

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT POSITION STATEMENT

Summary: This paper outlines the Board's draft Planning and Development Position Statement.

Recommendations:

- 1. To note progress in drafting the Planning and Development Position Statement.**
- 2. To endorse the draft Planning and Development Position Statement.**
- 3. To endorse the proposed next steps (i.e. consulting externally for a five week period, with a view to the Board adopting the position statement in June 2020).**

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Introduction

1. The Board was presented with a paper on 'planning guidance' in December 2019. Whilst the proposals in that paper were positively received, it was agreed that further work was required in developing the proposals.
2. This 'planning guidance' has since evolved into two separate draft position statements:
 - (i) Planning and Development Position Statement;
 - (ii) Housing Need Position Statement.
3. The Housing Need Position Statement is covered in agenda item 10.
4. A first draft of the Planning and Development Position Statement was presented to the Board's Executive Committee on 25th February 2020. The draft position statement has also been shared with officers at Cotswold District Council and with the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership and discussed at face-to-face meetings with those organisations on 12th March 2020. This has been invaluable in helping to ensure that the position statement is 'fit for purpose' prior to wider external consultation.
5. The position statement has been further refined to take account of feedback from these meetings.

Planning and Development Position Statement

6. The Planning and Development Position Statement advocates two key principles:
 - (i) a landscape-led approach to development in the Cotswolds AONB and its setting;
 - (ii) development within the AONB being based on robust evidence of local need arising within the AONB.

7. The position statement is intended to help local authorities, developers and other relevant stakeholders to fully address AONB-related issues in planning policy and development management.

Changes made since the Executive Committee meeting on 25th February 2020

8. Feedback from Cotswold District Council indicated that the first draft came across as 'anti-development'. To address this concern, the current draft provides a more balanced stance. For example, it now takes account of relevant national and international drivers, such as the Government's objective to build 300,000 homes each year and the 'climate emergency'.
9. The first draft included a lengthy supporting text, which provided a mixture of context, evidence base and guidance. However, feedback from Cotswold District Council has indicated that such a lengthy document would not be readily used by hard-pressed local authorities. To address this issue, the position statement itself is now a relatively brief, stand-alone document which sets out *what* the Board's position is (framed in terms of principles and recommendations) and provides some brief context explaining *why* the Board is taking this position.
10. The position statement will be supported by a separate guidance document, which will set out *how* relevant stakeholders can implement the principles and recommendations that are set out in the position statement. In order to maximise 'added value', the guidance document will also include flowcharts and templates that can easily be used by local authorities and other stakeholders.
11. The guidance document has not been included as an appendix to this paper because, as of 16th March, it is still a work in progress. However, it is anticipated that the guidance document will be ready for external consultation at the end of March. It is not anticipated that any further work in the guidance document will fundamentally change the principles and recommendations set out in the position statement.
12. The position statement does not explicitly address the Board's second purpose (i.e. to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB). However, it is worth noting that the position statement, in itself, should be helpful to increase understanding of the AONB's special qualities.

Next steps

13. Assuming that the Board endorses the position statement, it is anticipated that the document will be circulated externally (primarily to the local authorities) for a five week consultation period. The final version of the position statement will then be presented to the Board for adoption in June 2020.

Supporting Paper(s):

Appendix 'A' – Draft Planning and Development Position Statement