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Supplement to PPS 1: Planning and Climate Change.

Overview

As part of a widespread review of national planning policy in the light of the Stern Review¹ the Government published a draft Supplement to Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 entitled *Planning and Climate Change* in December 2006. The supplement is accompanied by a draft *Framework of Practice Guide* which sets out in more detail how regional and local planning bodies should interpret and apply the supplement to PPS 1.

Planning and Climate Change sets out how spatial planning should contribute to reducing carbon emissions and stabilising climate change (mitigation) and take into account the unavoidable consequences (adaptation). The PPS accompanies the Climate Change Bill published in March 2006 which will make the government's long-term goal of a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 a legally binding target. While some of the features are already part of planning practice the PPS provides a range of new objectives that will need to be taken into account by planners and others.

Key Features

Managing and measuring carbon emissions. *Planning and Climate Change* introduces the notion of 'carbon performance'. In future, Regional Spatial

Strategies (RSSs) will produce regional targets for carbon emissions for all new residential and commercial development. Local Development Documents will conform to the RSS targets and new developments will be expected to contribute to an improvement in carbon performance.

Integration with building regulations.

Planning policies deal with the location of development while building regulations deal with conservation of fuel and power. In future Development Plan Documents will be expected to set policies on low carbon and renewable sources of energy whilst revisions to Building Regulations will increase requirements for energy efficiency.

Renewable energy. The PPS introduces an immediate requirement that 10% of energy requirements for new development be derived from low carbon or renewable sources. Larger developments will be expected to source a 'significant proportion' from renewable or decentralised energy supply systems.

Sustainability Appraisals and Design and Access Statements.

Appraisals and statements should now include the key objectives from *Planning and Climate Change*.

Main Changes from Current Position

It is difficult to overestimate the potential impact of *Planning and Climate Change*

¹ *The Economics of Climate Change (Stern Review)*, HM Treasury 2006

upon all stages of the planning process. The interpretation by those with responsibility for development planning and control will have a major influence on how the principles are taken forward. Three main changes stand out:

- The planned provision for new development and its spatial distribution will need to contribute to mitigating climate change through improvements in carbon performance. Individual proposals will not be judged against carbon performance at the regional level.
- Appropriate carbon emission indicators will now be selected, monitored and reported on in regional planning bodies' and planning authorities' annual monitoring reports. These targets will be published and will be expected to contribute to the Government's 60% reduction in CO² emissions by 2050. Reviews will reflect future updates to the national Climate Change Programme, be sensitive to scientific and technological developments, and be carried out at least every five years, or sooner.
- The PPS introduces some new criteria for site selection. New development should be located and designed to optimise its carbon performance and limit its likely contribution to carbon emissions. Specifically, 'substantial new development' (more than 1000m² total floorspace which can be over a number of buildings) should be expected to consider and take into account the potential of decentralised energy supply systems based on renewable and low-carbon energy. In identifying land for development local planning authorities will now take into account location and accessibility to a choice of transport modes, infrastructure capacity including energy, schools, the impact upon biodiversity, the use of open space for urban cooling and physical constraints such as flood risk.

Implications

A key issue, as the PPS acknowledges, is the extent to which regional planning and local planning bodies move towards incorporating the themes and policies in *Planning and Climate Change* into emerging RSSs and LDDs. Some organisations have been pushing regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to halt plan production in the light of this PPS and other climate change related guidance. *Planning and Climate Change* expects planning authorities to resist such pressure but they will have to take into account the PPS even in its draft form. If there are major differences between emerging plans and the PPS then planning bodies will be expected to undertake work to ensure compliance. This would be likely to delay plan progress.

One of the much discussed aspects of *Planning and Climate Change* is the immediate requirement that 10% of energy for new developments come from low carbon or renewable sources. Development Plan Documents can and will be expected to introduce higher targets. The requirement that substantial new development should source a 'significant proportion' of its energy supply from renewable supplies is likely to lead to debates about how this can be achieved.

On a more procedural level Design and Access Statements along with Sustainability Appraisals will need to reflect the new principles and key objectives of *Planning and Climate Change*. Applications made in advance of development plans that reflect the new approach will be judged against the principles and advice in *Planning and Climate Change*.

Further information and advice

Hives Planning Ltd, 46 Queens Road,
Reading, RG1 4AU

Tel: 0118 958 7331

Fax: 0118 939 4119

ajd@hivesplanning.co.uk