

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 April 2013

Present:

Councillor K H Turner (Chairman)
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor K J Ross

Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor C Morgan

Members in Attendance:

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor E May
Councillor D J Sanders

Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew

Officers in Attendance:

Bruce Lang, Corporate Director
Martin Wilsher, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Toby Clempson, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Krystyna Kowalewska, Meeting Administrator

LD15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors A F Knight and M A Smith.

LD16 Minutes

(Minutes of the Local Development Panel held on 18 October 2012 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Panel held on 18 October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

LD17 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr K H Turner	All Items	Brompton Ralph	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Y Goss	All Items	Quantock Vale	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Councillor P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	All Items	Crowcombe and Stogumber	Personal	Spoke

LD18 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

LD19 West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Understanding the Future Housing Need

(Report No. WSC 53/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the provisional findings of an update to the Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment in as far as it relates to the Council's Local Planning Authority responsibilities and informs the progression of the emerging West Somerset Plan to 2032.

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher, presented the report in detail and informed that WSC had only received the headline figures from the update from Housing Vision, he also advised that the need for an update was as a result of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which stated each local authority needed to have an objectively identified housing need. The findings detailed projections for the local planning authority area suggested that for the 20-year period 2011 – 2031 this could be as low as 2,400 for the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area. He reported that the identified housing need figure to plan for over the 20 year period could be in the region of 2,900, based on the fact that the original (2008) study had been based on data at the top of the housing market cycle and the latest update used information taken at the bottom of the cycle. The update confirmed that over 60% of the objectively identified housing need would be for affordable housing, not market housing, and identified the issue of under-occupation and an increase in the need for specialised elderly accommodation. The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) drew Members' attention to Table 2 of the report which detailed the projected net housing requirements for West Somerset. Members were also informed that there currently was no demand/interest by national house-builders in West Somerset.

During the discussion, the following specific issues were raised:

- The lack of national developer interest could be due to the fact that West Somerset had not identified any sites yet.
- The findings would enable officers to plan where to site future development and manage the process more effectively.
- Clarification on the term under-occupation was requested. The Officer advised that Housing Vision had to work within government's definition and interpretation of the term.
- In response to a question regarding what would the housing need be if the Hinkley Point C project did not proceed, the Officer responded that no further information could be provided until receipt of the first draft of a separate Hinkley Point report, the first draft of which would be available shortly, detailing the impact.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

LD20 West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Key Strategic Site Identification

(Report No. WSC 51/13, circulated with the Agenda and a replacement Fig 17 and 18 of Appendix 3.)

The purpose of the report was to facilitate the selection and allocation of key development sites for delivery of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032's Strategy.

The report was presented in detail by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, and he advised that due to new requirements by the NPPF the selection of allocated key development sites was one of the key proposals to significantly boost the supply of housing. It was important to identify specific strategic sites as the Local Plan had to be consistent with national policy and credible in terms of the evidence used to justify it. In order to demonstrate that the Plan's strategy had been successfully achieved the strategic sites should allocate 50% of the indicative 2,900 housing figure referred to in the previous report (Understanding the Future Housing Need) in, or around, Minehead, Watchet and Williton.

The Officer reported that there were a limited range of sites for development due to a number of issues and he drew Members' attention to a list of criteria which would be used to inform the recommendations. He then gave a presentation to Members on the key strategic site selection figures.

In response to concerns raised regarding the lack of available sites suitable for affordable housing in Minehead, the Officer confirmed that consultations had already been undertaken on locations around Minehead, however alternative sites could still be put forward during the supplementary consultation; and evidence showed that there was a very substantial need for affordable housing.

Following questions regarding the mapping of flood zones, it was advised that the quality of the flood risk maps in the West Somerset plan area were accurate.

Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor B Heywood.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to publish for public consultation the draft Key Strategic Sites set out below (and in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) at Minehead, Watchet and Williton, based on the proportions of the overall development requirement for the Local Plan set out in paragraph 2.2 and Table 1 of the report:

Key strategic site A6 – Minehead
Key strategic site D1 – Watchet
Key strategic site D2 – Watchet
Key strategic site G1 – Williton
Key strategic site G2 – Williton
Key strategic site H1a – Williton

And longer term key strategic sites as follows:

Longer term key strategic site A5 – Minehead
Longer term key strategic site D3 – Watchet

LD21 Local Plan to 2032 Delivery Timetable Review

(Report No. WSC 52/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present an updated Local Development Scheme for the emerging Local Plan to 2032.

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson who advised that it was important to formally adopt the Local Development Scheme in order for the Planning Inspector to be able to find the Local Plan sound.

Members requested whether an indication could be provided as to which parishes had approached the Council for preliminary discussions regarding a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Officer advised that interest had been received and discussions had been had with Watchet Town Council, Stogumber Parish Council, Holford Parish Council, Kilve Parish Council and Minehead Town Council.

During the discussion of this item an additional recommendation was proposed to amend the supplementary consultation timetable so that it took place in July, August and September, instead of June, July and August. The reason being was that the consultation would run over the summer holiday period which could be problematic, and most parish councils did not hold meetings in August. By postponing the timetable parish councils would have a better opportunity to participate in the consultation exercise. It was also agreed to publish an update bulletin in the community matters newsletter detailing the timetable of events..

Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendation contained in the report, together with the additional recommendation of amending the supplementary consultation timetable to take place in July, August and September, and this was duly seconded by Councillor B Heywood.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council to bring the replacement Local Development Scheme, attached at Appendix 1 to the report as amended, into operation with immediate effect.

RESOLVED (2) that the timetable for the supplementary consultation be amended to take place in July, August and September.

LD22 West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 : Duty to Co-operate Update

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, verbally updated Members on the steps taken to fulfil this new duty.

He advised that this was another new requirement of the NPPF designed to replace strategic planning and the Council had to co-operate with its neighbours and other agencies regarding cross boundary strategic issues. The full range of prescribed bodies had been written to and the Officer gave an update on the responses received. Members were advised that the Principal Planning Officers (Policy) attended a Somerset duty to co-operate meeting every 6 months, along with the Portfolio Holder, and it was very important to satisfy to the Inspector, by documenting evidence, that the plan was being prepared in line with the duty to co-operate.

Members hoped that the Inspector would take into consideration the financial cuts and the loss of staff capacity faced by the bodies involved in having a duty to co-operate.

LD23 Neighbourhood Development Planning Update

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, advised that a written update would be circulated via email to all Members on emerging practice in neighbourhood planning.

Concern was raised by Members that some parish councils could be confusing the Neighbourhood Development Plan with the Parish Plan. The Officer was asked whether he had any knowledge as to whether the parish councils were aware of how robust the plans had to be and the financial implications of embarking on such a plan. The Officer responded that it was important when having discussions with parish councils to go through these issues and confirmed that communities could not protect themselves from unpopular development by having a neighbourhood plan.

The meeting closed at 4.47 pm.