

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008 AT 10.00 A.M IN THE BRIDGNORTH ROOM, SHIREHALL**

**Present:**

Councillors: Mr G. L. Dakin  
Mrs G. L. D. Ellis  
Mr J. Hurst-Knight  
Mrs H. H. Kidd  
Mrs R. E. J. Yeomans

Officers Ms P. Spencer (Lead Officer)  
Mr N. Taylor (Unitary Planning Project)  
Mrs M. McLaven (Solicitor)  
Mrs J. Leivers (Committee Officer)

**LD/1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Proposed by John Hurst-Knight, seconded by Gerald Dakin

**RESOLVED (unanimous)**

**that John Everall be elected Chairman of the Local Development Sub-Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.**

**LD/2 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Brian Ashton, Joanne Lancaster and David Roberts.

**LD/3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Proposed by John Everall, seconded by John Hurst-Knight

**RESOLVED (unanimous)**

**that Gerald Dakin be appointed Vice Chairman of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.**

**LD/4 NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

The notes of the informal meeting of the LDF Sub-Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008 were accepted as an accurate record.

**LD/5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

Further to Note 5 regarding the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Nick Taylor confirmed that GOWM had appointed consultants to look into the housing figures proposed in the Phase 2 Revision. The consultation period for Phase 2 had already been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 but it was now likely to be further extended and the Examination in Public would probably now take place in January 2009. This would

have the effect of pushing back the timescales for the Phase 3 Revision. The National Housing & Planning Advice Unit had estimated that between 21,000 and 23,000 new houses would be required across the West Midlands by 2026 whereas the proposals in the Phase 2 revision had allowed for 19,000. The GOWM appointed consultants would advise on how increased housing numbers could be accommodated and reconciled with the RSS Strategy. This would then feed into the Examination in Public.

## **LD/6 JOINED UP PLANNING POLICY AND DRAFT LDS**

Penny Spencer referred to the discussion at the Sub-Committee's last meeting regarding responsibilities for approving the LDS and LDF. She confirmed that now the Structural Change Order was in place Regulation 6 of the Order could be wide enough to allow the Implementation Executive (IE) to approve the LDS and LDF for submission to GOWM. However, until further regulations under Regulation 7 of the Order were made, to be on the safe side, it was considered sensible for the draft LDS to be submitted to individual authorities for their approval. It was proposed that the Sub-Committee would recommend the draft County wide LDS to the IE who would then submit it to GOWM. At the same time individual authorities would be required to approve the sections of the draft LDS so far as it applied to them. Unfortunately, it was not known when further regulations would be forthcoming. She confirmed that the table accompanying the report was a draft, the final version would be submitted to the Sub-Committee at its next meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

Nick Taylor then took the Sub-Committee through the proposed approach to joined up planning policy in Shropshire; the staff resources and the proposed thematic approach for interim joint working, all of which were explained in some detail in the report and accompanying timetable. He reminded Members that at the next meeting they would be asked to approve the draft LDS for submission to GOWM, via the IE. Once agreed by GOWM the Authority was committed to this timetable. It was essential for all involved to be focussed on the priorities and not be diverted.

Heather Kidd suggested that it was important that the links between themes, such as housing and the economy were evident and that these issues were not dealt with in isolation. This led to a discussion regarding how best to ensure that the LDF created policies that were appropriate to Shropshire overall whilst recognising that villages were individual communities with differing requirements. Nick Taylor acknowledged that it would be a challenge to produce a coherent overall strategy for Shropshire because, whilst the LDF had to conform to national and regional strategies, the core strategy would need to be specific to Shropshire. The LDF would include a Site Allocation Document and identify the main settlements for development. There may, in due course, be the potential for the creation of Area Action Plans for the market towns which would reflect their individuality.

Gerald Dakin emphasised the need to engage communities at an early stage and encourage the public to recognise that the LDF was not just a series of dry policy documents. Penny Spencer confirmed that the Statement of Community Involvement detailed the means by which the public would be consulted and engaged and was not part of the LDF itself. Nick Taylor also pointed out that a number of topic based discussion papers would be forthcoming giving the opportunity for Member and local engagement.

Regarding the enormity of the work involved, Georgie Ellis asked if more staff would have to be recruited. Penny Spencer confirmed that this was not the intention and it was hoped that the work could be organised using existing staff. It was recognised that a number of specific areas of work would require outside expertise and resources were being identified for these. Regarding whether the staffing structure complied with the Business Plan she explained that this was being considered by the

Planning Policy Team and would then go on to the Service Transition Sub-Committee. Whilst acknowledging the additional workload on staff she pointed out that work on individual authorities' LDFs had now ceased but recognised that staff had to be looked after particularly when a number were concerned about their long term future. It was essential to establish the most effective interim and long term arrangements.

**RESOLVED (unanimous)**

**that the proposed content of a draft joint Local Development Scheme (LDF) for Shropshire and the intention to move towards more formal joint working by Planning Policy staff be noted.**

**LD/7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – BROAD POLICY CONTEXT**

This report introduced the concept of sustainability from international, national and regional perspectives. Nick Taylor confirmed that it stopped short of what “sustainable” meant for Shropshire but the definitions provided would help to form the ideas on how the concept applied to Shropshire. He stated that sustainability was not just about green and environmental issues, although the concept had tended to focus on these areas. It was about “proofing for the future”. However, climate change had now come to the fore and all local authorities had to ensure that local policies addressed the wider problems of climate change.

In response to a comment from Gerald Dakin about the need to engage with other bodies, such as Severn Trent Water, which may have conflicting policies, he confirmed that this was being taken on board and that it would be obligatory to liaise with organisations such as the Environment Agency when considering new developments.

Heather Kidd stated that it was important to look at the issue from all angles. She said that “social sustainability” was vital in small communities. Small developments helped families to stay together and support each other, reducing the need for social services and outreach involvement, which in turn led to less travel to these communities, thus helping the environment.

It was also recognised that agriculture, although greatly reduced in recent years, played a significant role in Shropshire and ways should be found of helping to sustain farms and agricultural developments through diversification and encouraging the younger generation to stay within the family farm. Elizabeth Yeomans confirmed that there were few small traditional farms left in Shropshire, as most were now big businesses being managed from a distance. However, those that were left should be assisted through encouraging diversification and introducing flexible policies to enable different businesses to run alongside the farming business. John Hurst-Knight confirmed that the County Council was in touch with the NFU who were trying to encourage younger people back into farming.

Georgie Ellis suggested that, although farming and agriculture was now a small part of the local economy it had a knock on effect in other areas such as tourism. She cited the example of Ludlow promoting the use of local produce in shops, cafes and hotels. It was also noted that Shropshire schools now all used local produce too.

Gerald Dakin felt that the concept of the polluter pays was a little harsh when in Shropshire private transport was often the only means of getting around. Nick Taylor suggested that this was shorthand for the principle that everyone had a duty to try and reduce the inefficient use of resources. However, he acknowledged that there were some areas in Shropshire where a blanket approach to sustainability would not be feasible. He added that it was a difficult balance to strike, i.e. promoting economic

growth without damaging the environment whilst economic growth was necessary to develop a scientific approach to addressing climate change.

Heather Kidd asked if this discussion would result in an overarching policy for Shropshire. Nick Taylor stated that sustainability would underpin every document and policy within the LDF rather than there being one Sustainability Policy. The core strategy would include sustainability and how it applied to Shropshire. In addition all documents were subject to a sustainability appraisal. He confirmed that this would not clash with the work being undertaken on the Rural Renaissance.

**RESOLVED (unanimous)**

**that the broad definitions of sustainable development, which will need to be developed into a Shropshire perspective that will underpin the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF, be noted.**

**LD/8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Sub-Committee will next meet on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 10.00 a.m..

The meeting finished at 11.20 a.m.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date .....