

# LDF - Development Management Policies Workshop

**22nd October 2009**

**Council Chamber, at 4pm**

*The purpose of this workshop was to receive feedback and discuss the preferred Development Management Policies that were published for six weeks' public consultation on 11th September 2009.*

## Present:

Cllr Ritchie	Cllr Dack	Dickon Povey (DP)
Cllr Mawer	Cllr Baxter	Chris Green (CG)
Cllr Allen	Philip Ridley (PR)	Andy Norton (AN)
Cllr Elliott	Richard Amor (RA)	Iain Robertson (IR)
Cllr Shepherd	Kevin Hilson (KH)	
Cllr Hudson	Desi Reed (DR)	
Cllr Ryland	Julie Hood (JH)	
Cllr Ashdown	Jack Green (JH)	
Cllr Light	Sam Hubbard (SH)	
Cllr Barron	Ian Johns (IJ)	

## Policy DM01 – Physical Limits

Cllr Elliot raised the issue of affordable housing provision and said that more land was needed. Officers responded that the Site specific Allocations includes proposals for affordable housing based on viability. Over and above this, rural housing schemes can come forward through the 'exceptions policy'.

## Policy DM02 – Design Principles

No comments.

## Policy DM03 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

Cllr Elliott argued that policy DM03 was very subjective. As such there were no targets to be met for individual developments. Planning policy officers replied that this document was worded so as to give general support to decisions on planning applications in accordance with regional and national policy. Cllr Ritchie stated that targets for renewable energy production should include the Greater Gabbard Wind Farm. In particular, he questioned whether this policy was intended to open up areas of the District for energy development, including nuclear power. Policy officers replied that no form of energy generation could be ruled out if the District was to meet its commitments under the Regional Spatial Strategy. The demand for energy was likely to become particularly acute in the East of England as older magnox reactors were switched off.

Cllr Ryland claimed that there was no basis for a division between onshore and offshore provision and that offshore provision should be investigated far more seriously as an option. Officers responded that under PPS22 all options for renewable energy should be considered. However, officers also stated that offshore energy production was only included in national targets. Regional Spatial Strategy targets only included onshore energy production.

Cllr Elliott stated his support for local provision of electricity. Officers informed him that policy proactively supports this and encourages local ownership of energy provision.

#### Policy DM04 – Sustainable Construction

JG informed the meeting that smaller developments would not be affected by BREEAM standards. However, proposals should demonstrate how development could meet 15% of its energy requirements from renewable sources.

#### Policy DM05 – Carbon Emissions and Carbon Compliance

Cllr Ritchie reiterated that Waveney District Council should be at the forefront of measures to reduce carbon emissions, a point supported by Cllr Elliott. PR stated that developers supported measures to reduce carbon emissions provided that they were properly consulted. JG mentioned that developers had been consulted on the 15% renewable energy target and policy DM05 and it had been discussed at the Developers' Forum.

#### DM06 – Coastal Erosion Risk Zone

Members were concerned about the lack of flexibility in this policy. In particular, there was concern that Ferry Road to the south of Southwold has been blighted by coastal erosion. PR assured members that policy DM06 takes a holistic approach to coastal erosion and that each case is considered on its own merits. Policy encourages a thorough investigation of whether a scheme is acceptable. Furthermore, policy DM06 must be linked to the Shoreline Management Plan.

#### Policy DM07 – Relocation and Replacement of Development Affected by Coastal Erosion Risk

Cllr Shepherd asked if this policy was applicable to coastal footpaths. He noted that several were being eroded and lost, particularly in the Lowestoft area. Officers responded that access to the coast was of national importance and should also be considered.

#### Policy DM08 – Existing Industrial Areas and Other Employment Sites

No comments.

#### DM09 – Re Use, Conversion and Replacement of Buildings in the Countryside for Employment Use

PR raised the issue as to whether all buildings in any location should be used for employment purposes. He cautioned that the emphasis on development in existing settlements risked neglecting the rural hinterland. Cllr Ritchie also expressed concern that villages preserved in aspic would not be viable. Failure to allow conversion of buildings to employment uses would lead to increasing reliance on volunteers to maintain communities. He drew attention to the tension between allowing modern development and preserving historic buildings, many of which were converted into houses. DR referred them both to page 40 of the DMP document, which stated that development proposed for employment should be located near to a larger village, giving some flexibility but so there was also access to services and facilities.

#### DM10 – Town Centre Boundaries

No comments.

#### Policy DM11 – Lowestoft Town Centre Core and Main Shopping Areas

No comments.

#### Policy DM12 – Office Areas in Lowestoft Town Centre

No comments.

#### Policy DM13 – Kirkley and Oulton Broad District Shopping Centres

Cllr Hudson wished to know what type of 'other uses' could be converted to takeaways. She cautioned that use of the word 'other' was a loophole that allowed conversion to takeaways. DR responded that this policy would allow conversion of residential and non commercial uses, but she conceded that it was difficult to ban conversions to takeaways. However, the policy required cumulative impacts to be considered.

#### Policy DM14 – Local Shopping Centres

No comments.

#### Policy DM15 – Neighbourhood and Village Shops and Facilities

It was asked if the six month timeframe for marketing of a property should be changed to reflect the current economic conditions.

#### Policy DM16 – Housing Density

PR said that the last sentence should perhaps include references to an area's character. Reference to policy DM02 was needed if interpretation and confusion were to be avoided. This could be done in the text. There was concern that high housing density requirements were inappropriate for villages, where residents wished to live sustainable lifestyles, which included growing some of their own food.

#### Policy DM17 – Housing Type and Mix

No comments.

#### Policy DM18 – Affordable Housing

Cllr Ritchie expressed opposition to the principle of having separate requirements for affordable housing in Southwold and Reydon. Cllr Allen considered that given Southwold had the highest house prices that could be a clear argument for seeking to achieve more affordable housing. PR expressed concern that developers would wish to renegotiate their contributions in relations to existing permissions so that they were in line with the new requirements. Cllr Allen opined that more rental accommodation needed to be provided.

#### Policy DM19 – Conversion of Properties to Flats

No comments.

#### Policy DM20 – Residential Annexes

AN drew attention to the middle paragraph of this policy, which he felt to be open ended. Should this policy apply to people dependent in a physical sense or just through family ties? It wasn't clear whether this would allow an annex that could be used by younger relatives such as grown up children, or developed and sold off as a separate dwelling. DR directed AN to the supporting text, which provided the necessary clarification. Cllr Ritchie pointed out that the use of an annex by grown up children can help to maintain the population of a village by providing affordable accommodation.

#### Policy DM21 – House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

There was discussion as to whether the 35% increase should be in the policy or left in the text. PR stated that it was necessary for policies to provide flexibility and also to preserve the character of a building. To rigidly apply a 35% increase was not appropriate. It is important to consider landscape impact, existing dwelling size and design etc. in each case. However, the policy would try to prevent extensions to smaller houses to retain the stock of smaller dwellings.

#### Policy DM22 – Housing Development in the Countryside

Housing that accommodated residents forced to relocate by coastal erosion would need to be located close to an existing settlement in accordance with the Core Strategy settlement strategy. Cllr Ritchie questioned the policy of allowing infill but not back fill, claiming that this risked the creation of ribbon development.

#### Policy DM23 – Hotels and Guest Houses

Cllr Allen expressed concern that the last paragraph, which related to the extension of hotels and guest houses, would not allow extensions where there was no parking. PR responded that this policy offered an opportunity to tackle the issue of a lack of parking and congestion.

#### Policy DM24 – Touring Caravan, Camping and Static Holiday Sites

DR advised that Suffolk Coasts and Heaths have written in and have opposed permission for even small caravan sites in the AONB.

#### Policy DM25 – Existing and Proposed Open Space

Cllr Elliott questioned whether the policy was strong enough in terms of the delivery of additional allotments. DR stated that the commitment to provide allotments was to be found in the Core Strategy.

#### Policy DM 26 – Re-Use of Vacant School Buildings and Playing Fields

Cllr Light raised the issue of funding for the reuse of redundant school sites and that this needs to be investigated further. This is particularly the case if a site is reallocated for community use.

#### Policy DM27 – Protection of Landscape Character

No comments.

Policy DM28 – Strategic Gaps and Open Breaks

No comments.

Policy DM29 – Protection of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

No comments.

Policy DM30 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

No comments.

Policy DM31 – Archaeological Sites

No comments.

Policy DM32 – Southwold Harbour

Cllr Allen stated that the wording of the policy needed to be changed to allow for the provision of additional moorings. A more flexible policy towards Southwold Harbour wall and the possibility of more moorings is needed. PR stated that this will be investigated further.