

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 June 2013

Present:

Councillor K H Turner (Chairman)
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor K J Ross
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew

Councillor B Heywood
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor M A Smith

Members in Attendance:

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor E May

Councillor A P Hadley

Officers in Attendance:

Martin Wilsher, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Toby Clempson, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Ian Timms, Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy
Andrew Goodchild, Planning Manager
Krystyna Kowalewska, Meeting Administrator

LD1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

LD2 Minutes

(Minutes of the Local Development Panel held on 11 April 2013 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that, subject to deleting Councillor A F Knight from the list of Panel Members present and amending Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew's description of interest to read Somerset County Council in Minute No. LD17, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Panel held on 11 April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

LD3 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 K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted

LD4 Public Participation

Item 6 - Draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Proposed New and Amended Policies in Response to the New Requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework

Julian Spicer, Chairman of Stogumber Parish Council thanked the Principal Planning Officers (Policy) for their response to the feedback and amendments given by the parish council to the consultation as many of the parish council concerns had been addressed.

He raised further concerns regarding the following:

- Policy SC1, point 2 concerning limited development in the primary villages - more understanding was needed as to what criteria would be considered for meeting a 'clearly identified local need'; and suggested that it should not be limited to affordable housing.
- Policy SC1, point 5E – it was not clear as to whether the development itself or the occupants of the development should enhance the service and social facility provision of the settlement.
- Policy NH2 – reference to the Brendon Hills had been chosen as notably requiring landscape character protection and the parish council was concerned that the corridor between the AONB and the ENP could be vulnerable to development, therefore a request was made to identify Quantock Vale as a particularly special area.

LD5 Identifying the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the Area – Evidence Review Update

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher, verbally updated Members on the final version of the revised Northern Peninsula Strategic Housing Market Assessment for West Somerset.

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher provided a verbal update on the consultant's first draft of the Hinkley Point impact on housing which formed part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. He advised that it was still work in progress and at the moment there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding it. In trying to access future housing requirements for the Hinkley project the consultant was unable to be precise as to what the anticipated level of demand would be. It had been indicated that although campus accommodation would be provided this would not cover all the potential accommodation that was likely to be required by workers on the project. In terms of tourist accommodation there was a difficulty in estimating capacity and availability of surplus space as it was subject to a number of variables, e.g. the weather and the current economic conditions. Issues surrounding vacant properties; where workers would reside and the type of accommodation they would be seeking; and the availability/shortage of housing were also highlighted. The Officer confirmed that notional figures and a final draft of the report was anticipated to be received shortly.

During the discussion, the following specific issues were raised:

- It was presently difficult to get an understanding of the private housing market situation and how to project that forward over the full timescale of the Hinkley project.
- Investigate internally by looking at council tax returns as to what the vacancy rates were likely to be.
- Until the project started the preference of where workers would like to live would not be known, however the market was currently being monitored.
- Monitoring and managing the impact on Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- The housing fund (secured through section 106 monies) would be available to help mitigate the effects of the housing market to ensure local people had access to housing locally once the project started.
- The Housing Enabling team's role was to plan in advance to deal with any issues that could potentially arise.

LD6 Draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Proposed New and Amended Policies in Response to the New Requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework

(Report No. WSC 66/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to facilitate recommendations to Full Council regarding the publication for consultation of proposed, amended and additional draft Local Plan policies, mainly in response to the new requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This would enable the Council to proceed towards the publication and adoption of a National Planning Policy Framework-compliant Local Plan.

The report was presented in detail by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, who advised that the complementary policy amendments contained in the report were required as part of the NPPF, and was a follow up to the key strategic site proposals report considered at the April meeting of the Local Development Panel. He drew Members' attention to the main reasons for the proposed policy changes and to the table (paragraph 5.4 of the report) which listed the amended policies as well as the proposed new policies.

Officers noted a number of amendments to the introduction which would be dealt with at a later stage, and confirmed that the typographical errors highlighted by Members would be corrected.

The following proposals to the amended and new policies were made:

- Policy SC2A should include a definition of the term 'average annualised rate'.
- Policy SV1 Assumptions paragraph first line 'can help' should be replaced with 'is necessary'.

During discussion on the policy subjects, the following main points were raised:

- In response to whether a stipulation could be incorporated within Policy SD1 stating that developments should have a southerly aspect to enable PV panels to be built in the roof, it was confirmed that this could be addressed as part of the work being carried out by the Planning Manager on design policy.
- It was envisaged that there would be cross subsidy development with a mixture of affordable and open market housing
- SC1, point 5 'within 50 m' – Members were concerned that this could be misinterpreted and officers advised that they were happy to receive further alternative suggestions on how to deal with this matter and would modify the policy accordingly as part of the consultation process. It was noted that the development should work in the context of the village and the character of the settlement rather than the precise distance.
- Officers reported that they found it difficult to find a definition of a 'built up area'.
- Following concerns as to why certain villages/settlements were not included in either the primary or secondary village category, it was explained that they were treated as being in the open countryside on the basis they did not have enough facilities to meet the criteria or had access difficulties, and this in turn helped to deliver a sustainable pattern of development.
- Open countryside was a planning policy term to mean anywhere with minimal or no service provision.
- It was proposed to do away with the Minehead development limit and development proposals would be considered on the criteria in the policies.
- Development on windfall sites would continue to be important and there would be a need to demonstrate that sites were viable and could be delivered to satisfy the Inspector.
- Changes would be introduced to single bedroom properties following the introduction of the bedroom tax.
- There was felt to have been a lack of advertising in the local area and a different approach was necessary to make the general public more aware of the next stage of consultation. The officers were open to practical suggestions from Members regarding different methods of advertising to facilitate the consultation process.
- Each District Councillor should ensure that their parish/town council was aware of the public consultation, and a request was made to forward to all Members a link to the relevant Council webpage.

Councillor K J Ross proposed the recommendations in the report, subject to the amendments above, which were seconded by Councillor I R Melhuish.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to publish for public consultation the proposed, amended and additional West Somerset District Local Plan to 2032 Preferred Strategy policies set out at Appendix 1 to the report, as amended. The policies set out at Appendix 1 compliment the draft Key Strategic Sites recommended to Full Council by the Local Development Panel of 11 April 2013, and which, subject to resolution of Full Council, will form an integral part of the supplementary consultation.

LD7 Late Item – Extension of Minehead’s Retail Red Line

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher provided a verbal update on representations and concerns raised regarding the primary retail area in Minehead and the properties which would be affected. He reported that the NPPF required the development plan to identify a primary retail area in Minehead and advised that the extent of it could be adjusted on the emerging local plan. Following the consultation process on the preferred strategy a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Local Development Panel for endorsement.

NOTE: Having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in relation to this item the Chairman was of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the agenda, this item should be considered at this meeting for information purposes only.

The meeting closed at 5.02 pm.