

Paine Martin

From: Steve Smith [Steve.Smith02@Urs.com]
Sent: 14 March 2012 10:32
To: Paine Martin
Subject: Criteria-based approach

Dear Martin

Thank you for sending through the work so far including on the areas of search for potential development in East Hertfordshire.

I've been through the documentation and your approach to assessing the areas of search seems sensible and reasonable. In particular, you have developed and applied a series of criteria covering the key planning issues and the application of these ensures a consistent and transparent basis for assessing the relative merits of different areas for future development. I also note that many of the criteria are based on mapped data and those that aren't are informed by reasonable assumptions (e.g. regarding access to public transport), expert input or technical research. Importantly, stakeholders will presumably have the opportunity to question the criteria themselves as well as the outcomes of the assessment during the forthcoming consultation.

Helpfully, each of the criteria is supported by a justification drawn from Government policy (e.g. from the National Policy Planning Framework) and the sources of information and evidence underpinning the criteria are also clear as well as the assumptions made in applying them (e.g. the density of potential new dwellings in relation to the 'land availability' criteria).

As you note, a criteria-based approach cannot be fully comprehensive and can only be used where there is a clear and measurable basis for assessment. However, it is clear from the document setting out the Stepped Approach to Strategy Selection for the Core Strategy that additional information including feedback from stakeholders will be considered later in the process.

I understand that the criteria-based approach has been designed to incorporate aspects of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) required for the emerging plan. This is reasonable and reflects available guidance (e.g. the Planning Advisory Service's advice on SA at www.pas.gov.uk/sa). Helpfully, draft chapter 1 of the Core Strategy includes a table setting out how the topics set out in the SA Scoping Report have been integrated into the plan-making process. The SA Report will need to document the criteria-based approach and include an analysis of possible cumulative effects from development across the District (the summary assessment matrix you sent is helpful in this regard).

I hope this is helpful. Please don't hesitate to contact me to discuss any aspect further.

Best regards

Steve

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