoption:** This SPD is scheduled to have been adopted by Cabinet on 13 June. The Rural Commission will recall (see 2 November 2010 agenda papers) that the SPD sets out detailed ‘development management’ design related planning policies for selected rural villages, which can, assuming it was adopted by Cabinet, be used day-to-day by planning officers when considering the detailed aspects of applicable planning permissions.
- 4.2 The SPD does not set major strategic targets (that is a task for the Core Strategy) and it does not include maps or new land allocations for development in villages (that is a task for the Site Allocations DPD). However, the policies are extremely important when determining planning applications. They give the Council the powers and justification to either refuse or approve something, especially on detailed design matters (which can be very sensitive in local village communities).
- 4.3 Extensive consultation took place with parish councils during the preparation of the document, and it has received their warm support. Indeed, the majority of the document, and its policies, has been written by the parish councils themselves, based on their own research and desires for their community.
- 4.4 Once adopted, the SPD will be available via the following link
http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building/planning_policy/adopted_development_plan/supplementary_planning_documen.aspx
- 4.5 **Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Submission and Examination Stage:** The Rural Commission will recall (see 2 November 2010 agenda papers) that the main purpose of the Site Allocations Document is to allocate land on a map for specific purposes, usually for new development but also for other uses such as safeguarding land for infrastructure.

- 4.6 Since your last update of November, the Site Allocations DPD was subject to a six-week public consultation between 11th February and 24th March 2011. We received over 1,450 comments. There was significant objection to proposed new development sites in the rural area, particularly in Eye where over 400 people objected to growth outside the current village boundary. We also received large numbers of objection to sites in Helpston, Newborough and Ailsworth.
- 4.7 The Site Allocations DPD, and all comments and objections received during the consultation period, was submitted to the Secretary of State on 4th May 2011. An Inspector has been appointed who will carry out a Public Examination into the document. This will include a 'Hearing' session, which is set to take place in early October and is likely to last for around 2 weeks. The Inspector will consider all the issues raised and will then publish a binding report, which means his decisions on whether a site should be allocated (or not) is final. Thereafter, the Council can adopt the document in early 2012.
- 4.8 **Planning Policies Development Plan Document – approaching pre-submission stage:** This document sets out detailed 'development management' planning policies which will, once adopted, apply district wide. It covers a wide range of matters, applicable whether development is in a rural or urban context. The document does not allocate land for new development (see Site Allocations Document for land allocations).
- 4.9 A draft version of the document was issued for consultation in February this year, and the responses to that consultation are currently being analysed. A small number of those draft policies are applicable mainly to development proposals in rural areas. The primary ones are 'Conversion and Replacement of Dwellings in the Countryside' and the 'Rural Economy'. These policies help to make efficient use of existing buildings in the countryside and assist in creating employment opportunities in the villages. The policies are attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.10 For the rural-based policies, the main issues raised at the recent consultation stage were affordable housing for young people in villages, the request that the village historic environment should be preserved and a suggestion that there should be Peterborough Rural Development Plan.
- 4.11 The aim is for a revised version of the document to be considered in the autumn, with full Council approving the document in December 2011. Thereafter, the document will be issued for its final period of public consultation, and any remaining objection will be considered by an Inspector prior to its formal adoption by the Council in early 2013.
- 4.12 **Future Updates:** The intention is to bring a further update to the Rural Commission on all of the above, and potentially any new issues which may arise out of the enactment of the Localism Bill, at its meeting in either November 2011 or January 2012.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no implications arising as a result of this report.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Each of the items described in this report have had extensive public consultation throughout their preparation, details of which are available on the council's website.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Some of the key stages for each of the documents are described above. A further update will be given to the Rural Commission at the end of the year.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 8.1 None

Appendix 1: Extract of the Planning Policies Development Plan Document (February 2011)

Policy PP5: Conversion and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Conversion of an agricultural building

In the countryside, planning permission for the conversion of an agricultural building to residential use will only be granted if:

- (a) there is no reasonable prospect of the building being used for employment purposes; and
- (b) the agricultural use of the building has ceased; and
- (c) the building is not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required; and
- (d) the building is of traditional character and appearance, and conversion can be undertaken without extensive alteration and rebuilding.

Replacement of an existing dwelling in the countryside

Planning permission for the replacement of an existing dwelling in the countryside with a new dwelling will only be granted if:

- (e) the residential use of the original dwelling has not been abandoned; and
- (f) the original dwelling is not a temporary or mobile structure such as a caravan; and
- (g) the original dwelling is not worthy of retention because of its character and/or positive contribution to the landscape.

Provided that criteria (e) to (g) can all be met, any replacement dwelling should be:

- (h) of a similar size and scale to the original dwelling, or a larger than original dwelling may be permitted where this is appropriate to both the size of the plot and its setting in the landscape; and
- (i) of a design appropriate to its rural setting; and
- (j) located on the site of the original dwelling, unless an alternative suitable site exists within the existing residential curtilage, in which case the existing dwelling will be required to be completely removed within a short period of the new dwelling being occupied.

Policy PP6 The Rural Economy

In villages and the countryside, planning permission for development for tourism, leisure and cultural uses will be granted, provided that the development:

- (a) would be consistent in scale and environmental impact with its rural location; and
- (b) would help to support existing local community services and facilities; and
- (c) would be compatible with, or would enhance, the character of the village or the landscape in which it would be situated; and
- (d) would not cause undue harm to the open nature of the countryside or any site designated for its natural or cultural heritage qualities; and
- (e) would be easily accessible, preferably by public transport; and
- (f) if it involves the construction of a new building in the open countryside, is supported by a robust business plan that demonstrates (i) the demand for the development and (ii) that the facilities to be provided would constitute a viable business proposition on a long-term basis.

In the countryside, development involving the expansion of an existing employment use on its current site or the conversion of an existing agricultural building (particularly if it is adjacent to or closely related to a village) will be acceptable for employment uses within Use Classes B1 to B8 or tourism-related uses, provided that the building is not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required.

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