

Planning & Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel

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REPORT

BUSINESS SECTOR CONSULTATION ON NEW PLANNING LEGISLATION

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Members will recall that part of the Panel's approved work programme is a consultation with the business community on how the impending changes to planning legislation will affect local businesses and how they might influence the process. This report provides members with a progress update on this process and recommends next steps.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1. All 'board' level members from the five local economic/business partners were invited to attend a briefing by officers on the new planning legislation on 28 April 2004. The briefing was facilitated by Stephen Woodhouse, Chairman of the South Wiltshire Economic Partnership, and attended by 18 people.
- 2.2. The key outcome was the agreement that the best way forward for the council to involve the local business community in this new planning process is through our existing relationship with our group of five economic partners (often referred to as the 5EP's):
 - South Wiltshire Economic Partnership (SWEP)
 - Salisbury City Centre Management
 - Salisbury Tourism Partnership
 - Salisbury Federation of Small Businesses
 - Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry

3. Next steps

- 3.1. The board representatives of each of the 5EP's have been asked to keep all their members up to date with this process and the importance of their influence.
- 3.2. The next steps in this process, as conveyed to the 5EP's, are:

Short term: The existing Salisbury District Local Plan was adopted in June 2003 and was designed to run until 2011. However, new government legislation allows for more focused reviews on a shorter timescale. As early as next year there will be opportunities to 'tweak' the policies of the plan, as appropriate. We will be seeking input from the local business community on such matters over the next 6 months.

Medium term: Over the next 2-3 years, a Core Strategy will need to be drawn up by the council (as required by the new planning legislation). This will define a strategy for development over the next 10-15 years and beyond. A strong voice from the local business community will be vital to ensure that economic development issues are properly reflected, and that arguments for and against development are more balanced.

In addition, the Wiltshire Structure Plan, outlining the county's development needs to 2016, will be adopted by this time. Members will recall that we have worked hard to secure an additional 20ha of employment land for the Salisbury district in this plan. Input will be required from the business community to identify appropriate sites and address the priorities of the business community.

- 3.3. The council's economic team has already gathered a great deal of research and other data about the demand/supply of local business space (offices, land, industrial units etc) and our current economic climate in Salisbury and South Wiltshire. It is vital that we have the further input of the local business community on these issues, to initially influence the 'short term' work outlined above.
- 3.4. It is proposed that the representatives of the local business community (as outlined in 2.2 above) are invited to facilitated workshops in the late summer to progress this short term work.

4. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel accepts this report and recommends to Cabinet that it approve the proposed actions.

5. Implications:

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| 5.1. Financial | : None |
| 5.2. Legal | : None |
| 5.3. Personnel | : None |
| 5.4. Community Safety | : None |
| 5.5. Wards Affected | : All |