

NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM : 9 MARCH 2006

ITEM 4(b)

HOUSING WORKING GROUP NOTE OF MEETING

Present:

Henry Oliver, NPF Chair and CPRE
Ian Biddulph, DWH
Dominic Church, CABE
Michael Coupe, RICS
Abigail Davies, CIH
Jane Griffin, SEEDA (RDAs network)
Heather Mitchell, RSPB
Kay Powell, NPF Secretary

An initial open discussion revealed a good deal of common ground on specifics, as well as on the general context, including the need for clarity on how housing policy contributes to delivering sustainable development.

The Group went on to focus on the key criticisms, positives and gaps, and to vote on the resulting lists. These, and the points agreed by all the members of the Working Group, were as follows:

Votes Criticisms

- 5 Lack of sequential test
- 7 Language – too weak, not definite enough (deliberate, as focus is on speed of output, or unintentional?)
- 7 underlying economics (looking at demand side) – blaming planning, therefore solutions won't work
- 6 community/standard approach – more qualitative angle needed
- 3.5 philosophical problem: won't make development more acceptable to the community
- 6 sustainability of new development in spite of, not because of, PPS3
- 6 absence of location/transport angle

Votes Positives

- 5 quality (design a significant consideration)
- 1 flexibility allowing sustainable Greenfield development
- 5 Density matrix
- 7 local planning authorities to set out policies in advance

- 5 CPO powers emphasis
- 3 15 year rolling land supply
- 7 Design codes
- 6 Brownfield first policy

Votes Gaps

- 5(6) Employment policy (PPS 4)
- 6(7) LAs to do characterisation (including typology*)
- 5 Detail of local brownfield strategies
- 6 Adequacy of housing typology – need, aspiration, supply *
- 7 Mechanics of process – resourcing, delivery mechanisms
- 7 Clarity on role vis-à-vis other local strategies – housing, homelessness
- 6 Overall clarity – omissions, hierarchy?, objectives?, order
- 4 Rôle vis a vis national strategies

POINTS OF AGREEMENT

Context

- need for PPS 3 and related documents to result in more sustainable outcomes

Criticisms

- language not definite enough
- underlying economics are flawed – therefore solutions won't work

Positives

- LPAs need to set out objectives in advance
- design codes are supported

Gaps

- mechanics of process – resources, delivery mechanisms
- rôle vis-à-vis other local strategies
- characterisation (including sustainability) and density

For further consideration

- broad guidance on density, with assessment on a site-by-site basis linked to the location, typology and characterisation

It was **agreed** that the draft note be circulated to members of the Group within the next week, and then to the NPF Executive Board, with a recommendation that the note be discussed at the next Forum meeting (9 March). Options

following that included the possibility of further discussion with ODPM Planning officials involving a sub-set of the Working Group.