

Report to Planning Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 26 February 2015

Subject: Building more homes on brownfield land – consultation proposals

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Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (01992 56 4607)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Panel consider the Government consultation regarding Building More Homes on Brownfield Land

Report:

A Government consultation published on 28 January 2015 seeks views on proposals for measures to make it easier to build on brownfield land that is suitable for housing.

The Government wants to go further to deliver more new homes and hence wants to maximise the number of new homes on suitable brownfield land. Definition of brownfield land is given as being suitable for new housing if it is deliverable, free of constraint (such as green belt designated land or remediation of contaminated land making a scheme unviable), capable of development and also capable of supporting five or more dwellings.

The Government expects that permissions on brownfield land suitable for housing will in future be granted by local development orders (LDO's) and has set an objective that by 2020, LDO's should be in place on over 90% of brownfield land suitable for housing (with an intermediate target of 50% by 2017), and which does not already benefit from planning permission.

LDOs grant permission to specific types of development within a defined area and are intended to streamline the planning process by removing the need for developers to make a planning application. Since their introduction in 2004, LDOs have had limited take up and Government now wants to change this by encouraging councils to put LDOs in place to fast-track new homes on brownfield sites.

A particularly controversial and likely unpopular aspect of the consultation for council's is the proposed sanction of placing councils under special measures for failing to make sufficient progress getting LDOs in place. Where an authority is designated, applicants would have a choice of applying directly to the Secretary of State for planning permission. Should councils fail to make sufficient progress in establishing LDOs, an alternative – and more palliative – sanction suggested would make councils unable to claim the existence of an up-to-date five year housing land supply when considering applications for brownfield development.

Whilst in a district such as ours that is over 92% green belt the Government's proposals should not be a major issue, there would still be a number of potentially harmful implications and an objection in principle to the proposals is recommended.

Also launched is an invitation to bid for funding to support local planning authorities who consult on and make local development orders on brownfield land. Bids are encouraged from local planning authorities who can identify brownfield sites that are suitable for housing and

capable of accommodating in the region of 100 units or more. It is anticipated that successful bidders would receive £50,000 per bid towards the costs incurred in delivering the LDO.

The closing date for consultation responses is 11 March 2015 and the document can be read at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-more-homes-on-brownfield-land>

The 22 page document asks for feedback in the form of 12 questions.

It is suggested that Members of the Panel look at the document and e-mail Nigel Richardson – Assistant Director Governance (Development) – with their comments by Friday 6 March 2015.