

POLYTUNNELS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Report By: Forward Planning Manager

1 Wards Affected

County-wide

2 Purpose

- 2.1 To receive and agree for consultation purposes a draft supplementary planning document (SPD) setting out further planning guidance on polytunnel development. This document is included within the Council's Local Development Scheme (January 2008) and is being produced in line with the regulations of the new planning system introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Costs such as printing and undertaking the consultation exercise will be met from approved budgets.

4 Background

- 4.1 This supplementary planning document is being produced to expand upon and provide additional information and guidance in support of policies contained within the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. As there is no single polytunnels policy within the Plan, a range of policies will need to be considered when assessing such proposals.
- 4.2 The purpose of the document is to make clear to applicants and interested parties the policy areas and requirements such development proposals will need to address and against which they will ultimately be assessed. Once adopted, it will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The document will replace the Council's Voluntary Code of Practice to control polytunnels which has been suspended.
- 4.3 In July and as part of initial consultation and information gathering, the Council published an Issues Paper and sought the views of Parish Councils, statutory undertakers, interested organisations, growers and stakeholders as to the form that this document should take. This was followed by structured consultation events with both representatives from the farming/growing community and with local individuals and representatives from interested lobby groups. The consultation process follows the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and comments received to date are summarised in a separate 'Consultation Statement' which can be viewed on the Council's website. These comments have helped shape the draft SPD.

- 4.4 In accordance with Government guidance, the SPD is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, which can also be viewed on the Council's website. The Sustainability Appraisal tests the performance of the SPD against a series of environmental, social and economic objectives. The appraisal will review any changes proposed to the SPD as it progresses to completion.

5 Aims of the SPD

- 5.1 The aim of the SPD is to assist all involved as to the requirements and issues to be addressed in any polytunnel development proposal. In so doing it attempts to:
- Help clarify the forms of development that will require planning permission;
 - Set out the planning issues associated with the erection of polytunnels;
 - Set out the UDP policies that will need to be addressed;
 - Make clear the additional information that would need to accompany an application; and
 - Set out the Council's pre-application planning guidance.

6 SPD Outline

- 6.1 The SPD is made up of the following sections:
- Sections 1 and 2: Introduction and Context – setting out role and purpose, use of polytunnels/methods of growing, associated development, planning control, planning policy context and main UDP policies.
 - Sections 3 and 4: Planning Issues – outlining and assessing the planning issues that most frequently arise when planning applications are considered. Setting out policy guidelines.
 - Section 5 – sets out the additional information that may need to be submitted with a planning application.
 - Section 6 – advice and opportunity for pre-application discussions, advice on types and forms of applications including 'whole farm plans'.

7 SPD Process

- 7.1 When agreed the draft SPD will be published for consultation purposes. Consultation will be in accordance with the procedures set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A Sustainability Appraisal and Consultation Statement will accompany the SPD. All comments received from this further consultation will be reported back to this Committee along with recommended changes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing) be recommended to agree the publication of the Draft Supplementary Planning Document for consultation purposes.

Background papers

Local Development Scheme (January 2008)
Statement of Community Involvement (March 2007)
Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (March 2007)
Sustainability Appraisal – Subsidiary Scoping Report October 2007.