

## **Part 2 Section 6**

### **Local Employment Skills Training and Enhancement of the Public Realm**

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## **Local Employment Skills Training and Enhancement of the Public Realm**

### **Justification**

- 2.6.1 It is clear that Government planning guidance and the development plan provide a firm basis for Councils (as Local Planning Authorities) to consider the impacts of development on the environment, and the community and that their assessment and evaluation of such impacts can relate to anything that can be a consideration material to planning.
- 2.6.2 Planning Policy Guidance (for example PPS1, PPS7, PPS12 and PPG15) and the development plan, in the form of the approved and emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the 'saved' Selby District Local Plan (SDLP), contain a range of objectives and policies that are aimed at ensuring development of a high quality in terms of sustainability and design and in terms of economic and community development, such that all development, particularly large-scale schemes, should positively and directly contribute to the achievement of these aims. For example, in the approved RSS (December 2004) relevant Policies include:
- S1 (Applying the Sustainable Development Principles)
  - S3 (Urban and Rural Renaissance)
  - S4 (Urban and Rural Design)
  - E2 (Rural Employment Opportunities)
  - N2 (Historic and Cultural Resources).
- 2.6.3 In the emerging RSS (December 2005), relevant policies are Policies YH1 (Overall Approach), TH3 (Key Spatial Priorities), YH6 (Better Towns), YH7 (Vibrant Rural and Coastal Areas); and in the saved SDLP, relevant Policies are ENV1 (Control of Development) and CS6 (Developer Contributions).
- 2.6.4 The main theme of these policies is the renaissance and regeneration of communities and the enhancement of the basic conditions of a prosperous, diverse and civilised community; in order to ensure that new development benefits the physical and social qualities of the local area and does not cause it harm. Uncontrolled development, which serves only the narrow interests of the developer and new occupiers of the development, will, if unmitigated, harm the interests of the wider community.
- 2.6.5 In the light of this, it is considered by the Council that it is fully warranted in its intention to seek developer contributions in pursuance of economic development and environmental enhancement strategies and policies. Therefore, such contributions will be sought where it can

be demonstrated as reasonable and justified to do so, for example, to offset the harm or loss caused to the local community, or where there are needs and opportunities to provide Local Employment Skills Training and/or Enhancement of the Public Realm, which can be linked to the nature and scale of a development and its direct impact on local employment opportunities and on the cultural qualities and assets of the District and the communities resident in it.

## Land Use

- 2.6.6 The Council, in connection with any form of development, may seek contributions towards Local Employment Skills Training and Enhancement of the Public Realm.

## Thresholds

- 2.6.7 Provision or contributions for Local Employment Skills Training and Enhancement of the Public Realm have rarely been sought in the past and then only in the cases of very large developments, where a special justification was agreed between the Council and the developer. It is intended that contributions will be sought in more instances in future, but it likely that only large-scale developments would be eligible under these headings.

- 2.6.8 'Large-scale', for this purpose is defined as:
- Proposals for: 50 dwellings or more or 2 hectares or more (net dwelling density – PPS3 definition) of residential development;
  - 2500 square metres (gross floor area), or 1 hectare or more (net dwelling density) of retail or B1/office development;
  - 5000 square metres (gross floor area) or 2 hectares or more (net dwelling density) of B8 Storage/Warehousing or B2 General Industry.

- 2.6.9 The number of dwellings, floor areas and the site areas stated above apply to or take into account the cumulative floor or site area or total of number of dwellings to be constructed on a site or development where it is made up of two or more phases, or is the subject of two or more separate planning applications. Thus the requirement cannot be avoided by dealing with a site through more than one planning application.

- 2.6.10 Exceptionally, provision for Enhancement of the Public Realm, may be required where developments of a smaller scale than just indicated are proposed. For example, where such development could affect significantly sensitive or special parts of the public realm, such as areas of historic and/or architectural importance.

## Methodology

- 2.6.11 There is not a specific local formula or approach for seeking contributions with regard to the Local Employment Skills Training and Enhancement of the Public Realm. However, a key principle in considering and seeking developer contributions will be that there is a functional and/or geographical/spatial link between the development and the feature, measure, project or programme that the provision or contributions will support.
- 2.6.12 Local Employment Skills Training for the purposes of this guidance relates to the training of residents in the local community to:
- Fill vacancies in quality jobs in the local area, including where possible within the development itself.
  - Address priority skill gaps in the local labour pool needed to enable the start up and growth of local businesses.
  - Help in the development of and growth in the pool of local skilled labour and thus the local economy, into which the new development would be introduced.
- 2.6.13 In determining whether a contribution will be sought for a project or programme of local employment skills training, the nature and scale of the impacts of the development on the local demand or needs for employment skills will be assessed. In undertaking this assessment it would clearly be advantageous to consult local employment training bodies and where feasible local employers. Particular attention will be given to the skills required in both the construction phase of the development and the development in use.
- 2.6.14 So, for example, in relation to the construction phase of a large development, the focus could be on training to assist local people in securing jobs requiring skills relating to such employment sectors as the building trades, civil engineering and supervisory and management in the building industry skills. As the development comes on stream the focus might shift to skills training that can be related to the permitted uses, such as retail, office, industry and residential ;(in the case of residential developments, skills in sales, marketing or property improvements and repairs might be targeted).
- 2.6.15 The public realm for the purposes of this guidance comprises all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public have free access. It includes all the streets, squares and other rights of way; the open spaces and parks and other public/private spaces to which the

public (of the very substantial part of a local community) has unrestricted access (at least during daylight hours) and includes the interfaces with key internal, external and private spaces to which the public have access.

- 2.6.16 The quality of the public realm should match or exceed the quality of new buildings and other development. This is an objective of planning policies at all spatial levels and the policy context for all forms of development provide a firm basis for mitigating the impact of new development upon the quality of the public realm both on the site and in the area around the site. It is not just the physical features in the public realm that could be the subject of developer contributions arising out of the impact of new development, it has been established in case law that it can be reasonable for developers and Local Planning Authorities to negotiate and agree upon contributions to improvements of the public realm at a distance from the development site and for provision other than physical objects in the townscape or landscape.
- 2.6.17 The spaces between and acting as a backcloth to built development, including spaces that form the routes and corridors through which people pass, are vital to the general visual and cultural value of the local townscape and the appreciation of the wider landscape. New development will often have direct or indirect impacts on these spaces. Typical direct effects will be through proximity of the development to a public space and through traffic impacts; indirect effects include the demands and needs generated by, or increased as a result of, additional residents, employees or visitors coming into an area or a community as a result of new development.
- 2.6.18 In determining whether a contribution will be sought for the enhancement of the public realm, the nature and scale of the impacts of the development on the quality of the public realm will be assessed. For example, one issue to be addressed will be the increased pressure for the use of public spaces; another will be how much the value of the development will benefit from improvements to the public spaces around it or in the centre of the settlement in which it is located. The types of enhancement will be very varied, including from physical features such as special landscapes, townscape features such as specific works of art, to cultural projects such as street performance. Clearly imagination and creativity will inform the choice of enhancement, as will the nature the development and the new land use created.
- 2.6.19 At present there is no overall District-wide strategy for enhancing the public realm nor, as a consequence, is there a specific mechanism for tying the Local Plan to such a strategy. The LDF process affords an opportunity to link land use planning policy explicitly to such a strategy

and to other relevant strategies. For example there should be such a link through the Selby District Community Strategy, but also, as appropriate, through other strategies for enhancing the public realm, for example Selby Towns Renaissance, also through strategies that other bodies are promoting, such as the County Council (e.g. the Cultural Strategy) and the Art Council England.

- 2.6.20 The general provision of landscaping designed as an integral part of development both on and off site is not a subject dealt with in this SPD. However, preserving and enhancing landscape and townscape features and creating new ones can be important and sometimes crucial elements in the quality of the character and appearance of the public realm. Thus in some instances hard and/or soft landscaping may be a form of off-site enhancement of the public realm that would be sought as a developer contribution for a limited number of development schemes.
- 2.6.21 Because only large-scale developments will normally be involved, when contributions will be sought for local employment skills training and the enhancement of the public realm, the assessment exercise carried out to evaluate and decide upon the nature and scale of contribution would normally be carried out at pre-application stage. The Council's aspirations may also be established through development briefs (which for larger developments would be adopted as SPDs and, therefore subject to community involvement).

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