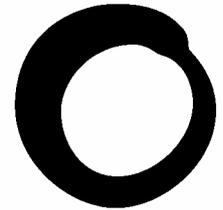


March 2005



**Friends of
the Earth**

Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities

A summary

Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.

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- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
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Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities

What is Planning Policy Statement 1?

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1) is a vitally important document for anyone campaigning on planning issues at the local and regional level. PPS 1 is the Government's overarching statement on the purpose of the planning system and sets out important objectives.

So what power does PPS 1 have?

Planning policy statements replace the old Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGS) and they are the national Government's policy on a range of planning issues. PPS's are guidance and not law, but all local authorities must have regard to the contents of the PPS when drawing up development plans or making specific decisions on planning applications. If, for example, a Local Authority ignores the contents of the PPS then this can form the basis of a powerful objection in a local plan inquiry or in a public inquiry into a specific development. In some cases the failure to reasonably have regard to a PPS could also be part of a legal challenge.

So is there anything useful in this new PPS 1?

In fact there's a lot of excellent new policy 'stuff' in PPS 1 that can be helpful to local campaigners. Of course it's not all good and there is considerable emphasis on economic growth and competitiveness; but taken overall this is balanced by significant new material on sustainable development and community participation. This briefing focuses on those parts of the PPS which might be positive for local campaigners, but it is important to bear in mind that the development community may take equal comfort from sections which deal with economic growth.

PPS 1 has three big themes

1. Sustainable development.
2. Spatial planning.
3. Public participation.

It is first and last of these themes which are most important.

So what does PPS 1 say about sustainable development?

There are some excellent references to ideas which have not been included in national planning policy quite so clearly before:

Paragraph 3 of the new PPS makes clear that '**sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning**'. The paragraph goes on to use the Bruntland definition of sustainable development which emphasises inter-generational equity.

Paragraph 13 sets out the key principles which ensure that development plans and decisions contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. This paragraph contains seven sub-clauses which are particularly important. The first makes clear that '**development plans should ensure that sustainable development is pursued an integrated manner, in line with the principles for sustainable development set out in the UK strategy.**' a new version of the UK sustainable development strategy will be published in March and this paragraph ensures of the contents of the strategy is now relevant to the preparation of development plans and individual decisions.

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Sub clause 2 of paragraph 13 is particularly important in relation to climate change. The paragraph makes clear that ***'development plans should contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impact of climate change - through policies which reduce energy use, reducing emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, or reduce the impact of moving freight), promote the development of renewable energy resources, and take Climate Change impacts into account in the location and design of development'***.

Paragraph 17-20 deals with the protection and enhancement of the environment. There are strong commitments here to protect the natural environment, open countryside and historic heritage.

However paragraph 19 is particularly important because it makes a commitment that ***'plan policies and planning decisions should be based on: - recognition of the limits of the environment to accept further development without irreversible damage'***. This is the first time that environmental limits have featured in national planning policy. This paragraph also contains an explicit commitment to the 'polluter pays' principle.

Paragraph 20 also recognises that development plan policy should ensure ***'the management of waste in ways that protect the environment and human health, including producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible'***.

Paragraph 21-22 includes important material on the prudent use of natural resources.

Paragraph 22 in particular contains this commitment: ***'development plan policy should seek to minimise the need to consume new resources over the lifetime of the development by making more efficient use or re-use of existing resources, rather than making new demands on the environment; it should seek to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)'***.

Community Involvement

Paragraph 40 onwards of the new PPS makes a strong commitment to community involvement in the local planning framework. There is a good deal of rhetoric in these paragraphs but they do make direct reference to another document ***'community involvement in Planning: the Government's response'***, which provides for a more powerful and detailed account of why participation in planning is important.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities

Useful Resources

Get your very own copy of PPS1

The full copy of PPS 1 can be downloaded from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's web site: www.odpm.gov.uk in the planning section, or specifically at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=5845&l=3

The Planning System: General Principles

Provides a general description of key elements of the planning system, including its structure the determination of planning applications and the Secretary of State's role.

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/downloadable/odpm_plan_034816.pdf

Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives

This paper sets out the government's general objectives for community involvement in planning.

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_027497.pdf

Friends of the Earth's Planning website:

<http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/planning/index.html>

Friends of the Earth's Freedom of Information website:

www.RightToKnowOnline.org

Contact Us:

Rights & Justice team

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