

7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCING A MID SUSSEX 'DISTRICT PLAN'

REPORT OF: HEAD OF ECONOMIC PROMOTION AND PLANNING
Contact Officer: Louise Gibbons, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy
Email: louiseq@midsussex.gov.uk tel: 01444 477391
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision Yes

Purpose Of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to summarise the changes recommended by the Members of the Better Environment Advisory Group to the arrangements for producing a Mid Sussex 'District Plan'.
2. At the meeting on 29th March 2011, Better Environment Advisory Group considered a report on the arrangements for the production of the Mid Sussex District Plan. The Group also considered arrangements for an updated Statement of Community Involvement and the Community Infrastructure Levy for the District. Member Working Groups were proposed to guide progress on the Statement of Community Involvement and the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the terms of reference for these were considered. The full report considered by the Group is attached at Appendix 1.
3. The Better Environment Advisory Group considered the current position on Regional Strategies, the Localism Bill and the situation on housing targets for the District. The report in Appendix 1 set out the need to progress the District Plan as soon as possible and Members supported this approach.
4. In considering the report, Members highlighted in particular the need to involve Town and Parish Councils in the process of producing the District Plan and to feed in the results of their emerging plans. A revised outline timetable is attached as Table A, which specifically highlights the involvement of Town and Parish Councils in the process. The arrangements for the two proposed Member Working Groups were agreed subject to changes that are set out in the minutes for the meeting, which are attached at Appendix 2.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) **Adopt the revised outline timetable for the production of the 'District Plan';**
- (ii) **Note the setting up of a politically balanced Member Working Group to update the Council's Statement of Community Involvement;**
- (iii) **Note the revised Terms of Reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group.**

Background Papers

Letter to Chief Planning Officers from the Communities and Local Government Chief Planner
10th July 2010

The Localism Bill as published.

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations April 2010

Appendices

TABLE A – ‘District Plan’ Proposed Outline Timetable

APPENDIX 1 – Better Environment Advisory Group Report ‘Arrangements for Producing a Mid Sussex ‘District Plan’ March 29th 2011

APPENDIX 2 – Better Environment Advisory Group Meeting Minutes March 29th 2011

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCING A MID SUSSEX 'DISTRICT PLAN'

REPORT OF: HEAD OF ECONOMIC PROMOTION AND PLANNING
Contact Officer: Louise Gibbons, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy
Email: louise@midsussex.gov.uk tel: 01444 477391
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision Yes

Purpose Of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek approval of an outline timetable for production of the Mid Sussex 'District Plan'. The report also proposes arrangements for producing an updated Statement of Community Involvement and for completing the production of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Plan.

Summary

3. Amongst its first acts, the Coalition Government announced its intention to abolish Regional Strategies and the top-down housing targets for Districts that they contained. In the subsequent Localism Bill, they have proposed to revoke Regional Strategies. This would leave the 'development plan' as the adopted Mid Sussex Local Plan until replaced by the Core Strategy (now referred to as the 'District Plan') and other planning documents. Districts will now set their own housing targets and development policies at a local level. These would be set out in the 'District Plan'.
4. The Council welcomed this change of policy and as a first step halted work on the 'Core Strategy' and published its own 'Local Housing Assessment: Five Year Supply Position' to establish an appropriate housing target. This is presently the subject of public consultation. However, a number of legal challenges to the Coalition Government's proposals have meant the Regional Strategies/South East Plan will remain in force until the Localism Bill is enacted. The Government has stated that their intention to revoke the Regional Strategy is a material planning consideration in decision-making. As Members are aware, the Council is not able to show it can meet the South East Plan target of 855 homes a year but the target being considered through the Local Housing Assessment: Five Year Supply position could be met.
4. The 'District Plan' will be the main planning document used by the Council when considering planning applications. An outline timetable for the production of the 'District Plan' is attached. It is essential that this plan be in place as soon as possible so that new development takes place where it is appropriate and is based on local decision-making.
5. It is also necessary to up date the Statement of Community Involvement. This sets out how the Council will involve the community in planning decisions and in the preparation of the 'District Plan'. It is proposed that a politically balanced Member Working Group be set up to undertake this work, including hearing evidence from community groups and other interested parties from across the District.
6. An important element of the Coalition Government's proposals is the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Under the Levy, the District's Charging Schedule will set out what developers will be charged in relation to the identified infrastructure requirements of the District. The Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Plan need to be produced alongside the 'District Plan' and it is proposed that the existing Member Infrastructure Working Group takes the lead on this work.

7. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) **Recommend the outline timetable for the production of the 'District Plan' to Council;**
 - (ii) **Approve the setting up of a politically balanced Member Working Group to update the Council's Statement of Community Involvement; and,**
 - (iii) **Agree the revised Terms of Reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group.**
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8. Current Position

- 8.1 One of the first actions of the Coalition Government was to announce its intention to publish a Localism Bill abolishing Regional Strategies and replacing central housing targets with the requirement that Local Authorities produce their own Local Housing Assessments. The Government's proposals to change the planning system were set out in a letter to Chief Planning Officers in July 2010. This was accompanied by guidance for Local Planning Authorities encouraging progress on plan making. The Council welcomed this change in direction, as it had never supported the high housing target of 17,100 homes imposed through the South East Plan.
- 8.2 In June 2010, the Council halted work on the 'Core Strategy' and to start work on the District's Local Housing Assessment. As a first step, Council published a 'Local Housing Assessment: Five Year Supply position' in November 2010, which sets out a housing requirement of 370 homes per year for the District for the next five years. This was in the spirit of the Government's intentions and the guidance in the July 2010 letter.
- 8.3 Since December this year, the Coalition Government has begun to take the Localism Bill through Parliament. The legislation includes the removal of Regional Strategies (including the South East Plan) and the introduction of a more 'bottom up' approach through neighbourhood plans. An additional proposal is to remove the ability of the Planning Inspectorate to make their reports on planning documents 'binding' on the Council. While we cannot be sure how the Bill will progress through Parliament, we are advised that it could become law by the end of this year.
- 8.4 However, as Members will be aware, there have been a number of legal challenges by Cala Homes to the Government's proposals to remove Regional Strategies and related issues. The result of these legal actions is that the Regional Strategies remain in force until the Localism Bill becomes law. The Government's position has not been entirely clear. In the High Court decision in February the Government was recorded as having stated "it would be unrealistic to suppose local planning authorities and Inspectors would 'give anything other than great weight to the (*July 2010*) letter as a material consideration". In a recent appeal decision, however, the Secretary of State has given little weight to the Coalition Government's intention to revoke the Regional Strategies.
- 8.5 As Members are also aware, the South East Plan housing target for the District of 855 homes a year is extremely high and the Council is unable to show it can meet it. Therefore, the District is at risk of unplanned housing development. In these circumstances, it is imperative that the Council moves on with the work required to produce a realistic and robust 'District Plan' in anticipation of the enactment of the Localism Bill later this year. In the meantime an interim policy position is being put in place through the Local Housing Assessment: Five Year Supply Position. Although it is non-statutory, the Council has considered it and it is currently the subject of public consultation. This seeks to reflect (1) the clear Coalition Government intention that targets should be set locally, (2) the changes that have occurred in the assumptions

that the South East Plan was based upon and (3) that the Council's policy needs to clear until the 'District Plan' is progressed.

9. Mid Sussex 'District Plan'

- 9.1 The production of a 'District Plan' will enable the Council to:
- a) Put in place the overall planning framework for Mid Sussex with a coherent set of policies to protect and enhance the distinctive character of the District and its towns and villages for the next 20 years;
 - b) Draw on appropriate policies from the adopted Local Plan as required (These are based on old guidance although they still have legal status as part of the Development Plan for the District);
 - c) Encourage local communities to develop realistic 'bottom up' neighbourhood plans;
 - d) Set out the Council's infrastructure needs and requirements in the Plan and ensure the necessary work on the Community Infrastructure Levy is completed in line with the Government's timetable; and,
 - e) Up date the Statement of Community Involvement to provide the residents, businesses and other interested parties with clear information on how they can be involved in the process.
- 9.2 The 'District Plan' would be a 'high level' document that needs to be presented in a clear and understandable format for a wide audience. It would need to be supported by an appropriate range of evidence, information and studies to ensure it would be considered 'sound' at the subsequent Examination. This evidence base will include a number of studies already produced for previous planning documents that remain up-to-date and relevant. Some information will have changed and new work will be completed where needed. Importantly, the content of the document will be subject to appropriate community consultation.
- 9.3 The proposed outline timetable for the preparation of the 'District Plan' and its accompanying documents is shown as Table A. This incorporates the work required for the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Statement of Community Involvement. It has three distinct phases:
- Collation and interpretation of a range of supporting material (including the local housing assessment) and completion of the work to update the Statement of Community Involvement. This phase needs to be completed by the end of summer 2012;
 - Consultation on a draft 'District Plan' and Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule so that a final document can be produced by April 2012; and,
 - Completion of the process by which the 'District Plan' and supporting material is submitted to Government, there is an Examination and subsequent Adoption by the Council. This phase is expected to be completed by May 2013.
- 9.4 Members should be aware that this is a challenging but realistic timetable that if met, means that it will be possible to use the 'District Plan' from April 2012 in deciding planning applications. This is because at this stage it will then be the Council's plan in its final format, only subject to consideration by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector will still need to find the 'District Plan' sound, but if the Localism Bill is enacted in its current form, an Inspector will no longer be able to make 'binding' recommendations on the District Council. Members should be aware that the 'District Plan' would only have full weight once the Council has adopted it and the whole process is completed.

10. Statement Of Community Involvement

- 10.1 Community involvement and consultation remains a key part of the planning process. An essential first step in working on the new plan will be to up date the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This sets out how the Council will involve the community in planning decisions. It will be important to complete this work as quickly as possible to provide residents, businesses and other interested parties with clear information on how they can be involved in the production of the 'District Plan'.
- 10.2 It is proposed that a politically balanced Member Working Group be set up to draw up a revised Statement of Community Involvement. In doing this, it is proposed that the working group hears evidence from representatives of community groups and organisations from across the District at the earliest opportunity. This 'task and finish' group would report its conclusions back to the Better Environment Advisory Group in the usual way. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Member Working Group are attached at Appendix B).

11. Infrastructure Planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

- 11.1 The 'District Plan' will also need to show what infrastructure is needed within the District over the lifetime of the Plan, when it will be provided and how much it will cost. In line with the requirements of the new Community Infrastructure Levy, the District's Charging Schedule will then set out what developers will be charged in relation to those requirements. It will be produced at the same time as the 'District Plan'. The necessary work on the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and the Infrastructure Plan will be progressed alongside the 'District Plan'. It will also be subject to examination by a planning inspector at the same time as the 'District Plan'.
- 11.2 The Member Infrastructure Working Group (which also has District and Town and Parish Council Members) currently provides advice and guidance to the Better Environment Advisory Group on Section 106 funding. It is proposed that this Working Group leads on the work required to meet the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy, reporting back to the Better Environment Advisory Group in line with the outline timetable described above. Revised terms of reference for the Working Group are attached at Appendix C.

Policy Context

12. The Corporate Plan and Budget for 2011/2012 states that the key objective for the Planning Policy and Economic Development service is the preparation of the 'District Plan' and in doing so, the review the Statement of Community Involvement, and the completion of preparations for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy by April 2014.

Other Options Considered

13. The option to produce the 'District Plan' over a longer time frame was considered. However, this would prolong the period during which the District was at risk of unwanted development. Similarly, the possibility of conducting the work in a shorter time frame was also examined. However, it is important that sufficient time is allocated for the collation of a robust evidence base and for the draft 'District Plan' to be subject to public consultation if the final document is to be judged 'sound' at Examination.

Financial Implications

14. This report does not contain any direct financial implications but adherence to the proposed timetable would ensure the Council met the Government's timetable for being eligible for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Risk Management Implications

15. In drawing up the timetable and approach described in this report, officers have made a number of assumptions as described below:
16. Officers have assumed that the Localism Bill abolishing the Regional Strategies and introducing Neighbourhood Planning will be enacted. The Council has been advised that that it should not publish its final version of the 'District Plan' until the Bill has received Royal Assent. Provided the Bill does not get excessively bogged down in the 'Committee Stage', it should be enacted in time for the proposed timetable to work. However, any significant delay beyond this may have an impact.
17. The Planning Inspectorate provides a planning inspector from the date that the Council submits its final Plan. They are appointed to deal with the examination and then produce a report on the plan. The availability of a Planning Inspector is a key factor in the latter part of the proposed timetable. Nine months has been allocated for the Council to take the documents from submission to adoption. However, Members should be aware that this part of the process is outside of the Council's control. In order to minimise the risk of an inspector not being available, it will be necessary to send the outline timetable to the Planning Inspectorate as soon as possible. This will allow the Inspectorate to allocate an inspector to us.
18. If work on the Community Infrastructure Levy is not completed in line with the outline timetable, the Council will risk losing financial contributions from development towards local infrastructure. From April 2014, Section 106 agreements will mainly become limited to affordable housing and on-site requirements. Provided the outline timetable is adhered to, this work will be completed on time.
19. As previously stated, the District is at risk of unplanned development in the short term. In recent appeal decisions planning inspectors have not given weight to the Government's intention to abolish the South East Plan or locally generated housing figures. However, as the 'District Plan' progresses through the stages in the outline timetable, and the Localism Bill progresses (abolishing the South East Plan), the 'District Plan' gains more weight. Provided the work programme progresses well, the period of time during which this risk of unwanted development is prevalent will be minimised.
20. The outline timetable will be heavily reliant on significant staff resources being focused solely on progressing the 'District Plan', Statement of Community Involvement and the Community Infrastructure Levy over the next few months. This will be the overriding priority of the Planning Policy team and other pieces of work will either be delayed or alternative arrangements made. This will mean some discussion with affected parties.

Other Material Implications

21. No other material implications have been identified as arising from this report.

Background Papers

Letter to Chief Planning Officers from the Communities and Local Government Chief Planner
10th July 2010

The Localism Bill as published.

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations April 2010

Appendices

TABLE A – 'District Plan' Proposed Outline Timetable

APPENDIX A - Background information and studies.

APPENDIX B – Draft Terms of reference for the Member Working Group on the Statement of
Community Involvement

APPENDIX C – Revised terms of reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group.

Background information and studies.

Local Housing Assessment

This document will show a range of long-term housing targets over 20 years. To be reported to Members in early summer.

Sustainability Appraisal

A document that shows the social, environmental and economic effects of the content of the 'District Plan'. It will assess what the effects are of potential development (both positive and negative). There will be a Sustainability Appraisal at each stage of the District Plan.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

This will look at the effects of potential development on the Ashdown Forest. It will also set out where development does go ahead, what is needed to ensure that there will be no effect on the Forest. The Ashdown Forest has international designations for the protection of habitats and bird life. A final Habitats Assessment will be published alongside the final District Plan.

Rural Issues Update

A replacement for the Rural Issues Background Paper. That document focused on housing targets for villages to accommodate housing numbers in the South East Plan. The new update will focus on the levels of services and facilities in the villages, sustainability and highlight key characteristics. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Transport Study Update

Work to be undertaken with West Sussex County Council to review previous transport models and information and provide some conclusions. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Housing Supply Update

This will be an updated assessment of sites to support the work undertaken on the Local Housing Assessment. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Review of other policies

This piece of work will look at current policies including National Guidance for possible reference within the 'District Plan' if they are relevant and appropriate for the District. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Assessment of implications of Employment Land Review

The Employment Land Review (Parts 1 and 2) has now been completed. This piece of work will provide information on the implications for the District. It will also show how this might be reflected in the content of the 'District Plan'. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment

This work is being undertaken in the Leisure Service and is largely complete. There is additional work, which will need to focus on natural green areas and networks of areas for wildlife within the District. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan'.

Viability Assessment

This document will set out what the financial implications are for infrastructure requirements in the District. Work on this would need to be as complete as possible before consultation on the draft 'District Plan' and Community Infrastructure Levy. It will require additional work after this stage to ensure that final policies and infrastructure requirements are viable.

Draft Terms of Reference for the Member Working Group on the Statement of Community Involvement

That a Working Group comprising a politically balanced representation of the District Council be created to advise the Better Environment Advisory Group and Portfolio Holder on the update to the Statement of Community Involvement. Group Leaders to submit nominations as soon as possible after 6th May 2011.

That the Working Group has the following terms of reference:

1. Membership:

- a) The membership will compromise 5 members.
- b) One of the members will be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Better Environment Advisory Group;
- c) Key community groups and interested parties from the District are permitted to attend the working group to give evidence on community involvement, at the invitation of the Chair;

2. Scope and Remit:

- a) The Working Group is established to draw up a revised Statement of Community Involvement and report back to Better Environment Advisory Group.
- b) The Working Group sets the timetable for production of revised Statement of Community Involvement with the aim to produce a consultation document by June 2011.
- c) That the Working Group hears evidence from key community groups and interested parties from across the District
- d) That the Working Group ceases to operate on the adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement.

Revised terms of reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group.

The Better Environment Advisory Group considered the terms of reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group in October 2009. It is proposed to revise the terms of reference to confirm that this Working Group leads on the work required to meet the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Proposed changes are made to Part C point (ii).

Terms of reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group

That the Working Group has the following terms of reference:

- (a) Membership:
 - (i) the membership comprise the former Section 106 Working Group;
 - (ii) one of the members will be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Better Environment Advisory Group; and
 - (iii) outside observers be permitted to attend meetings of the working group at the invitation of the Chairperson;
- (b) Scope and Remit: The Working Group be established to provide sound advice to the Better Environment Advisory Group on Infrastructure Issues throughout the District; and
- (c) Areas to be considered:
 - (i) To further consider action 9 in the light of the conclusions of the Land Transfers Working Group;
 - (ii) To inform arrangements for and adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy as part of the work on the District Plan and Charging Schedule and to inform and advise Better Environment Advisory Group accordingly ; and
 - (iii) To provide input to the revised Development and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document.

Minutes of the Meeting of Better Environment Advisory Group held on 29th March 2011 from 7:00 pm to 8:07 pm

Present: Councillors: Peter Martin (Chairman)
Andrew MacNaughton (Vice Chairman)

Irene Balls	Janice Henwood
Andrew Barrett-Miles	Christopher Hersey
Andrew Brock	Jane Keel*
Bernard Gillbard	Susanna Kemp

* Absent

Also Present: Councillors Bates, Jones, Livesey, Marsh, Moore and Seward.

31. **SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4**

None

32. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Keel.

33. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

34. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 2nd February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCING A MID SUSSEX ‘DISTRICT PLAN’**

Louise Gibbons, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy introduced the report. She referred to the background, current position and the need to produce a District Plan, an up to date Statement of Community Involvement and a Community Infrastructure Charging Scheme. She said that the Council needed to progress the District Plan and an outline timetable highlighting key stages of production was attached to the report. She sought agreement to the timetable being recommended to Council, to the setting up of a politically balanced Member Working Group to update the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and to agreeing revised Terms of Reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group.

The Chairman noted that the timetable was tight and while the resources of the planning policy team were engaged with carrying out this work he hoped that Members would be tolerant.

A Member queried the shading in the proposed timetable against the PPG17 assessment that went to April 2012. She said that the Advisory Group had agreed at the meeting held on 2nd February 2011 that the standards would be incorporated in a

Mid Sussex Planning Policy Document. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy confirmed that this was an administrative error and the shading should finish at August 2011.

A Member welcomed the timetable and the urgency with which the work would be carried out but had some concerns about the resource implications. He said that planning appeal issues might require the assistance of planning policy officers and asked whether this had been factored into the workload. He also asked what the green shading on the timetable denoted. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy replied that the green shading highlights key dates for consideration and strengthens the Council's position with regard to planning.

A Member expressed the hope that the opportunity for consultation would not be closed off if it were considered to be helpful. He queried whether the Towns and Villages needed to get their work done within the same time frame. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning responded that neighbourhood plans would feed into the District Plan and that the District Plan would set the framework for the neighbourhood plan. The Member said that the feed back from the Towns and Villages was very important and their involvement in the process needed to be shown in the timetable to encourage their input. This was agreed.

A Member queried how the Statement of Community Involvement would involve communities. The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy said that there would be early involvement from the community and the Member Working Group would hear representations from community groups. This would be followed by a formal consultation stage on a draft SCI document.

A Member said there was a considerable amount of work to be done, it was challenging and until it was completed the Council was at risk of unwanted development. He felt that it was necessary to progress the timetable with some speed in order to minimise the time when the Council was vulnerable.

The Chairman noted that the further the Council moved along the timetable, the more strength it would acquire. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that it was a challenge, and a balance needed to be struck between keeping the timetable tight and producing a plan that states what the Council needs to say.

In response to a Member's question the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that she had met with Parish Clerks to inform them of how the Council see things fitting together and to encourage them to get going with their neighbourhood plan. The Member said that the Council needed the input and should give clear step-by-step guidance for community engagement. He said that it was important for the Council to have evidence-based material and to take residents with us.

A Member said that the Statement of Community Involvement was one of the most challenging areas. She queried how community groups were defined and said that she would be interested to know who the groups were. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that she had been approached by a number of community groups, but the South of the District was not yet represented and it would be helpful to be alerted to any groups who want to express their views.

A Member welcomed the progress. Neighbourhood plans would need to mesh in with the District Plan. She reported that Hurstpierpoint had received help to draw up a neighbourhood plan but there is still considerable uncertainty until the Localism Bill is enacted. She expressed the hope that the new plan would concentrate more on

environmental matters. The fact that 58 % of Mid Sussex was an AONB should be emphasised more as it attracts tourists and should be given more protection.

A Member said that he shared the concerns expressed by other Members. He noted that the work on the Local Housing Assessment 20 year view ended in June. He referred to paragraph 9.1.c of the report and asked if this meant that local communities would be told how many houses they have to take and where to put them. He felt that if so, this was not a bottom up approach and felt that Members would have insufficient time for consideration. He felt that the timescale was too short. He was also concerned at the request for Members to be patient with the planning policy team, as their resources would be directed to the production of the District Plan especially as Members had been assured at the Council meeting in March 2011 that they would be doing work on Economic Development. He sought clarification about the wording of the terms of reference of the Infrastructure Working Group; he felt that (a)(i) should be number and titles of people as it would not necessarily be the same people. He suggested that the wording should be changed.

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning clarified that the timetable for the Local Housing Assessment was for officers to do the technical work. This would produce a range of numbers with differing impacts and it would then be for Members to decide. It is intended that Members would consider the results at the Better Environment Advisory Group in June. The Member queried local input and the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that this was the reason why they wished to consult on the District Plan together with the Housing Numbers. The Member said that District Numbers were meaningless to local communities. The Chairman said that it was intended to be a bottom up plan and the Planning Policy team would gather the information from the various 'neighbourhood plans'.

A Member asked why a new sustainability appraisal would not be produced until September 2012 when a considerable amount of work had been done for the Core Strategy. The BUL responded that the focus of that work had been meeting policies in the SE Plan therefore there was a requirement to revise and refresh what had been produced. The factual information would not need to be updated but the objectives need to be revised in relation to the abolition of the SE Plan.

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that the Chairman's comments with regard to the resources of the Planning Policy team referred to new work, the economic development work had already been factored into the resources required. A Member welcomed the timetable and said that the Localism Bill had raised expectations amongst residents that the Council would be able to resist development.

A Member reiterated that the involvement of Town and Parish Councils should be shown on the timetable. The bottom up approach should be highlighted. Local involvement should be shown on the timetable and when local needs should be input should be represented diagrammatically. There was a huge willingness to give input and be part of the plan and have local needs reflected. He noted that there was an intention to review SE Plan policies but he felt that the review should go wider than that as the Council had produced many policies for the Core Strategy that they had hoped would protect against unwanted development. He felt that these should be reviewed and a view should be reached about what policies were genuinely required. Gaps between settlements for example. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning agreed that there was a tension between spending time on the content of the plan and the speed of acquiring protection from unwanted development. Members would need to make judgements; local engagement and consultation could

slow the timetable down. The Member suggested that more use be made of experienced Members, he agreed that it was an ambitious timetable but it was in the interests of the District to get it done. He felt that it was important for the plan to show local input.

A Member asked whether local gaps could be strengthened and if windfalls could be counted towards housing numbers. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that where there is a local housing requirement it will need to be recorded how this would be delivered in principle and neighbourhood plans would need to comply with this requirement. Even if numbers are not required, villages and towns might wish to take development in order to gain infrastructure.

In reply to a Member's question the Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy said that the technical work on the local housing assessment would be done on a District wide basis and the scenarios would be District wide

A Member expressed concern that the grass roots nature of the input might not be coherent across the District and suggested that the Council needed to be sure who was going to be involved. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that a number of community groups had directly expressed an interest in giving their views but more would be welcomed. It was confirmed that community groups knew of this opportunity.

A Member said that while he appreciated that there was a balance to be struck between content and timescale, the District Plan must be sound and the content mustn't be glossed over just to meet time scales. He felt that it would be better to overrun by a month to ensure that what is produced is sound.

The Cabinet Member for Planning said that he was encouraged by the unanimity of the Council in ceasing production of the Core Strategy; the housing numbers required by the SE Plan were not sustainable for Mid Sussex. He said that in November 2010, a 5-year housing position had been approved reflecting Government announcements. The Council was unanimous in moving forward with housing numbers that are right for the District. He applauded the officers' work, and he felt that the timetable, though challenging, could be met and the production of the District Plan would strengthen the Council's position. He supported the recommendations before the Advisory Group.

Members suggested that the TOR for the Member Infrastructure Working Group be amended to reflect that it was the current structure that they were agreeing to but it might be different people. It was agreed that (a)(i) should be amended to read 'the membership comprise the structure of the former Section 106 Working Group;'

It was also agreed that the timetable be augmented to reflect the input of Towns and Parishes in their production of neighbourhood plans.

RESOLVED

That:

- (1) the setting up of a politically balanced Member Working Group to update the Council's Statement of Community Involvement be approved; and
- (2) the revised Terms of Reference for the Member Infrastructure Working Group be agreed, subject to the amendment about the structure.

(3) to recommend to Council:

That the outline timetable for the production of the 'District Plan' be recommended to Council, with additions of a reference to the Town /Parish Council involvement in neighbourhood plans and a correction of the error on PPG17;

Chairman.

8. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET

Cabinet – 11th April 2011

78. CAPITAL PROGRAMME VARIATIONS 2011/12.

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Finance. He referred Members to the report, which outlined three additional capital projects.

RESOLVED (to Recommend to Council)

That the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 2 of the Cabinet Report be approved in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B4.