

**TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2003 AT 10.30 A.M.**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN**

*Report of the Director of Environment*

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 As requested by Councillor B A York, to consider whether the Sustainability Appraisal of the Structure Plan should be the subject of scrutiny.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 Councillor York has submitted a request that the Stage 2 Sustainability Appraisal of the Structure Plan Alterations should be subject to scrutiny.
- 2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal was considered by the Structure Plan Panel at its meeting on 28 January, and was available as a document on the County Council's Web Site and in Member Rooms, prior to the consideration of the Structure Plan Alterations by Full Council on 13 February.
- 2.3 Formal consultation on the deposit Structure Plan Alterations will commence on 5 March and as part of that consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal will be made available at deposit points as a background document.

**3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 Having considered the information in this report. The Committee will need to decide how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 Councillor York has submitted a request for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Structure Plan Alterations to be the subject of scrutiny. In making this request, Councillor York outlined the possible remit and format of such a scrutiny as being :

“To scrutinise the Sustainability Appraisal Report Stage 2 in order to consider in depth the significance and value of the Report in assessing the sustainability of the Policies of the Structure Plan Alterations, now taken forward to deposit. In particular to examine in depth the Report’s findings on the main housing development strategy. Neither the Structure Plan Panel nor the County Council had time to scrutinise the Report in depth. A topic group may be appropriate to undertake the scrutiny. Perhaps members who served on the Cabinet Structure Plan Panel should be excluded, so that a fresh examination can be given.”

- 4.2 The Stage 2 Sustainability Appraisal was considered by the Structure Plan Panel at its meeting of 28 January. A covering report set out the purpose of sustainability appraisal and explained that this was Stage 2 of the Appraisal of the emerging Structure plan. In addition the report explained that the appraisal at this stage was in two parts. The first part dealt with the development strategy options, and the second with an appraisal of the emerging policies of the Structure Plan Alterations. The Panel considered the Appraisal itself, before moving on to consider the proposed policies relating to the development strategy and all the other policies of the Plan. The Appraisal was therefore available to be used in the more detailed discussion of the individual policies.
- 4.3 The Appraisal together with other Background Documents was made available in the Members’ Room and Group rooms before the meeting of County Council to consider the deposit Structure Plan Alterations. The Appraisal document was also available on Herts Direct as part of the Structure Plan Panel Agenda papers for 28 January.
- 4.4 Following County Council on 13 February, the Structure Plan Alterations will be placed on deposit from Wednesday 5 March 2003 for a six-week period. As part of the consultation, copies of the Stage 2 Sustainability Appraisal will be made available at deposit points. It is expected that there will be consultation responses relating the sustainability appraisal.
- 4.5 In these circumstances, any scrutiny of the item should be compatible with the statutory consultation procedures about to be commenced on the Structure Plan.

## **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 Having considered the information in this report. The Committee will need to decide how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

### *Background papers used by the author when preparing this report*

Stage 2 Sustainability Appraisal of Structure Plan Alterations – Baker Associates

Structure Plan Panel papers 28 January 2003 – Item 3 – Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre Deposit Plan