

Hertfordshire Town Renaissance Campaign Update note for Structure Plan Panel

Following the request made at Structure Plan Panel on the 12th February 2002, the Hertfordshire Town Renaissance Campaign Co-ordinating Group has met to re-consider the purpose, scope and programme for Stage 2 of the Campaign. The views of the Group are as follows:

A re-focus

The Group acknowledged the sentiment expressed by the Panel that Stage 2 of the Campaign should turn its focus on to achieving practical outputs. The Stage 2 programme previously presented to Panel proposed a series of research projects to establish the current standard of development practice in the county, with a view to identifying the shortfall in skills and resources necessary to deliver urban renaissance objectives 'on the ground'. This approach sought to respond to a range of messages that emerged from Stage 1, but in so doing was in danger of losing sight of the more practical outputs it could deliver.

The Co-ordinating Group therefore proposes that Stage 2 focuses on the delivery of two key outputs:

- Providing support and a consultation framework for the Sustainable Development Design Guide (SDDG), that HCC has commissioned in partnership with the district councils, that will provide the foundation for promoting sustainable development through the planning system.
- Establishing the remit of a 'renaissance support team' that could support (both in terms of skills and resources) the districts on the implementation of the SDDG and continue to raise awareness and 'challenge' the agendas of a range of organisations and groups on 'bigger picture' renaissance issues facing the county e.g. the affordability of housing and design quality

The Co-ordinating Group strongly believes that it is important that Stage 2 is seen to be taking forward the quality of life objectives that emerged from Stage 1 (and that are reflected in its Terms of Reference). The role of the 'support team' is key to this and so it is essential that it obtains as wide an ownership as possible.

Timetable for delivery

The SDDG – Work is currently underway on the SDDG. Following the completion of the scoping report, a first draft of the Guide is expected shortly. This will provide the basis for early consultations with key interests – those who will ultimately be required to use the guide. Following revisions to the first draft it is expected that a further draft will be prepared for wider consultation in late summer.

The 'renaissance support team' – It is proposed that a discussion paper be prepared for consideration by HTCOA in May or June, which outlines some of the key issues of concern about design and renaissance work throughout the County and identifies opportunities for improving the current situation. The objective would be to seek the support of HTCOA to working up a proposal for the establishment of a joint team, which could take forward town renaissance work in the County and also act as a resource to take forward the implementation of the SDDG.

As part of this initiative, other bodies with an interest in sustainable design would be approached to examine the possibilities of wider partnership opportunities e.g. EEDA, and English Partnerships.

The overall objective would be to arrive at a jointly agreed proposal for a support team, which could be formally considered by Districts and the County Council, in parallel to the publication for consultation of the SDDG. This timetable should also enable any budget implications for financial year 2003/04 to be identified.