

minutes



Meeting FLOODING SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 13 November 2006 (commencing at 10.00 am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Councillor Yvonne Davidson (Chair)
Councillor Brian Wombwell (Vice-Chair)

	John Carter		Tom Pettengell
A	John Clarke	A	Peter D Prebble
A	Sybil Fielding	A	Sue Saddington
	Pat Lally		

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23 October 2006, having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clarke, Fielding, Prebble and Saddington.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

WORK PROGRAMME

With regard to the presentations scheduled to take place at the Select Committee meeting on 15th January 2007, it was agreed to invite the National Flooding Forum to make its presentation at 10.00am and the District County Planning Officer at 11.00am.

Following discussion on the work programme, the Select Committee acknowledged the complexity and detail of the work involved with the review. The Chair explained that if it were found that an extension was required to the scrutiny review then this could be sought via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Chair welcomed Mr Richard Ling, Planning Manager, Communities Department who gave a presentation to the Select Committee on the Regional Spatial Strategy.

It was explained that the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was the top tier of the new statutory planning system and replaced the former Regional Planning Guidance approved by the Secretary of State and the County Structure Plan approved by the City and County Councils in Nottinghamshire. The strategy is prepared by the East Midlands Regional Assembly with assistance from the County and City Councils and others with final approval from the Secretary of State. Representatives included all local authorities in the region which accounted for 70% of its membership, with 30% being made up from public bodies, business community and interest groups.

Mr Ling also said that the Regional Spatial Strategy consisted of two parts, Part 1 setting out regional wide policies and Part 2 setting out sub-regional strategies that cover the whole of the geographic county. The draft strategy was currently out for formal representations of support or objection to be made by 20 December 2006 and would be presented to Cabinet on 6 December 2006. Final approval by the Secretary of State was expected to take place early in 2009.

The strategy is supported by a number of documents which include a flood risk assessment being undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Assembly and the Environment Agency. The Regional Spatial Strategy and local development documents, when approved would provide the framework for all development control decisions in accordance with the strategy. Priority areas for assessment included the built up areas of Nottingham and Newark.

Mr Ling also drew the Select Committee's attention to the fact that the new lower tier of the statutory planning system included Local Development plans being prepared by the Local Planning Authorities. He pointed out that these strategic plans would be informed by strategic flood risk assessments in order to evaluate actual flood risk.

In terms of development, Mr Ling pointed out that the annualised figures for development were higher in the region than the trend figures. Proposed housing for the period 2001-2006 stood at 96,875 with 20,000 proposed developments on Greenfield sites.

Mr Ling agreed to let members have a copy of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Councillor Davidson referred to drainage and said that this was an area to bear in mind since no one had responsibility for this.

The Select Committee wondered how many planning applications were approved against Environment Agency opinion and how many went to appeal.

Councillor Cole was concerned that flood plain area might be used when there were no alternative areas for development. Mr Ling explained that this would depend on a number of factors and that plans would be subjected to a number of tests.

In response to a question by Councillor Davidson, Mr Ling said that a strategy on Derby/Nottingham flood risk cover was currently being prepared. Councillor Davidson asked for a copy of the strategy once it was complete.

Councillor Wombwell expressed concern with regard to the stress being put on existing water supply and sewers due to new and proposed developments. Mr Ling said that sustainable Urban Drainage Studies (SUDS) would be undertaken because of the increase in density. The studies covered all aspects including transport and shops.

Councillor Davidson thanked Mr Ling for his presentation.

VISIT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Select Committee visited the Environment Agency's offices at Lady Bay. They were invited into the incident room where they learnt about flood incident management, how various data was collated for use in forecasting flood risk, the flood warning process and how warnings were issued.

In response to a question in relation to the different levels of flood warning given, it was explained that if more than 100 properties were at risk from flooding then a severe warning would be issued and the incident room would be opened to monitor the situation closely and deal with incoming calls from the public and other organisations affected. It was also the Environment Agency's responsibility to make decisions to close sluice gates and make sure that defences and controls were in place to minimise flooding.

The Select Committee thanked officers from the Agency for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 1.00pm.

CHAIR

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