

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 13TH AUGUST 2007

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER (COMMERCIAL SERVICES)

(Author: Environmental Planning and Development Services Teams)

PLANNING WHITE PAPER – PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Summary: The Government has recently published the Planning White Paper – Planning for a Sustainable future which sets out the Government's detailed proposals for reform of the planning system, building on Kate Barker's recommendations for improving the speed, responsiveness and efficiency in land use planning, and taking forward Kate Barker's and Rod Eddington's proposals for reform of major infrastructure planning. The White Paper is the subject of consultation until 17th August 2007 and this report outlines for Members the key proposals.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Government has recently published the Planning White Paper – Planning for a Sustainable future which sets out the Government's detailed proposals for reform of the planning system, building on Kate Barker's recommendations for improving the speed, responsiveness and efficiency in land use planning, and taking forward Kate Barker's and Rod Eddington's proposals for reform of major infrastructure planning. The White Paper is the subject of consultation until 17th August 2007 and this report outlines for Members the key proposals. The White Paper is accompanied by a series of "daughter" documents containing proposals to amend Permitted Development Rights, Householder Consent Process, Appeals Process, Planning Performance Agreements and Fees. The Key proposals of each of these documents are outlined in the Appendices to this report

2. KEY DECISION

2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

3.1 The matter raised in this report falls within the following Council priorities:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
- A prosperous place to live and work

The purpose of the Planning System is to provide for Sustainable Communities and promote their economic, environmental and social wellbeing

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Planning White Paper is largely the Government's response to two key reports. The Barker Review of Land Use Planning in 2006 and The Eddington Transport Study 2006 that examined how large infrastructure projects are dealt with by the Planning System. In addition there have been some issues surrounding the new Development Plan (LDF) system that has led the Government to revisit some of the process requirements.

4.2 The Key recommendations arising from Kate Barker's report are:

- streamline policy and process through reducing policy guidance, unifying consent regimes and reforming plan-making;

- update national policy on planning for economic development;
- introduce a new system for dealing with major infrastructure projects;
- promote a positive planning culture within the plan-led system;
- consider enhancing fiscal incentives to ensure a more efficient use of land;
- a more risk-based and proportionate approach to regulation;
- remove the need for minor commercial developments to require planning permission;
- improve skills and ensure sufficient resources for planning;
- reduce delays at appeals and call-in; and
- ensure that new development beyond towns and cities occurs in the most sustainable way.

4.3 Rod Eddington's analysis of the delivery system for transport infrastructure echoed Kate Barker's concerns about the potential for the planning process to delay the development of vital new infrastructure. He recommended radical reforms to the process of planning for major transport infrastructure.

- the primary role of ministers should be to set national policy statements for major infrastructure development, taking full account of economic, social and environmental considerations, following consultation;
- there should be a presumption in favour of development for major infrastructure proposals so long as they are consistent with national policy statements, and compatible with EU law and the European Convention on Human Rights;
- an independent commission should be established to manage inquiries and determine individual applications for major schemes in England;
- local consultation should be carried out by the applicant at the pre-application stage and inquiries and decisions would have regard to local considerations;
- consent regimes should be rationalised to eliminate duplication and overlap, and to treat major projects as a whole; and
- there should be a clear framework for statutory rights to challenge at key stages in the process.

4.4 The Proposals contained within the White Paper are principally the Government's response to the two reports outlined above and these are examined in more detail in Appendix 1 of this report.

5. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

5.1 Members are requested to consider the contents of the White Paper as outlined in the Appendices to this report to enable Breckland's response to the consultation.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

6.1 In order to compile a response to the issues raised in the White Paper Members are requested to consider the contents of the report and its appendices.

7. RECOMMENDATION(S)

7.1 Members views are requested.

Appendices:

A – Planning for a Sustainable Future – The Planning White Paper

B – Householder Development Consents

C – Improving the Appeals Process

D – Changes to Permitted Development

E – Planning Fees

F – Planning Performance Agreements

Where appropriate, this report has taken account of the need for compliance with

- The Council's Equal Opportunities Policies
- Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Section 40, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006