

---

REPORT TO:	Development Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM:
DATE OF MEETING:	16 <sup>th</sup> August 2001	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Gill Hague 595821	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Settlement Hierarchy	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: DS9

---

**1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 Members approve the settlement hierarchy set out in this report for the purposes of determining planning applications in accordance with the search sequence in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 – Housing (PPG3).

**2.0 Purpose of Report**

2.1 To advise Members of the importance of the search sequence set out in PPG 3, its implications for determining planning applications for residential development, and to seek approval for a settlement hierarchy which will enable consistent decisions to be taken.

**3.0 Detail**

3.1 Members will recall a discussion at their last meeting about the implications of PPG3. The document is largely aimed at guiding decisions about new allocations in local plans. However, it makes it quite clear that *'in considering planning applications for housing development in the interim, before development plans can be reviewed, local authorities should have regard to the policy contained in this PPG as material considerations which supersede the policies in their local plan'*.

3.2 The guidance refers to a search sequence (sometimes referred to as a sequential approach) that recognises that urban areas are the most sustainable locations due to the level of service provision and opportunities for reducing the need travel. They are also likely to be where there are the most opportunities for redeveloping brownfield land and so it is to such areas that new development should be directed.

3.3 If all the housing provision in a local plan cannot be met on brownfield sites within urban areas then the next step is to identify urban extensions, with priority being given to identifying brownfield land in such locations. If there is still a shortfall the third step is to look at sites at nodes in good public transport corridors.

- 3.4 The Swadlincote Urban Capacity Study dealt with potential sites within the main urban area of the District, and indicated that not all future development can be located within the existing built up area. The local plan review will therefore need to concentrate on identifying an edge of urban area site, preferably brownfield, to make up the shortfall. Due to the numbers involved it is not anticipated that the local plan will need to pursue the third step in the Swadlincote Sub-area.
- 3.5 However, there are a series of villages throughout the District which also contain a basic range of facilities and services, and which also may have some brownfield land within them. In monitoring housing land availability local authorities previously made allowances for windfalls (i.e. small sites not specifically identified as available) in their calculations. Historically, such calculations included greenfield sites. PPG3 now states that '*No allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls.*' This implies a presumption against permitting planning applications on greenfield sites however small, such as those that used to be approved as 'infilling' in accordance with the current Local Plan Policy H5 that defined a confine around all but the very smallest of settlements. The existing confines are being reassessed as part of the local plan review.
- 3.6 PPG3 refers to urban areas as towns and cities. However, in mainly rural areas such as South Derbyshire the larger villages will also be treated as urban for the purposes of undertaking the search sequence. In order to establish which settlements could be considered sustainable i.e. have a range of services and facilities that could support some small housing development, all villages were assessed using the methodology set out in Appendix 1. The results are tabulated in Appendix 2.
- 3.7 In order to identify a cut off point below which a settlement is not considered to be sustainable there have conveniently been two recent appeal decisions where the Inspectors have determined that the particular village in question is not a sustainable settlement. These are Rosliston in the Swadlincote Sub-area and Egginton in the Derby Sub-area. Thus in the Derby Sub-area those settlements with a higher score than Egginton are those considered to be sustainable. In the Swadlincote Sub-area because there is very little difference in score between Rosliston and Walton on Trent the cut off point has been made above the latter.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Potential loss of income should any land that the Council wishes to dispose of not lie within a sustainable settlement.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The hierarchy may have implications for development of the Council's own land holdings.

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 The hierarchy ensures that residential development is directed to sustainable locations where a range of services and facilities are available and the need to travel

is reduced. There are environmental benefits from bringing back vacant and derelict land and buildings into beneficial use.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 According to the settlement hierarchy Overseal, Repton, Hatton, Linton, Hartshorne and Netherseal within the Swadlincote Sub-area and Melbourne, Etwall, Willington, Hilton, Aston on Trent, Findern and Shardlow within the Derby Sub-area are sustainable settlements.
- 7.2 In determining planning applications local planning authorities have to have regard to the search sequence. Thus, while there is brownfield land available for development within the confines of Swadlincote and the sustainable settlements, planning permission should normally be refused for all applications for residential development on greenfield sites irrespective of where they are located, and for brownfield sites if not located within a sustainable settlement.
- 7.3 There have been previous permissions granted for development on greenfield sites which have not yet been implemented. PPG 3 states that *'Issues of sustainability mean that local planning authorities should review thoroughly all applications to renew permissions particularly by comparison with previously-developed sites'*.
- 7.4 The 'exceptions' policy is retained in PPG3 so that planning permission can be granted where there is a justified need for 'affordable housing' in a location that would not normally be acceptable.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

- 8.1 None other than those referred to in the document.

