

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 15 June 2011 at 7.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Brooks)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hall)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Coles, Denington, Ms Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, Ms Lisgo, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Mullins, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Mrs Slattery, T Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Swaine, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

Also present : Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 19 May 2011, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Baker, Cavill, D Durdan, Edwards, R Lees and Mrs Lees.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Brooks, Govier, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillors Hayward declared a personal interest as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Watson declared a personal interest as the alternate Director of Southwest One. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as the owner of an area of land at Cotford St. Luke. Councillor Wren declared a personal interest as an employee of Natural England.

4. **Public Question Time**

- (i) Mrs Julie Richardson stated that residents in Milverton had recently learnt that following the Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2010, a nine hectare site (ref: MILV008) had been added to the 'potentially developable' list for Taunton Deane. I would like to ask the Council to

consider removing this site from the list on the following grounds:-

- There were a number of serious inaccuracies in the site description that formed the basis for the decision:-
 - The description of the site contained the phrase 'land not in current use'. This was inaccurate as there was a good wheat crop in place over the full site. The grade of the farm land was good;
 - The farmland was described as lying to the east of Milverton. It lay to the west;
 - The description said that the land was "separated by a farm track which runs from Wood Street to Milverton Court and High Street". In fact the land marked on the map attached to the description was divided by two farm tracks, or more accurately, two sunken lanes, one of which ran west from Wood Street and the other west from High Street to Milverton Court. The document says that clarification would need to be obtained about access. The owner of at least one of the lanes had not been contacted and would be likely to refuse access.
- It is extremely difficult to see how access could be achieved given the nature of the B3187 at the possible exit, the restricted width of High Street and the private ownership of the sunken lanes.
- These fields had never been considered by the Parish Council as potential sites for development.

It seemed incredible that a survey carried out in such seeming haste could be allowed to result in a large area of land being deemed developable and sitting in the records as thus described and so blighting a large number of properties. Could the decision be changed?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Williams, thanked Mrs Richardson for her question and promised that a full written response to the points she had raised would be sent to her shortly.

(ii) Mr Ray Tully referred to the proposed Core Strategy and asked the following questions:

- Page 3, paragraph 3-2 the Employment Led Strategy – By 2028 the forecast was for 17,000 houses with a population of about 40,000. So why was there only an intention to create 12,000 jobs, most of which would be in the service sector (75%), the low pay sector?

- Why has there been so very little information sent to local people particularly those in the Monkton Heathfield area about the Core Strategy proposals?
- The Strategy suggests that the target for the provision of affordable housing would be 25%. Can we trust that will happen? – unlike the 900 dwellings in Monkton Heathfield with planning consent, where the affordable housing target has been lowered.

Councillor Williams thanked Mr Tully for his questions and promised that a full written response would be sent to him shortly.

- (iii) Councillor Mullins asked why the format of the Full Council meeting was different, with no “Part II” (reports from the Executive Councillors) on the agenda.

The Legal and Democratic Services Manager explained that as this was a special meeting, outside the scheduled dates for Full Council meetings, there was no requirement for the agenda to include the Part II reports.

5. **Taunton Deane Core Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

The Executive had given detailed consideration as to whether the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal should be published in July/August for public consultation and submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2011.

The Core Strategy was the key plan within the Local Development Framework and sustainable development was a statutory objective. Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) stated that spatial planning was a process of place shaping and delivery. PPS12 also stated that adequate infrastructure planning was an essential process in developing a sound Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy set out a vision for Taunton Deane and eight strategic objectives together with indicators to measure success. For each objective there was a core policy:- (1) Climate Change; (2) Economy; (3) Town and other Centres; (4) Housing; (5) Inclusive Communities; (6) Accessibility; (7) Infrastructure; and (8) Environment.

The plan set out an employment-led strategy, with homes balanced to jobs. The priority was to regenerate Taunton Town Centre, with the majority of the remainder of growth being accommodated in sustainable mixed use urban extensions served by public transport corridors. Existing green wedges would be enhanced and new green wedges created.

The employment led strategy sought to provide at least 11,900 jobs and 17,000 homes over the period up to 2028.

Taunton was the strategic focus for this growth with about 13,000 homes (of which over 3,000 would be affordable), Wellington was a secondary focus with about 2,500 homes (of which about 625 would be affordable) and the rural areas up to 1,500 homes.

The Core Strategy only allocated strategic sites. The subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Document would allocate smaller sites in Taunton, Wellington and the rural centres. Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard were identified as major rural centres for up to 200 additional homes. Cotford St Luke, Creech St Michael, Milverton, North Curry and Churchinford were identified as minor rural centres for up to 50 homes.

Central to the delivery of the Core Strategy's proposals were a number of sustainable mixed use allocations. At Taunton about 5,000 homes and 22.5 hectares of employment would be provided at Monkton Heathfield and about 900 homes and 1 hectare of employment at Priorswood Nerrols. About 10 hectares of employment land had been identified as a long term reserve at Walford Cross.

Further broad locations for growth after 2016 had been identified at Comeytrowe/Trull for between 1,000 and 2,000 homes and at Staplegrove for between 500 and 1,500 homes. Taunton Town Centre was the focus for shopping, leisure and office development and would also provide about 2,000 homes. At Taunton a broad location would be sought for a strategic employment opportunity after 2016.

Strategic sites for sustainable mixed use urban extensions at Wellington would provide for about 900 homes and the relocation of the two main employers at Longforth, together with a Northern Relief Road and reopened railway station and a further 900 homes at Cades/Jurston. At Chelston a strategic inward investment employment site of 8.67 hectares had been allocated for a single user.

Six strategic development management policies were proposed for general requirements, development in the countryside, gypsy and traveller site selection criteria, design objectives and delivery, and use of resources and sustainable design.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) gave details of the infrastructure that local service providers and the Council had identified as key to supporting growth in Taunton Deane and in meeting the objectives of the Core Strategy.

Local authorities could choose to charge Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on new developments in their area. The money could be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the local community needed. It applied to most new buildings and charges were based on the size and type of development.

The IDP had been prepared to reflect the level of growth proposed in the emerging Core Strategy. It took account of the number of dwellings which had already received planning permission and the infrastructure requirements

which arose out of the development were allocated in the Core Strategy. Since the Core Strategy did not account for the timing and location of every single dwelling that contributed towards meeting strategic housing requirements, the IDP could not similarly account for all the infrastructure requirements arising.

Whilst the IDP covered the whole of the Core Strategy timeframe, the emphasis was on the first five years (2011-2016). To allow for uncertainty that attached to longer-term requirements, it was proposed to review the IDP annually in consultation with other service providers.

The IDP had identified that the level of infrastructure required to support development was unlikely to be funded fully from developer contributions. With this in mind, the document identified a number of actions which would be taken in order that the growth outline in the Core Strategy was accompanied by sufficient infrastructure.

Securing contributions from developers would be key to the delivery of infrastructure and services and preliminary analysis suggested that contributions in the region of £15,000 per dwelling (excluding affordable housing) would need to be sought.

The IDP did not deal in any detail with affordable housing, although the need for this had been taken into account when assessing the level of contributions that developers were likely to have to make. This viability assessment indicated that with about £15,000 per dwelling contribution package, 25% affordable housing was possible.

The principles of sustainable development were at the heart of the planning system. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process was intended to ensure that through plan-making, Local Planning Authorities had considered social, environmental and economic concerns when producing Local Development Frameworks. The carrying out of SA was mandatory on any new or revised Development Plan Document.

Moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Coles that a decision on the adoption of the Core Strategy be deferred until the next scheduled meeting of Full Council on 19 July 2011.

The justification for this amendment was that:-

- (a) The affordable housing target was far too low and the current deficit would only get larger not smaller;
- (b) The standard allocation of dwellings for the major and minor rural centres ignored the individual characteristics of the settlements and their ability to accommodate growth. The Council needed to build into this framework greater flexibility to enable new ideas to come along to regenerate the rural hinterland and ensure sustainability in the long term; and

- (c) 20% of the Council were new Members who might need longer to fully understand the implications of the Core Strategy and the affect on the people of Taunton Deane.

It was therefore hoped that fresh proposals could be brought forward over the next 4 weeks which broadly met the suggestions outlined above.

The mover and seconder of the amendment requested that a formal roll call of votes be taken and recorded in the Minutes in accordance with Standing Order 18(2).

The amendment was put and was lost. Eighteen Councillors voted in favour of the amendment, twenty nine Councillors voted against and there were two abstentions, as follows:-

Yes	No
Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Adkins
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Allgrove
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Beaven
Councillor Henley	Councillor Bishop
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Denington
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor Ms Durdan
Councillor Mullins	Councillor Gaines
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor A Govier
Councillor Gill Slattery	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor T Slattery	Councillor Hall
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Hayward
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor Stone	Councillor C Hill
Councillor Swaine	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Tooze	Councillor Ms Lisgo
Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Meikle
Councillor D Wedderkopp	Councillor Morrell
	Councillor Nottrodt
	Councillor Ms Palmer
	Councillor D Reed
	Councillor Mrs Reed
	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
	Councillor Mrs Warmington
	Councillor Watson
	Councillor Mrs Waymouth
	Councillor Ms Webber
	Councillor Williams
	Councillor Wren

The Mayor (Councillor Brooks) and Councillor Mrs Hill abstained.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Core Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Sustainability Appraisal all be approved for publication; and
- (2) The relevant Executive Councillor be authorised to agree any minor changes to the documents that might be necessary prior to publication.

(Councillors A Wedderkopp, Swaine and Mullins left the meeting at 9.24 pm, 9.28 pm and 9.29 pm respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 9.41 pm.)