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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Environmental &amp; Development Services Committee</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	8
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> April 2004</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>DELEGATED/</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Gill Hague (595821)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Planning Policy Statement 1 : Creating Sustainable Communities (PPS1)</b>	<b>REF:</b>	
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>	<b>ES03</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be informed that the Council's response to the consultation paper on Planning Policy Statement 1 : Creating Sustainable Communities (PPS1) is as follows:  
The Council welcomes the continuing commitment set out in the guidance to the planned system but is concerned that separating policy from guidance on practical implementation creates opportunities for differences in interpretation that will lead to challenge and delay, thus undermining the Government's aims of speeding up the process.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To inform members of consultation paper PPS1, a copy of which is available in the Member's Room, and seek approval of a response to be forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 21<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

## **3.0 Detail**

### Context

- 3.1 Document PPS1 will replace the current Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: Policy and Principles (PPG1) as part of the Government's ongoing review of planning documents. The review considers whether PPGs are needed or require greater clarity and whether guidance on practical implementation should be separated from policy statements.
- 3.2 The intention is that PPS1 should support the Government's objectives for planning culture change by setting out the Government's vision for planning and the key policies and principles which should underpin the planning system. These are built

around the following three themes the first of which will become the purpose of the planning system:

- Sustainable development
- The spatial planning approach
- Community involvement in planning.

- 3.3 The guidance in PPS1 supports the duty in Clause 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act that requires regional and local plans to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

#### Content

- 3.4 Paragraph 1.6 of PPS1 reaffirms the governments commitment to the plan led system and the certainty and predictability it aims to provide which it believes is central to planning and plays the key role in integrating sustainable development objectives.

#### *Officer Comment*

*The continued commitment to the plan led system and the certainty and predictability it provides to the public and developers alike is welcomed. However the Government also wants the planning system to be flexible and able to quickly react to change. There is therefore a contradiction as the two are not compatible particularly when the Government also wishes the system to be speeded up and the community to have a greater opportunity to shape plans!*

- 3.5 Along with PPS1 the Government has published a paper entitled 'Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives. That paper sets out the Government's general objectives for community involvement in planning to provide the context for the changes being made to the way the planning system operates. It is intended that other guidance on sustainable development in planning will be produced in due course.

#### *Officer Comment*

*The review of PPGs is welcomed as many are out of date. However, the replacements so far issued are certainly not more concise and the publication of other documents the legal status of which is uncertain, can only cause confusion. A plethora of documents provides opportunity for differences in interpretation and hence the opportunity for developers to mount objections to local plans and appeals on planning applications the consequences being a lengthening of the process and the undermining of public confidence in the system.*

- 3.6 The guidance states that planning needs to operate efficiently and effectively but acknowledges that speed is not the only consideration. Good quality design and a proactive approach to development including pre-application discussions rather than regulation and control are encouraged.

#### *Officer comment*

*There has been concern for some time that performance indicators were based heavily on quantitative results. Recognition in the guidance of the importance of qualitative aspects is to be welcomed and the Government's revised performance indicators will reflect this. The planning service already works towards achieving the aims set out in PPS1 and has been rewarded for doing so in its Planning Delivery*

*Grant. The implementation plan presented to this committee in a separate report sets out how the money can be spent to secure continuing improvements.*

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The Government has made it clear that an element has been included specifically in the Planning Delivery Grant to improve community involvement in the planning process. Other improvements to the planning service will also be facilitated through the delivery grant.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 Integration is one of the key elements of the Government's aims for sustainable development requiring that issues of social inclusion be addressed through integration of all strategies, programmes and partnership working in particular.

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 More effective community involvement is a key element of the Government's planning reforms. Planning policies should promote development that builds socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing and which recognises the needs and broader interests of the community as a whole.

#### **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Whilst the document should, like its predecessor PPG1, be a material consideration when preparing plans and determining planning applications because it contains principles rather than practical guidance on implementation it is unlikely to be a useful tool for practitioners.

#### **8.0 Background Papers**

- 8.1 None other than those referred to in this report.

