

REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meetings Held on 23 May and 4 July 2008

Membership:

Councillors: TW Hunt (Chairman), RV Stockton (Vice-Chairman), ACR Chappell, PGH Cutter, H Davies, GFM Dawe, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, JW Hope, B Hunt, G Lucas, RI Matthews, PM Morgan, JE Pemberton, AP Taylor, DC Taylor, WJ Walling, PJ Watts and JD Woodward.

REFERRED PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. The following Planning Applications were determined by the Committee because (i) they relate to the Council's own development or to the development of land owned by the Council; (ii) they are applications referred to the Committee by the Head of Planning Services because the Area Planning Sub-Committees are mindful to approve/refuse them contrary to officer recommendations and Council's Policies; (iii) they are of strategic importance; or (iv) they are applications by Members of the Council or their relatives.
 - (a) DCNE2008/0633/F - alterations and extensions to existing buildings, new warehouse, concentrate store, gatehouse, fuel tank structures, access road and re-arrangement of hardstanding areas at Robertson's Business Park, Little Marcle Road, Ledbury – approved as recommended;
 - (b) DCCW2008/0421/F - retrospective application for change of use from agricultural to a two family traveller site including siting of two mobile homes and a touring caravan for Mr James Smith and Mr Jimmy Smith and their respective families at The Birches Stables, Burghill – approved as recommended; and
 - (c) DCCE2008/1026/N - formation of earth bunds (8000 cu m of imported soil) as screening etc. at The Old Mushroom Farm, Haywood Lane, Callow, Hereford – approved as recommended.

AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEES

2. Information reports have been received from the three Area Planning Sub-Committees which have dealt with the following matters:
 - (a) **Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings held on 9 April, 7 May & 4 June, 2008**
 - applications approved as recommended – 9
 - applications refused as recommended – 1
 - applications minded to approve contrary to recommendation 2
 - applications minded to refuse contrary to recommendation 1
 - applications deferred for further information or site visit - 1
 - number of public speakers – 3 parish council; 6 objectors and 8 supporters

- appeals - 14 appeals received, 10 dismissed, 4 upheld and 1 withdrawn)

(b) Central Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings held on 16 April, 14 May & 11 June, 2008

- applications approved as recommended - 8
- applications refused as recommended - 0
- applications deferred for site inspection – 0
- applications minded to approve contrary to recommendation 0 (referred to Planning Committee)
- applications minded to refuse approve contrary to recommendation 3 (2 referred to Planning Committee)
- applications deferred for further information/negotiations – 2
- applications withdrawn - 1
- number of public speakers – 2 parish council; 8 objectors and 6 supporters
- appeals - 7 appeals received, 5 dismissed and 2 upheld).

(c) Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings held on 30 April, 28 May & 25 June, 2008

- applications approved as recommended - 16
- applications refused as recommended - 0
- applications minded to approve 1 (not referred)
- applications minded to refuse 1 (not referred)
- number of public speakers – 1 objector and 2 supporters
- appeals - 9 appeals received, 4 dismissed and 3 upheld.

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS): PHASE TWO REVISION

3. The RSS was issued by the Government in 2004 and has been followed by a phased review. The first phase dealt with the Black Country and the second phase has reached an advanced stage. It deals with housing, employment, the role of centres, waste and some aspects of transport. The third and final phase began in November 2007 and covers rural services, gypsy and traveller sites, culture, minerals and environment policies. The Regional Assembly has worked closely with regional stakeholders in preparing phase two, and strategic planning authorities such as Herefordshire Council have submitted advice to it. Consultation was undertaken on spatial options which were considered by Cabinet in February 2007. A preferred option was approved by the Assembly's Regional Planning Partnership in October and submitted to the Secretary of State in December. Formal public consultation on the revision was launched in January. The next stage will be by way of an Inquiry arranged by the Secretary of State and held before an independent Panel. The Panel will subsequently prepare a Report for consideration by the Secretary of State who will consult on proposed changes before finalising the revised RSS.
4. The Government is concerned that more houses need to be built if problems of affordability are to be addressed. The Assembly has worked with partners to increase its proposals for housing provision throughout the region. Although significant increases in housing development have been proposed, they do not

meet Government aspirations in full. The proposed housing targets for the County are broadly in line with the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan but with a greater emphasis on the City and the market towns for their location. It has been recommended to Cabinet that the Phase Two Revision should be generally supported.

HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY: DEVELOPING OPTIONS PAPER

5. The preparation of a Core Strategy is a mandatory element of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and includes:
 - a long term vision for the County and its places (to 2026);
 - objectives for an identified set of key issues;
 - a strategy to deliver the objectives; and
 - an indication of strategic sites or locations, infrastructure needs, funding and responsibilities.

6. The Core Strategy relates to the shaping of places rather than solely the grant of planning permission and is linked to the Community Strategy and to the Local Area Agreement. An LDF Task Group was established early in the process of preparing the Core Strategy, consisting of Herefordshire Council Cabinet Members covering the portfolio areas of environment, housing, transportation and economic development/regeneration; together with Herefordshire Partnership Board representatives for community, economy and environment. It provides a forum for the broad consideration of the spatial development of the county and helps to ensure consistency and coherence across the Council and the Partnership. The Committee has recommended to the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing) that the Herefordshire Core Strategy Developing Options Paper be commended for approval by Cabinet for public consultation.

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

7. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is an initial study of the land with potential for housing development within the County for the period up to 2026. The Council is required to produce an assessment under the provisions of PPS3 Housing to demonstrate how the future housing requirement identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) could be fulfilled. The study is a key component of the Local Development Framework and contributes to the preparation of the Core Strategy. The initial report from the study will be made available as an evidence based background paper for the Core Strategy options. It will help to establish whether the options for broad directions of growth are feasible by indicating whether sufficient land is available to achieve the levels of growth suggested. The assessment will also provide information for the Hereford Action Area Plan and any other development plan documents. Land identified will contribute to the overall RSS requirements including those for affordable housing. The sites identified will not automatically receive planning permission or be allocated for housing development. The assessment is also being undertaken in the knowledge that the housing figures proposed in the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy were viewed by the Government as being too low. Any addition to the future housing provision for Herefordshire will need to be considered further within the context of the Core Strategy and the Assessment.

8. Some 500 sites have been identified within the process although there are numerous issues with each. Hereford and the market towns have been concentrated upon initially and the next phase will be to widen the scope to the

rural areas. The study needs to be widened to include the conservation and environmental issues to help to determine those sites which could be progressed. All sites had been investigated around each settlement to determine their suitability and it is likely that the majority of the smaller ones will be discounted because the emphasis is on areas of growth. The Committee has recommended to the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing) that Cabinet be requested to approve the initial findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as a basis for further technical work in support of the Local Development Framework.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS

9. Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's) are a collaborative project management process for complex development proposals. The aim is to move away from development control to a system of development management which takes into account the broader concept of spatial planning. PPAs are aimed at improving the quality of the decision making process. Advice from the Government is that if PPAs are to be used regularly, local planning authorities should establish a formal process. The Committee has approved the introduction of Planning Performance Agreements and an associated Charter. The Charter sets out the proposed parameters to be used by the Council and covers the following:-
 - a) proposals for strategic housing and/or employment sites as identified either in the existing UDP or the forthcoming LDF; or
 - b) proposals requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment; or proposals which would have a significant impact on existing communities and therefore require expansive consultation or involvement from many different stakeholders, interest groups, statutory agencies etc.

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT SITES

10. On 1 July the Committee carried out a review of some of the sites in the County which have been developed following the granting of planning permission.

**T.W. HUNT
CHAIRMAN
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS Agenda for the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 23 May and 4 July 2008.