



### District Councils' Network Planning Reform Survey Analysis

#### Background

At the beginning of November the DCN invited its members to complete a survey questionnaire about planning reform. The purpose of the survey was to give the DCN a better understanding of the reform challenges that districts are facing including transition arrangements, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, neighbourhood planning and planning across local boundaries. The survey results are being used to inform the DCN's ongoing dialogue with Government. The dialogue is designed to make sure that we have a reformed planning framework and system that enables us to work with developers, in order to contribute towards a positive future for our districts, towns and villages.

A list of the survey questions is included as an appendix to this report.

#### Introduction

91 councils completed and returned a survey questionnaire, including four councils working together as the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (a statutory joint committee of the City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council). A list of the councils that responded is included as an appendix to this report.

The majority of the councils provided answers to all of the questions but some councils did not. Therefore when considering the detailed analysis of the survey it should be borne in mind that it is based on the numbers that answered a particular question.

#### Transition arrangements

30 councils already had an adopted core strategy, 58 did not (66%).

Colchester, East Cambridgeshire, Horsham, Tonbridge and Malling and Wycombe had full local plans with a complete suite of planning documents.

Of the 58 councils that did not have an adopted core strategy the anticipated dates of adoption were:

2011 – 4 councils  
2012 – 28 councils  
2013 – 22 councils  
2014 – 4 councils

The majority of these councils were not putting in place any interim policies, pending the adoption of a core strategy and considered that the current local plan or saved local plan policies were sufficient. However a small number of councils were preparing interim policy statements to make sure that there was a five year land supply.

### **The presumption in favour of sustainable development**

Only seven councils had experienced an increase in appeals following the publication of the draft National Planning Policy Framework but many more anticipated an increase in appeals.

Appeal decisions had referred to the draft National Planning Policy Framework but it appeared that inspectors were adding a standard paragraph that stated that it carried very little weight in relation to the decision.

### **Neighbourhood planning**

58 councils did not have any neighbourhood planning front runners but Broadland had six. Most councils that had front runners, were confident that the plans that were being prepared would be in conformity with the local plan. They did not anticipate there would be major issues in making sure that there is conformity.

66 councils were not intending to allocate a dedicated resource for neighbourhood planning. The reasons for not allocating resource were partly budgetary (and several councils considered that a refocusing of existing resources was sufficient) but there was a significant view that many parish councils did not have an appetite for neighbourhood planning.

### **Planning across local boundaries**

17 councils were providing employment or housing or employment land for neighbouring councils. The majority of these councils adjoin a large town or city.

30 councils were not currently involved in any formal collaboration on a strategic investment plan. Many councils that were collaborating were using partnership arrangements that have been in place for several years.

11 councils were Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) front runners; 9 front runners anticipated that their CIL strategy (charging schedule) would be adopted in 2012, 2 anticipated that it would be adopted in 2013.

Of the councils that are not front runners, 10 anticipated adoption in 2012, 26 in 2013 and 14 in 2014.

## Other planning reform challenges

- Ongoing concern about transitional arrangements and the void that is being created
- The requirement to have a 5 years housing land supply plus 20% and the likelihood of community opposition when identifying this requirement
- Resisting the loss of employment sites during a period of low demand
- Delays in allowing authorities to set own planning fees
- The need for new forms of joint working due to shrinking resources
- Resourcing of neighbourhood planning
- The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

## Appendix

### Planning reform survey questions

#### 1. Transition arrangements

**Does your district have an adopted core strategy?**

**If yes;** what other documents need to be put in place to complete your local plan?

When do you anticipate that you will have your full plan in place?

**If no;** when do anticipate that your core strategy will be adopted?

Are you preparing any interim policies pending the adoption of your core strategy?

#### 2. Presumption in favour of sustainable development

**Has your district experienced an increase in appeal activity since the publication of the draft NPPF?**

**If yes;** please can you give an estimate of the increase in appeal activity:

**Do you have any examples of the Planning Inspectorate referring to the draft NPPF in an appeal decision?**

#### 3. Neighbourhood planning

**Does your district have any neighbourhood planning front-runners?**

**If yes;** how many?

**If yes;** do you think that the front runners will propose policies that are in conformity with district policies?

**Do you, or are you planning to have a dedicated resource to support neighbourhood planning?**

**If no;** is this a budgetary decision or a policy decision?

#### 4. Planning across local boundaries

**Will your district have to provide housing or employment land for neighbouring areas?**

**If yes;** please can you provide brief details:

**Is your district collaborating with neighbouring areas on a strategic investment plan?**

**If yes;** please can you provide brief details:

**Is your district a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) front runner?**

**If yes;** when do you anticipate that your CIL strategy will be adopted?

**If no;** when do you anticipate that your CIL strategy will be adopted?

## **5. Other planning reform challenges**

**Please provide details of any other planning reform challenges that your district is facing:**

## Councils that took part in the survey

|  |
|--|
| Allerdale Borough Council                                |
| Amber Valley Borough Council                             |
| Arun   |
| Ashfield District Council                                |
| Basildon Borough Council                                 |
| Basingstoke and Deane                                    |
| Blaby  |
| Braintree  |
| Broadland  |
| Bromsgrove District                                      |
| Broxbourne   |
| Cannock Chase  |
| Canterbury   |
| Carlisle City Council                                    |
| Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee* |
| Chelmsford BC  |
| Cheltenham   |
| Chichester   |
| Chiltern   |
| Colchester   |
| Craven District Council                                  |
| Crawley  |
| Dartford   |
| Daventry District Council                                |
| Derbyshire Dales District Council                        |
| East Cambs District Council                              |
| East Lindsey DC  |
| East Northamptonshire                                    |
| Eastleigh BC   |
| Eden   |
| Elmbridge Borough Council                                |
| Erewash Borough Council                                  |
| Exeter City Council                                      |
| Fareham Borough Council                                  |
| Forest of Dean   |
| Gedling Borough Council                                  |
| Guildford BC   |
| Harborough District Council                              |
| Harlow   |
| Hart District Council                                    |
| Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council                    |
| Horsham District Council                                 |
| Huntingdonshire District Council                         |
| Ipswich BC   |
| Lancaster City Council                                   |

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Maldon District Council               |
| Melton Borough                        |
| North Hertfordshire                   |
| North Norfolk                         |
| North Warwickshire                    |
| Norwich City Council                  |
| Oxford City Council                   |
| Redditch Borough Council              |
| Reigate & Banstead Borough Council    |
| Ribble Valley Borough Council         |
| Rochford                              |
| Rugby Borough Council                 |
| Rushcliffe B C                        |
| Ryedale                               |
| Sevenoaks                             |
| South Bucks                           |
| South Cambridgeshire District Council |
| South Derbyshire                      |
| South Norfolk                         |
| South Oxfordshire                     |
| South Somerset District Council       |
| South Staffordshire                   |
| St Edmundsbury Borough Council        |
| Stafford                              |
| Stevenage Borough Council             |
| Stratford upon Avon                   |
| Stroud District Council               |
| Surrey Heath                          |
| Swale Borough Council                 |
| Tandridge District Council            |
| Taunton Deane Borough Council         |
| Test Valley Borough Council           |
| Tonbridge and Malling                 |
| Uttlesford District Council           |
| Vale of White Horse DC                |
| Warwick District Council              |
| Watford Borough Council               |
| Waverley Borough Council              |
| Wealden District Council              |
| Wellingborough Borough Council        |
| Worcester City                        |
| Wycombe District Council              |
| Wyre Forest District Council          |

\* A statutory joint committee of the City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council