

CABINET

18 November 2003

EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF COMMITTEES RELATING TO 'IMPLEMENTATION OF PPG3 WITHIN THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT'

REPORT OF CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WDLP32 The Implementation of PPG3 within the Winchester District 3 November 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the relevant minute extracts from the meetings of the Winchester District Local Plan Committee held 3 and 4 November 2003 in addition to the Principal Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2003 relating to the Implementation of PPG3 within the Winchester District (report WDLP32 refers).

Members are requested to bring copies of report WDLP32 with them to the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider and determine the matters set out the minute extracts from the meetings of Winchester District Local Plan Committee held 3 and 4 November 2003, in addition to the Principal Scrutiny Committee held 6 November 2003.

CABINET18 November 2003EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF COMMITTEES RELATING TO 'IMPLEMENTATION OF PPG3 WITHIN THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT'Report of City Secretary and Solicitor1. WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – 3 NOVEMBER 20031.1. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PPG3 WITHIN THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT
(Report WDLP32 refers)

Councillor Davies declared a personal (but not prejudicial interest) in this item as a Member of the City of Winchester Trust and spoke and voted thereon.

Mr Opacic explained that following Members' concerns, two seminars on PPG3 had been undertaken to review its implementation in the District.

The report set out the main responses from these seminars and recommended that the Local Plan be strengthened with regard to certain policies that took account of local character in the decision making process.

At the invitation of the Chairman, several members of the public commented on the report.

Mr Lander-Brinkley (Denmead Parish Council) thanked the Council for organising the seminars and questioned what level of support would be available to local communities in developing Village and Neighbourhood Design Statements. Mr Opacic explained that the current arrangements provided officer advice and a £1,000 grant towards printing costs. Members discussed whether the Council should offer further support and recommended that the greatest help was needed at the start, not the completion of the process of drafting a Village or Neighbourhood Design Statement.

Members also discussed the need for Neighbourhood Design Statements within the unparished area of Winchester Town and Councillor Campbell, as the Leader of the Council, spoke in support on this. Members also agreed that local communities should be encouraged to produce Village and Neighbourhood Design Statements through their promotion in the next available edition of Insight, the Council's newsletter. Members noted the importance of public consultation in the drafting of the statements and the need to involve as many local residents as possible.

Mr Atkins (Alresford Town Council) broadly welcomed the changes in the report but recommended that those policies that set the number of developments that trigger social housing should be more flexible and that these dwellings should be located as close to town centres and facilities as possible. Mr Atkins also commented on the need to protect industrial sites and that the question of a site's viability was a matter for the developers, not the Council.

Mrs Edwards (City of Winchester Trust) welcomed the report but circulated to Members a list of the Trust's concerns. In summary these included the concern that the Council's policies placed too great an emphasis on achieving a density threshold of 30 dwellings per hectare. The Trust also recommended further liaison with the service providers to evaluate the likely impact of developments on the infrastructure and that a flexible master-plan should be established for areas under incremental development pressure. She also suggested that the Council should be more proactive in urban design.

In consideration of Mrs Edward's comments, Members noted that it was impractical to weight each of the criteria set out in the Local Plan as they should all be taken into account, if relevant, and each application should be judged on its own merits. However, it was agreed that officers' reports should demonstrate that 'character' issues had been considered. Mr Opacic added that relevant service providers were often already consulted on planning applications.

In response to comments from Mrs Hauser, Mr Opacic stated that (if approved by Council) the changes in paragraph 3.8 of the report would become the Council's non-statutory policy, although the importance attached to them would largely depend on the number and type of objections received during the six week period of public consultation on the Pre-Inquiry Changes. Mr Opacic also clarified that all the constraints of a site, such as the highways, should be taken into account when assessing whether an appropriate density was being proposed.

Mrs Hauser also recommended that developers should be given more guidance earlier in the planning process as to Members' views on appropriate site densities.

The Committee also heard from Mr Cherrett who commented on the need for the Local Plan policies to protect the special character of Winchester.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Lipscomb commented on the report and stated that the planning process should give more reference to the views of Parish Councils.

Mr Hayter addressed the Committee and amongst the comments he made, he suggested that the requirement for developers to produce development and design briefs would be impractical in terms of workload and time. Mr Opacic anticipated that the number of development briefs produced would be comparatively low and that they should be produced before applications are submitted. They should, therefore, not adversely effect the eight week decision target.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Busher spoke as Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee. She stated that many of the more controversial applications concerned proposals for single developments rather than the ten dwellings or more that would trigger the requirement for a development brief.

Members noted that GOSE (Government Office of the South-East) had calculated the average density in the District to be 19 dwellings per hectare and Mr Opacic stated that this was thought to be an inaccurate and out of date estimate and that he would contact GOSE with his concerns.

Members agreed the proposed changes to DP.3 at paragraph 3.8 of the report with the amendment that “introverted backland developments” be changed to “inward looking backland developments.”

In considering the report, it was noted that page two of Appendix 5 should be deleted and that “discreet” be amended to “discrete” in paragraph 3.8 of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that the proposed changes to the Local Plan Review set out in paragraphs 3.8 (as amended) and 3.24 be approved as proposed Pre-Inquiry Changes.

2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the suggested changes to the procedures for reporting to Planning Development Control Committee as set out in paragraph 3.22, be agreed.

3. That it be recommended to Cabinet that it considers whether it wishes the Council to be more actively involved in developing Design Statements and other types of Supplementary Planning Guidance to help define and protect the character of certain areas (as discussed in paragraphs 3.41-3.43) and, if so, makes available appropriate funding and staff resources.

2. WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – 4 NOVEMBER 2003

2.1. REVISED DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN: ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIONS AND PROPOSED PRE-INQUIRY CHANGES: CHAPTER 3, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES; CHAPTER 6, HOUSING (H.5-H.7 AND MAP 38A); CHAPTER 9, RECREATION AND TOURISM; AND CHAPTER 13, SETTLEMENTS (SUTTON SCOTNEY). DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN: ANALYSIS OF MISSED REPRESENTATIONS

(Report WDLP34 refers)

(nb extract relates to discussion of PPG3 only)

Following debate, each of the representations and responses were agreed as set out in the report, but for:

(Amongst others)

Issue 3.6: Members agreed to defer this issue to the 20 November 2003 meeting of this Committee, pending a decision from Cabinet on how pro-active the Council should be in encouraging development briefs. Members requested that the wording of DP.3 (iii) be reconsidered to replace “introverted backland development” to “inward looking backland development.” It was also suggested that the development brief should take account of not just the “adjoining land” but also nearby and significant features and Members requested that this be re-drafted accordingly for the 20 November meeting

(Note: See Appendix A to the minutes as the re-drafted text)

RESOLVED:

1.

2. That consideration of the detailed wording changes proposed at Issue 3.6 (page 18) of the report in relation to DP.3 be deferred to the 20 November meeting of this Committee.

3.

2.2. APPENDIX A TO MINUTES OF THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE, 4 NOVEMBER 2003

Appendix A

Recommended changes-

Proposed amendments to DP.3, add new criterion after existing (ii) and new paragraphs after paragraph 3.19:

DP.3...(iii) includes provision for the comprehensive development of other nearby land, where this forms an area of uniform character, through the production of a development brief. Development should accord with the principles established in the development brief, to ensure important features and characteristics are identified, secure adequate provision of infrastructure and facilities, and avoid inefficient use or sterilisation of land;...

3.20 There are substantial development opportunities within the existing settlements, especially in the predominantly lower density suburban areas of the District's towns and villages. These opportunities can usually be developed at higher densities than the surrounding development, subject to the requirements of Proposal DP.3 (i) and (ii). It is, however, important to avoid the development of a series of discrete and inward-looking developments, which could harm the character of the areas concerned, fail to provide adequate transport linkages, facilities and affordable housing, and prevent the efficient use of other land.

3.21 In order to overcome these potential problems, Proposal DP.3 (iii) seeks the production of a development brief (unless one has already been adopted) covering nearby land, where this consists of plots of consistent size and character. These nearby areas may also come forward for development and a brief will help to ensure that important characteristics of the area are identified and taken into account, that efficient use is made of land, and that adequate facilities, access and linkages are provided. Briefs should be subject to public consultation so as to enable them to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance by the planning authority. Once a brief is adopted, development proposals for parts of the area concerned will be permitted, provided they accord with the requirements of the brief and relevant proposals of this Plan.

3. PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 NOVEMBER 2003

3.1. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PPG3 WITHIN WINCHESTER DISTRICT (Report WDLP32 refers)

Councillor Davies declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in this item as he was a member of the Council of the City of Winchester Trust.

The Committee referred to draft extracts of the minutes of the meetings of the Winchester District Local Plan Committee held on 3 November and 4 November 2003 that were circulated for information. The Chairman agreed to accept the draft minutes onto the agenda as a matter of urgency because of the need to consider them in conjunction with Report WDLP32.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that Members had previously requested information on the Council's interpretation of guidance contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) and the way that it was implemented together with comparisons with neighbouring Councils.

The Director of Development Services summarised the conclusions of the Winchester District Local Plan Committee held 3 November 2003 and the two PPG3 seminars held in October 2003. The Director also addressed the points raised by the City of Winchester Trust and Mr Hayter during the public participation session at the start of the Committee, whilst referring to the earlier response given at the Winchester District Local Plan Committees.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Cook (as Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economy and Development) addressed the Committee. Councillor Cook stated that PPG3 should continue to be applied with some flexibility. Members were also reminded of the demands placed upon planning authorities by the Government Office for South East England and the pressures within Regional Planning Guidance regarding housing completions and required densities.

Further to questions, the Director of Development Services stated that proactive Local Area Design Statements, if compiled by the Council, could be interpreted by residents as an intention to promote development within their neighbourhood. For this reason it was considered that there could be disadvantages to such Statements, as well as benefits.

Furthermore, the Director explained that Parish Appraisals and Parish Plans, although helpful, could not be adopted as supplementary planning guidance. Village or Neighbourhood Design Statements could be adopted as supplementary planning guidance but had to attempt to represent the area in its entirety and be seen as having legitimacy within the community. The Local Plan set out the necessity for early referral of applicants to Village Design Statements.

Noting the thorough discussion by the Winchester District Local Plan Committee, the Committee resolved that they wished to add no further specific comments or requests for information regarding this matter. Therefore, the Committee agreed to support the recommendations 1 and 2 of the Winchester District Local Plan Committee at its meeting on Monday 3 November 2003 as set out. However the Committee did not want to express any view on whether the Council should be more actively involved in developing Design Statements.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that the proposed changes to the Local Plan Review set out in paragraphs 3.8 (as amended in the Minutes of the Winchester District Local Plan Committee held on 3 November 2003) and 3.24 be approved as proposed Pre-Inquiry Changes.

2. That it be recommended to Cabinet THAT the suggested changes to the procedures for reporting to Planning Development Control Committee as set out in paragraph 3.22 be agreed.