

Report from the Planning Committee

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Summary: The Planning Committee met on 23rd May. The following items were discussed: the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide review and the Chilterns Roofing Materials Technical Note; the Chilterns Buildings Design Awards; the provision of skills training; the AONB Management Plan review; response to DCLG consultation on changes to permitted development (householder microgeneration); Development Plans responses; an update on responses to planning applications, and the annual Planning Committee Tour.

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers and seek comments on a planning application.

Updates – Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Chilterns Roofing Materials Technical Note

1. An update was given in connection with the Buildings Design Guide Review and the issue of Supplementary Planning Document status. Advice had been sought from the Planning Inspectorate. The recommendation was that the Board should act as an agent for the Local Planning Authorities and prepare the review as an SPD – this is the only way that the document would receive the weight in decision-making that it is due. A meeting is being arranged with key local authority planning officers to discuss this issue and the work needed on the Management Plan.
2. An update was also given on the Roofing Materials Technical Note – this is being widely circulated. The Design Guide and Technical Notes have been subject to a price rise – the new prices are £15 for the Design Guide and £12 for the Technical Notes.

Chilterns Buildings Design Awards

3. The entries and winners for this year's buildings design awards scheme were discussed. The overall winner for 2007 is the new bedroom accommodation at The Crown Inn, Playhatch near Reading. Two commended awards will be given for a house extension at Gerrards Cross and the new affordable housing scheme at West Lane, Bledlow. A special project award will be given for the new hospice building for the Hospice of St. Francis in Berkhamsted. The awards ceremony was held 15th June at St. Katherine's, Parmoor.

Planning Training Provision

4. The training given on AONB matters by the Planning Officer was discussed in some detail. This will replace the annual planning forum and will take the form of lunchtime seminars for officers and presentations to Councillors (at principally District and Parish Councils). Board Members have been asked to help and will also give training after receiving suitable training themselves. It was also resolved that a summary leaflet would be prepared based on the main presentations that would be used.

AONB Management Plan Review

5. The Management Plan review was the main item on the agenda. The broad aims, key issues and policies of the two key chapters that affect the work of the Planning Committee (the built environment and minerals and waste) were discussed in some detail, and a standard table was compiled based on the comments that were made. Much of the material was still considered to be relevant, though there is scope for removing some elements that are repetitive or are out of date (annex 2 for example). The relevance of the current indicators (chapter 14) was also discussed and these were generally considered to be appropriate. The table will be completed and used as the basis for the discussion with the local authority planning officers.

DCLG Consultation – Changes to Permitted Development (Householder Microgeneration)

6. The DCLG consultation on changes to permitted development rights for householder micro-generation was discussed. The key issues that were raised related to: the removal of AONBs and National Parks from the protection currently afforded by Article 1(5) of the GPDO; the need to address views from all areas (including waterways, open access land and public parks) as well as highways; the need to prepare good practice and advice notes at the national level, and the need to protect all historic assets.

Development Plans Responses

7. All responses had been prepared and sent under delegated powers.

Bucks CC Minerals and Waste LDF Minerals DPD Issues and Options

8. Comments were made about the lack of recognition being given to the AONB and consistency in terms of wording when references are made. Various supporting representations were made in connection with support for the local brick industry, protection of the natural and cultural heritage and ensuring high standards of restoration and after use. Various options were proposed for the supply of aggregates and provision of sand and gravel and the response sought protection of the AONB and wider environment.

Wycombe DC Consultation on Proposed Pre-Examination Changes to the Core Strategy

9. Many of the proposed changes were supported as they addressed comments that had previously been made or added new information about the need to provide infrastructure, protection of habitats, the need to take account of the effects of cumulative development and the need to achieve carbon neutral development. However, a small number were objected to based on the implications for the AONB. One change that was objected to introduces a list of settlements (many within the AONB) which are stated as not being protected by other policies or designations although in many instances this is not the case.

Wycombe DC Consultation on Preferred Options Site Allocations DPD

10. One key objection in this instance was the omission of the AONB from the DPD whereas other similar constraints are included (Green Belt for example). Some of the proposals are affected by or would affect the AONB and for consistency it should be included here. Various proposals are supported including the removal of a coachway facility from the AONB, the inclusion of a walking and cycling network and the Council's stance in connection with not releasing land from the Green Belt. Detailed comments were made about proposals in the Hughenden Quarter. Various proposals are located within or adjacent to the AONB, and though these are not objected to in principle the fact that the sites are within or in close proximity to the AONB needs to be given greater prominence.

Oxfordshire CC Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options

11. Much of the consultation document was supported and reflects comments made at previous stages. The prominence given to the three AONBs within the County is welcomed and supported, although in some of the more detailed sections objections had to be made to ensure that the AONBs received full recognition. The lack of reference to locally distinctive, traditional building materials was also objected to.

Oxfordshire CC Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Waste Sites Proposals and Policies Issues and Options

12. In this instance objection was made to the lack of recognition given to the AONBs within the County. The response stressed the need to ensure that all development within the AONBs should conserve or enhance the natural beauty. Any development should be small in scale (size) and designed to the highest quality. The principle of development at sites with the AONBs was not objected to but the above points had to be stressed for a number of sites.

Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's draft Core Strategy, draft Action Plan and draft Environmental Report

13. The lack of recognition for the purposes of the AONB and its associated Management Plan were objected to for both the Core Strategy and the

Environmental Report. The lack of a policy specifically dealing with the AONB was also objected to.

Luton BC Draft SPD Planning Obligations and Sustainability Appraisal

14. Much of the Draft SPD was supported as it would apply to many of the developments that are likely to come forward, and would address cumulative impacts (particularly as it relates to infrastructure provision). However, the lack of recognition given to the provision of Green Infrastructure was objected to. The Sustainability Appraisal was objected to because of the lack of recognition for the AONB and the need to provide Green Infrastructure. The need to secure sustainable construction standards was welcomed, though greater detail is needed in connection with energy schemes.

Mid Beds DC Gypsy and Traveller DPD Issues and Options

15. Limited comments were made about this document as the sites were all outside the AONB. However, sites may come forward in the future and the document as drafted did not take proper account of the AONB and its setting if this was to occur.

Further detail on the development plans responses can be found in the Committee report which is available on the AONB website. See the following link.

http://www.chilternsaonb.org/downloads/board_meetings/Planning_agenda_papers_230507.pdf

Aylesbury Vale Growth

16. Subsequent to the Planning Committee it has been discovered (press reports) that the likely growth points at Aylesbury, as part of the wider growth agenda, are to be located to the east and south of the town (from the A41 to the A418).
17. The proposals are likely to lead to significant traffic generation towards and through the AONB and increased use of the AONB for recreation. The Board had previously responded to the consultation on the issues and options stressing the need to ensure that the AONB was protected from the implications of such development. A close eye will be kept on the proposals as they emerge (likely to be mid July for a six week consultation period).

Planning applications update

18. In the year from 1st April, the Board has been consulted on 27 applications, and has made formal representations on 6. Of these applications 1 has been determined, and that was in line with the Board's comments.
19. In the previous year the Board was sent details of 167 applications and appeals. Of these 26 were the subject of formal representations with 25 objections and 1 support. Of those applications that have thus far been determined (22), 18 are in line with the Board's comments and 4 are not. This

shows that 82% of those cases that the Board made formal comments on that have been determined were in line with the Board's comments. This will continue to be monitored.

20. Subsequent to the preparation of the Planning Committee papers details were obtained of an application at the High Heavens waste site near High Wycombe. A representation was made objecting to two very large buildings which would be massive in their bulk, being 40m long, 20m wide and 13m high (waste reception) and 112m long, 36m wide and 12m high (maturation building) and would be clearly visible both within and from outside the site. The square bulk of the reception building would make it more obvious in the landscape. Both the bulk and the proposed materials (white translucent fabric covering which would be highly reflective) of the maturation building will also make this highly visible and more obvious in the landscape.
21. The Planning Officer met two Officers from Buckinghamshire County Council. The need for the buildings and their design were explained. The need stems from making the site more efficient and removing odour problems. The design and materials arise from the use of the buildings and are at a scale that cannot apparently be changed (we had asked for the maturation building to be split). The covering material can be coloured and two colours will be proposed (the Council is open to suggestions). The material can be non-reflective. The Council stressed that they considered that there would be additional benefits based on meeting wider waste objectives and employment creation on the site, as well as control of odours. If a site visit was needed this could be arranged.
22. The application has been sent to the Secretary of State as it departs from the Development Plan and we had suggested that the application should be called-in for determination. If the Board has any further comments to make these can be forwarded to the County Council.

Annual Planning Committee Tour

23. The annual planning committee tour was also the subject of discussion. It was resolved that the tour should focus on successful diversification schemes. A visit has been arranged to Crowmarsh Battle Barns at Crowmarsh Gifford to look at the office development that has taken place. Other visits are being arranged. The tour takes place on Thursday 12th July.

Recommendations

1. **The Board notes: the progress made in connection with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide; the suggestions made for planning training; the responses made on the DCLG Consultation and other Development Plan documents; the current situation regarding responses on planning applications, and the details of the Planning Committee Tour.**
2. **The Board considers what additional comments, if any, should be made in connection with the proposal at High Heavens.**