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## **PROPOSED CHANGE TO PPG3 HOUSING - SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF NEW HOUSING**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on a Government proposal to change PPG3 to allow the re-allocation of employment and other land to housing. Comments are required by 31st October 2003.

### **2 THE PROPOSED CHANGE**

- 2.1 Paragraph 42 of PPG3 requires Local Planning Authorities to review all non-housing allocations and consider whether these might be better used for housing or mixed use developments.
- 2.2 The Government is now proposing that where land is no longer required for industrial or commercial purposes, applications for housing or mixed use schemes should be handled sympathetically.
- 2.3 The full text of proposed paragraph 42a is as follows:

"Applicants for planning permission for development that includes housing should be able to expect expeditious and sympathetic handling of planning proposals which concern land allocated for industrial or commercial use in development plans but which is no longer needed for such use, or redundant industrial or commercial buildings. This is particularly the case where local planning authorities have yet to complete the review referred to in paragraph 42 above. Local planning authorities should consider such planning applications favourably unless:

- the proposal fails to reflect the policies in this PPG, particularly those relating to a site's suitability for development and the presumption that previously-developed sites (or buildings for re-use or conversion) should be developed before greenfield sites;
- the housing development would undermine the planning for housing strategy set out in RPG or the development plan where this is up-to-date, in particular if it would lead to over-provision of new housing where this will exacerbate, or lead to, low demand;
- it can be demonstrated, preferably through an up-to-date review of employment land, that there is a realistic prospect of the allocation being taken up for its stated use in the plan period or that its development for housing would undermine regional and local strategies for economic development and regeneration.

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**3 DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The Government considers that an urgent change is required to PPG3 to enable industrial or commercial sites that are redundant or no longer required to be used as soon as possible for housing without waiting for a review of the development plan.
- 3.2 The preferred option, as outlined in new paragraph 42a, is for such land to be granted consent, regardless of a review of the development plan, unless a convincing case for retention is made.
- 3.3 This proposed change to PPG3 seems, on the surface, not to be unreasonable. In reality, it perhaps reflects an element of concern to see more sites for housing brought forward sooner rather than later.
- 3.4 There is no doubt that it is appropriate for a replacement development plan to review allocations and to propose alternative uses within the overall requirements for development and of different types within a district.
- 3.5 However, the Government's proposal to amend PPG3 has the potential to create all sorts of difficulties, since it is likely to encourage applications for residential development on land that should be retained for other purposes. Applicants will no doubt make a case, arguing that the land is no longer required for its existing purpose, but the Local Planning Authority's response will be limited, since it will not be within the broader perspective of a review of development land across the district as a whole.
- 3.6 It is considered that this proposed change is ill considered and, notwithstanding pressure for more housing, the correct place to examine alternative uses for allocated sites is within the boundaries of a development plan review.

**4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members' comments, the Deputy Prime Minister be informed that this Council does not support the proposed change to PPG3.

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**Background Papers:**

Consultation Paper on a Proposed Change to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3  
Housing - Supporting the delivery of new housing  
ODPM - July 2003.

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