

## APPENDIX C: MEMBERS INFORMATION BULLETIN

### New planning system heralds ‘all change’ for district plan

**The new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act comes into force on Monday 27 September. It sweeps away the town planning system that has been in place since 1968. This will have significant implications for the council in terms of its statutory plan-making responsibilities. In advance of the new planning system coming into force this MIB outlines the principal changes.**

The new Act replaces the structure plans prepared by county councils and local plans prepared by district councils. In their place will now come regional spatial strategies (RSS) prepared by Regional Planning Bodies (in our case EERA) and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) prepared by district councils. County Councils now have plan-making powers only for minerals and waste issues, but the Herts Structure Plan 1998 continues to exist and it will have statutory force until the new RSS and LDF are in place.

Unlike local plans (such as the Stevenage District Plan), which were a single document, the new Local Development Frameworks will be a series of documents. But, as now, they will – in combination - set out the statutory development and planning framework.

The LDF has to be in conformity with national and regional planning policy and it also has to flow from the Community Strategy prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership. The organogram overleaf sets out the various different documents that might make up an LDF.

Each district council is required to produce the following documents (the dark green and blue boxes in the organogram):

- A **Statement of Community Involvement**, which sets out how and when the local community will be involved in the preparation of the LDF.
- A **Core Strategy** which sets out the vision and a broad spatial strategy for the area as a whole (such as ‘Stevenage will become an emerging regional city of over 100,000 population by 2021 with a major sustainable urban extension to the west’).
- A suite of **generic/core development control policies** (such as ‘Development will not be permitted in the Green Belt.’).
- **Site-specific allocations and policies** that identify land parcels that are allocated for specific uses (such as ‘100 new homes will be built at the former Fairview Road playing fields, of which at least 40% will be affordable.’).
- An **Annual Monitoring Report** each year, which sets out progress against the LDS and reports upon key planning indicators (such as the number of new homes built) in the previous year.

In addition to these compulsory documents the council may produce any of the following:

- **Area Action Plans**, which provide a more detailed planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed or anticipated (such as the town centre).

- **Supplementary Planning Documents**, which set out in more detail proposals related to matters dealt with in the statutory documents. These are the equivalent of current supplementary planning guidance (such as parking standards).

The current statutory planning documents for Stevenage are:

- Hertfordshire Structure Plan (prepared by the county council)
- Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan (also prepared by Herts CC)
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan (again prepared by Herts CC)
- Stevenage District Plan First Review (prepared by the Borough Council)

The Stevenage District Plan Second Review is to be reported to full Council for adoption in December 2004. It will exist for only three years before it is replaced by the new Stevenage LDF under the requirements of the new Act.

When the new planning system fully comes into force these plans will all be replaced by the following documents:

- Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (currently being prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly - EERA)
- Hertfordshire Waste and Minerals LDF (to be prepared by Herts County Council)
- Stevenage LDF (to be prepared by the Borough Council)

The new Act requires that councils have to prepare Local Development Schemes (LDS), which set out a clear and timetabled programme for the production of the LDF for the area. Officers are currently working on an LDS for Stevenage, which will be placed before full Council in February for approval.

If you have any queries about this topic please contact Cllr John Gardner or:

- **Richard Javes, Planning Policy Manager (242962)**

### Organogram: possible Local Development Framework

