

**STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY PANEL
(SPECIAL)****14 FEBRUARY 2006**

Chair: * Councillor Burchell

Councillors: * Marilyn Ashton * Mrs Kinnear
* Mrs Bath * N Shah
* Idaikkadar * Anne WhiteheadNon-voting Councillor Branch
Co-opted Member:

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document**

The Panel considered a report of the Group Manager (Planning and Development) which provided information on the progress made in respect of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Officers advised that, since the agenda had been circulated, and in view of the need for a lead-in period prior to consultation, a waiver of the requirement for a five-day Call-In period had been sought from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in order that, in the event that Cabinet were to agree the officer's recommendation at its meeting on 16 February 2006, consultation could formally commence on 24 February 2006. The request for a waiver had been declined, which meant it would not be possible to commence consultation until 5 May 2006, due to the requirement that no documents with a potential political bearing be consulted upon during the pre-election period beginning on 24 March 2006.

A Member expressed the view that the consultation was important and should commence as soon as possible to ensure adherence to the overall timetable. In response to questions from Members, officers advised that, if the consultation were to commence in May 2006 rather than February 2006, it would reduce the time available to officers to process consultation responses prior to its programmed adoption in July 2006. Given that it would not be possible to predict the volume or nature of the responses that would be received, consulting later would increase the risk of it not being possible to process responses prior to July 2006, in which case submission of the SPD would be delayed until September 2006. However, officers were of the view that consulting later would be unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the overall timetable unless a particularly high number of responses were received.

During the discussion on the report, the following issues were raised:

- A Member expressed concern that the feedback that had been received at pre-production consultation stage for the SPD appeared to come from a specific segment of consultees. Officers advised that a wide range of organisations had been invited to respond, and it was anticipated that there would be a wider response at consultation stage. Officers were requested to provide Members with a draft of the summary that had been produced following the workshop meeting with pre-production consultees on 16 November 2005.
- A Member expressed concern that, in her view, the SPD contained a number of 'sweeping statements'. In response, officers confirmed that the contents of the SPD were evidence-based.
- A Member expressed the view that the report appeared to assume an increasing level of subsidy.
- In response to a question from a Member, officers advised that the Council's decision to accept a wider range of professions as being eligible for key worker housing than that defined by the Government had been made by Cabinet on 14 October 2004.
- A Member wished it to be noted that she did not agree with the statement on page 12 of the report: "The Council no longer considers that, in a Harrow context, low cost market housing can be affordable housing". The Member

was of the view that low cost market housing could be affordable housing if the housing market changed in the future.

- A Member wished it to be noted that she did not agree with SPD objective 4 on page 47 of the report: "To state that low cost market housing will not be regarded as affordable housing", and that, in her view, this objective, along with the explanatory comment provided in item 10 on page 72 of the report, were not encouraging for developers.
- Officers were requested to include in the 'Glossary' the following definition of Low Cost Market Housing that was contained within the London Plan:
"Low Cost Market Housing – Housing provided by the private sector, without public subsidy or the involvement of a housing association, that is sold or let at a price less than the average for the housing type on the open market."
- The Chair advised that Cabinet would be responsible for determining use of the funds contained within the Council's Affordable Housing Fund (referred to on page 17 of the report). Members with particular questions regarding this fund were advised to consult the Group Manager (Housing).
- Officers were requested to correct typographical errors in item 11 on page 69 of the report.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That the draft Affordable Housing SPD be placed on four-week formal statutory public consultation from 24 February 2006.

[REASON: To ensure that the Council's objectives in applying affordable housing policies H5 and H6 in the adopted Harrow Unitary Development Plan (HUDP) are achieved].

[Notes: (1) During discussion on the above item, the following amendment to the recommendation of the Group Manager (Planning and Development) was proposed and seconded:

"Given (a) the restricted response there has been to the initial consultation; and (b) that it is possible to consult early in the life of the new Council without a detrimental impact on the overall timetable; the Council postpone consultation until after the election.";

(2) upon being put to a vote, the amendment was not carried;

(3) Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Mrs Bath and Kinnear wished to be recorded as having voted in favour of the proposed amendment;

(4) upon being put to a vote, the motion to support the recommendation of the Group Manager (Planning and Development) was carried;

(5) Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Mrs Bath and Kinnear wished to be recorded as having voted against supporting the recommendation of the Group Manager (Planning and Development).

PART II - MINUTES

84. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

85. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note the following declarations of interest made by Members present relating to business to be transacted at this meeting:

- (i) Agenda Item 5 – Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
 Councillor Mrs Bath declared a personal interest in the above item arising from the fact that she was a board member of Harrow Churches Housing Association, which was listed as a Preferred Registered Social Landlord Partner in Appendix 2 to the SPD. Accordingly, she would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision-making on this item.

86. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

87. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

88. **Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document:**

(See Recommendation 1).

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.47 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR KEITH BURCHELL
Chair