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Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Sub-Committee** held on Tuesday 22 August 2000 when there were present:

Cllr D A Weir – Chairman

Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr K A Gibbs  
Cllr Mrs J M Giles  
Cllr A Hosking  
Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr R A Pearson  
Cllr Mrs M J Webster  
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C C Langlands and R E Vingoe

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllrs R S Allen and P F A Webster

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Scrutton	-	Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives
G Brazendale	-	Committee Administrator

### **87 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Cllr R A Pearson declared a non pecuniary interest by virtue of being a representative on the National Council for Housing and Planning.

### **88 MINUTES**

A Member suggested that discussion at the last Meeting concerning the Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (Minute 85) had emphasised the need for a strategy for future housing development to be based on locally identified demand. It was therefore agreed to amend the relevant wording to read "An assurance from Central Government should be sought that, in future, the strategy for housing development would be Local Plan-led, based on local evidence". (Addition shown underlined).

Subject to this revision, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 June 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **89 URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (Min. 82/00)**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives which presented a suggested project brief for an

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urban capacity study of the District. A copy of the brief was appended to the report.

Members noted that, given the timetable for publication of a Deposit Draft and the consequent need to appoint consultants to begin work on the urban capacity study as soon as practicable, it was proposed to take urgent action under the arrangements agreed at Council on 25 July 2000 to implement the Sub-Committee's recommendations. A report of the action taken would be presented to the next meeting of the Transportation and Environmental Services Committee.

During consideration of the brief, the following main points arose:

- Confidentiality of the consultant's report

A number of Members questioned the extent to which the consultant's report would become publicly available. The Head of Service indicated that while the consultant could be required, under the terms of the contract, to retain confidentiality, and while it would be appropriate for reports to Members on the preliminary stages of the study's development to be in confidential session, inevitably the document's contents would become public. This was particularly likely where the Council was required to reveal the evidence used in refusing developers' applications in respect of particular sites. Members nevertheless remained concerned that public knowledge of the consultant's recommendations concerning future development strategies, which could in some cases conflict with existing policies, could weaken the Council's position when determining planning applications.

A motion by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr R A Pearson, to seek legal clarification of the extent to which the consultant's report could remain confidential, was agreed unanimously.

- Sub-contracting of the project

Members were anxious to ensure that the terms of the brief should prevent the project being carried out by an unknown sub-contractor. The Head of Service confirmed that a number of tenders, some from outside the local area, would be sought, and that the tendering process would be subject to the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

- Use of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3)

It was recognised that the consultants would need to take heed of PPG3, which sought to identify the best use of land within urban areas. Whilst some of the suggestions within this Guidance – such as the provision of a greater mix of housing including more affordable, higher density dwellings – would be supported by this Council, it was recognised that others would be at variance with the

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existing policies within the Local Plan. The consultants would, it was considered, need to be briefed on the Council's views upon major policy issues. Members wished to emphasise that the reference within the brief to "better quality development" should not be interpreted as meaning more expensive housing.

- Timescale for preparing the study

The Sub-Committee agreed that the consultants should be requested to provide a completed report by mid-December, with interim reports before this time, as appropriate.

- Assessment of the tender submissions

The Sub-Committee indicated its wish to be involved in the assessment of the tender submissions to evaluate the extent to which the required criteria were met by each applicant. A motion to this effect by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr R A Pearson was agreed.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That the terms of reference and project brief for an urban capacity study of the District be agreed, and that arrangements be made to appoint consultants as soon as is practicably possible.
- (2) That legal clarification be sought concerning the extent to which the consultant's report would need to become a publicly available document.
- (3) That assessment of the tender submissions for the contract to produce the urban capacity study be carried out by Members of this Sub-Committee. (HCPI)

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## **PROPOSED WASTE MANAGEMENT SITE IN WEST RAYLEIGH**

A Member referred to the recent decision by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions not to locate a waste management site in West Rayleigh, and to the significant value of the contribution by the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives to the public enquiry held earlier in the year. Other Members associated themselves with these remarks.

The Meeting closed at 8.48pm

Chairman\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_