

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Development and Regeneration	Development Control Committee	13.02.07

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 3: HOUSING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform members of the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- Policies and proposals relating to housing will have implications for the Borough that relate to the Council's Strategic Objective of developing the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live.

RISK ISSUES

- The issues and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	3	Information	3
Reputation	3	Regulatory/Legal	3
Financial		Operational	
People		Other	

- The risks identified may arise if PPS3 is not taken into account when preparing Local Development Framework documents and when determining planning applications.

BACKGROUND

- PPS3 replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing. The policies in PPS3 should be taken into account when preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) and when making decisions on planning applications. The publication of PPS3 also results in the cancellation of a number of other housing policy documents and guidance, including Circular 6/98: Planning and Affordable Housing.
- PPS3 sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives and has been developed in response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply.
- A consultation paper on a draft of PPS3 was issued in December 2005. Whilst some aspects of the draft were welcomed, the your officers expressed some concerns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the guidance given on affordable housing, the role of windfall housing sites, the need for protection of sustainable employment sites and the lack of emphasis on sustainable design and construction in new developments.

SUMMARY OF PPS3

Planning for Housing - Objectives

8. The Government is seeking to create sustainable, inclusive mixed communities. Planning for housing should deliver the following outcomes:
- High quality housing
 - A mix of housing including both market and affordable
 - A sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand
 - Housing developments in suitable locations, with a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs and key services
 - A flexible responsive supply of land

Achieving high quality housing

9. The importance of good design for residential environments is emphasised. Poor designs should not be accepted. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are encouraged to promote good design through design coding, masterplans, village design statements, site briefs and community participation techniques. LPAs are told to encourage applicants to bring forward sustainable and environmentally friendly new housing developments, reflecting the approach in the Code for Sustainable Homes and the forthcoming PPS on climate change (recently issued in draft form for consultation).

Achieving a mix of housing, including affordable housing

10. A central theme of PPS3 is the delivery of mixed communities, in terms of housing tenure and price, and in terms of household composition. There is a requirement on Councils to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to profile the different types of households in a Housing Market Area and their requirements. LDFs should then set out the likely overall proportions of households that require market or affordable housing, the likely profile of household types requiring market housing (e.g. families with children) and also the size and type of affordable housing required.
11. LPAs are required to set a target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided in the plan area and to specify the size and types of affordable housing that is likely to be needed in particular locations. Affordable housing is defined as social rented and intermediate housing, but not low cost market housing. Intermediate housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents. The national indicative minimum site size threshold where affordable housing can be sought is 15 dwellings, but there is scope for LPAs to set lower thresholds, where they can be justified. The presumption is that affordable housing be provided on the application site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing, unless off-site provision can be robustly justified.

Assessing an appropriate level of housing

12. The level of housing provision should be determined through a strategic evidence based approach taking account of local and sub-regional evidence of need and demand, set out in Strategic Housing Market Assessments. Regional Spatial Strategies should set out the level of housing provision to be distributed amongst constituent housing market and LPA areas. This should enable LPAs to plan for housing for a period of at least fifteen years. There is a requirement to produce Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments to provide evidence of the availability of suitable land for housing, at the local and sub-regional level.

Providing housing in suitable locations

13. The Government aims to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations with good access to jobs, facilities, services and infrastructure. At the regional level Regional Spatial Strategies are to identify broad strategic locations for new housing, with LDFs identifying locations and sites at the local level. Factors that should be taken into account when deciding on the location of new housing include:

- The need and demand for housing
 - The contribution to be made to cutting carbon emissions
 - Physical, environmental and other constraints
 - Accessibility to community facilities, infrastructure, services and transport
 - The need to provide housing in rural areas in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability
14. The priority is for new housing to be located on previously developed land, but it is highlighted that LPAs will need to consider sustainability issues, as some previously developed sites will not be suitable for housing. LDFs should include a previously developed land target and strategies for bringing previously developed land into housing use.
15. There is an emphasis on the efficient use of land for housing. LPAs are able to set out a range of housing densities across the plan area, rather than one broad density range, if they wish. 30 dwellings per hectare is the national indicative minimum, but LPAs can agree densities below this level if there is justification – so this allows more discretion than PPG3 did.
16. In terms of residential car parking provision PPS3 is also less restrictive than PPG3. The maximum standards of the latter (1.5 spaces per dwelling on average) have been omitted. Instead LPAs are told to develop residential parking policies for their areas, taking account of expected levels of car ownership and the importance of good design.

Delivering a flexible supply of new housing

17. The Government's objective is to ensure that a flexible responsive supply of land for housing is delivered. The principles of 'Plan, Monitor, Manage' have been retained. LPAs are told that LDF documents should identify broad locations and specific sites that will enable continuous delivery of housing for fifteen years from the date of adoption, taking account of the current Regional Spatial Strategy and having regard to the level of housing provision that is set out in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. This is a longer time horizon than PPG3 envisaged.
18. LPAs should identify specific 'deliverable' sites to deliver housing in the first five years, drawing on information from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and other relevant evidence. To be considered deliverable, sites should at the point of adoption of the relevant document be:
- Available – the site is available now
 - Suitable – the site offers a suitable location for development now
 - Achievable – there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years
- This is a more rigorous approach than in PPG3.
19. LPAs are also told to identify a further supply of specific developable sites for years 6 – 10 and, where possible, for years 11 – 15. Where this is not possible, broad locations for future growth should be indicated. Allowances for windfall housing should not be included in the first 10 years of land supply, unless LPAs can provide robust evidence of circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified. Once identified the supply of land should be managed to ensure that that a continuous five year supply of deliverable sites is maintained. The supply of deliverable sites should be monitored on an annual basis, linked to the Annual Monitoring Report review process.

Implementation

20. Reflecting the principles of 'Plan, Monitor, Manage' the LDF should set out a housing implementation strategy that describes the approach to managing the delivery of housing, outlining the circumstances in which action will be taken.

Determining planning applications

21. Development control decisions on housing developments should have regard to the policies in PPS3 from 1st April 2007, as material considerations which may supersede the policies in existing development plans. In situations where an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated, LPAs should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in PPS3.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHORLEY BOROUGH

22. PPS3 will have significant implications for Chorley Borough in terms of both preparing the LDF and making development control decisions. The priority given to good housing design is welcome, as is the greater acknowledgment of the potential impact of new housing on climate change. The policies in PPS3 on residential car parking, and to a lesser extent housing densities, are more flexible and should allow the Council to tailor approaches that better reflect local circumstances, whilst still prioritising the efficient use of land.
23. The impact of the requirement for a fifteen year supply of housing land and the necessity to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing land will need to be carefully assessed. The emerging North West England Regional Spatial Strategy proposes significantly higher housing provision figures than previously, taking account of higher household growth projections.
24. Latest housing land availability figures suggest that committed housing sites in the Borough could accommodate about 2750 units. This is likely to equate to more than a 5 year supply. The bulk of this housing will take place at Buckshaw Village. Therefore, at 1st April 2007 the Borough should have sufficient deliverable housing in the short term. In the longer term, sites in the Urban Potential Study 2004 and sites suggested as part of the process of producing a Site Allocations DPD will need to be considered and brought forward as appropriate in the LDF documents.
25. PPS3 places great emphasis on having an up-to-date evidence base to support decisions taken on planning for housing. PPS3 requires the production of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and Strategic Housing Market Assessments to help inform this evidence base. However, these documents are a new requirement and the Government has not yet finalised guidance on producing these assessments, so it remains unclear as to what is actually required. Your officers are working jointly with South Ribble and Preston to develop a consistent approach.
26. PPS3 places considerable emphasis on the provision of affordable housing, which is welcome, as a lack of such provision is an issue across the Borough. The greater flexibility provided in PPS3 in terms of allowing lower site size thresholds where affordable housing can be sought, should also prove useful.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

27. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

28. No comments received.

CONCLUSION

29. The new PPS3 aims to provide a more rigorous approach to identifying and meeting housing needs in light of significant increases in household growth. However, it also gives Councils more powers to tailor solutions to local circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION

30. That the report be noted.

JANE E MEEK
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing	November 2006		Gillibrand Street Offices
Consultation Paper on a new Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing	December 2005		Gillibrand Street Offices
Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing	2000		Gillibrand Street Offices

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Stephen Lamb	5282	18/01/07	Housing: PPS3 Report