

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2012

Present:

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

Councillor B Heywood
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor M A Smith

Members in Attendance:

Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew

Councillor E May
Councillor L W Smith

Officers in Attendance:

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

LD7 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors S Y Goss and C Morgan.

LD8 Minutes

(Minutes of the Local Development Panel held on 13 June 2012 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Panel held on 13 June 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

LD9 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
Councillor K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Councillor L W Smith	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	All Items	Crowcombe and Stogumber	Personal	Spoke

LD10 Public Participation

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

LD11 West Somerset Local Plan to 2032: Preferred Strategy Response Report

(Report No. WSC 135/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 was subject to an eight week period of community and stakeholder engagement between 23 March and 16 May 2012. The appendices to the report set out a summary of the responses received and also the main issues which had been raised during the frontloading stage of the Plan's preparation. The report was an important step in the preparation of the formal Publication Draft of the Plan. Consideration of the responses received must be made in the light of the significant national planning policy changes made through the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (published during the Local Plan consultation period on 27 March 2012).

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, presented the report and briefed Members on the responses that had been received from the Preferred Strategy consultation for the Local Plan, and reported that one of the requirements for taking the Local Plan to Examination was that a list should be provided of the main issues raised and these had been summarised in Appendix 3 to the report. He brought to Members' attention the principle issues which had arisen as a result of the consultation exercises. He advised that there had been a great deal of support for the Preferred Strategy Local Plan by the vast majority of respondents. He emphasised that the purpose of the feedback was to test the soundness of the Plan and its policies and were very helpful.

Members were informed that there was now a requirement for the Council to define its own housing requirement in the Plan following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

During the discussion, the following specific issues were raised:

- The appropriateness of different affordable housing thresholds in different sized settlements.
- Concerns with Dunster Marsh area and flooding issues.
- The more specific identification of key strategic sites being required.
- The Plan required an appropriate mix of housing on all strategic sites with an element of mixed development.
- Infrastructure providers would be targeted in the further supplementary stage of consultation for a comment/feedback on what the impact of particular proposals in the Plan would be in terms of their service provision, and in particular what additional infrastructure would be required.
- Concern with the high level of second home usage in the West Somerset area and it was hoped that the development being provided in the Plan would not be suitable for the second home market
- The comments received were thought to be subjective.
- Clarification on barn conversion policy was sought.
- The supplementary consultation would not prevent comments being submitted on areas that had not been identified for development.
- An explanation was given as to the reason for revisiting the sites in the Strategy because of the NPPF new requirements.
- The advisability of increasing the plan's housing requirement to meet NPPF requirements in order to have the best chance of soundness at Examination. The main challenge facing the Council was to ensure that if less housing was ultimately delivered, that a sustainable pattern of development would still be provided.

Councillor I R Melhuish proposed the recommendation in the report which was duly seconded by Councillor M Smith.

RESOLVED that the appended summaries to the report of responses and the main issues raised be noted and their use in the continuing development of the Publication Draft Local Plan to 2032 be endorsed.

LD12 Detailed Implications of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the emerging West Somerset Local Plan

(Report No. WSC 136/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform Members further to the report to the 13 June 2012 Local Development Panel of the detailed implications of changes to national planning policy guidance and advice issued by central government for future development plan creation and planning policy formulation in West Somerset outside of the Exmoor National Park, and to recommend appropriate steps to address these changes in preparing a sound Local Plan.

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson, who advised that Members were required to consider a number of issues to ensure that the Local Plan was amended to make it compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework. He drew Members' attention to the Risk Assessment Matrix contained in the report and reported that the

risks that existed were quite difficult to mitigate, and although they were high, the effects of the risks were manageable. The main risk was that the Plan would be deemed unsound at Examination stage. Members were advised that the Planning Inspectorate had adopted a helpful approach, meeting with officers prior to plans being finalised for Publication and Submission for Examination, flagging up any potentially problematic issues in order that they could be remedied. However, PINS have warned that the new duty to cooperate cannot be carried out retrospectively, so planning authorities should take care to address this in particular as they prepare their plans. The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) informed Members that a document would be produced as part of the submission documentation setting out how the Council had fulfilled the duty. The Officer responded to questions concerning the duty to cooperate and advised that the process would be kept under review and the content of the Plan could be amended if required. He further advised that the Planning Inspectorate were offering constructive criticism in order to help local planning authorities to adopt sound local plans.

The Officer also reported that the refreshed Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment would be published soon which would provide evidence identifying the full objectively assessed housing requirement for the area which would inform the appropriate level of housing provision to be made in the Plan in fulfillment of the NPPF's provisions. Provision for managing variations in the delivery rate of the increased level in housing could be made by introducing a phasing approach to ensure that whatever the level of development delivered, a sustainable pattern of settlement would result. Sequential testing would be undertaken in order to identify appropriate key strategic sites for inclusion in the Plan. Members were made aware of the difficulties of the coastal management issue and were informed that another key requirement of the NPPF is that the Strategy needed to be viability tested.

Councillor K J Ross proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor I R Melhuish.

RESOLVED (1) that, further to the Resolutions made at the Local Development Panel held on 13 June 2012, the contents of the report be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the Local Plan strategy be amended to provide for the full objectively assessed housing need for the Plan area at a range of locations according to the overarching Strategy which has been adopted.

RESOLVED (3) that key strategic development sites, essential to the delivery of the Local Plan's Strategy, be identified through sequential and viability testing and bring proposals forward for the phasing of these sites.

RESOLVED (4) that a Duty to Cooperate process with each of our neighbouring local planning authorities and county councils be initiated.

RESOLVED (5) that a revised timetable for the production of the Local Plan through to adoption be produced.

LD13 Future Strategic Development – Where could it go?

(Report No. WSC 137/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the implications of the changes to the development planning process as a consequence of the publication of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its impact on the strategy and policies that are being developed in the emerging West Somerset Local Plan 2012-2032. The consequences of these changes in relation to the supply of land and delivery of development through the forward planning process have been considered in the attached document to the report which is to form part of the 'evidence-base' for the emerging (new) Local Plan.

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher, who reported that the attached document to the report illustrated how the evidence and the sources used in the production of the current version of Local Plan linked together. It provided an explanation as to how the (new) Local Plan had evolved up to the Preferred Strategy stage. It also provided additional contextual evidence covering the historical growth of settlements in West Somerset and recent residential development covering the past 35 years. In order for the Plan to be sound the contents had to be NPPF compliant and therefore a supplementary round of consultation would need to be undertaken to address areas where changes had to be made to the existing policies proposed in the Preferred Strategy and the creation of new policies covering specific issues. Following this consultation, Officers would be able to progress the plan to the Publication stage.

Councillor I R Melhuish proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor A F Knight.

RESOLVED (1) that the contents of the report and the attached document to the report be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the attached document to the report be endorsed as forming part of the evidence-base to support the evolving strategy and policies in the emerging West Somerset Local Plan 2012-2032.

RESOLVED (3) that Officers be authorised to amend and update the attached document to the report to reflect changes as the (new) Local Plan progresses through the various stages to Adoption. Any substantive amendments to the contents that are likely to impact significantly on the strategy and policies in the emerging plan are to be reported to the Local Development Panel.

LD14 Proposed Supplementary Planning Document – Design Guide and Major Developments

(Report No. WSC 138/12, circulated with the Agenda. The first draft of the SPD – Design Guide and Major Developments circulated at the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to seek Member approval for work to commence on the production of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) initially entitled – Design Guide and Major Developments.

The report set out the reasons for proceeding with this work, the links back to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emerging Local Plan 2012-2032 (the (new) Local Plan), provided an overview of the expected content and the process to be followed over the next few months.

The report was presented by the Planning Manager who advised that it was necessary to produce the SPD Design Guide and Major Developments to help with determining planning applications and when giving general planning advice. The SPD would 'sit underneath' the Local Plan to help explain the Council's approach to various issues and it would be made publicly available following the publication of the Local Plan. The document focused on giving good guidance on design and major development, particularly with regard to larger scale developments. It would provide more detailed understanding of the type of development and demonstrate how the Council would like to see sites being developed, taking in the characteristics of the District into consideration, e.g. looking at street and house types, provision of local facilities, flooding, rights of way, green infrastructure, links to the town/village centre and the wider countryside network. The document would also provide guidance on long term management and maintenance of the facilities if community buildings and open spaces were provided by developers. The Planning Manager advised that the SPD would be designed to ensure the Council are not faced with the problem of standard development form taking place.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- Fresh and innovative design solutions should be encouraged.
- Incorporate sustainability opportunities into the design.
- Car charging points and parking solutions.
- Concept development and pre-application engagement objectives to be incorporated into the SPD.
- Detailed analysis of street construction would be included in the SPD.
- The SPD would be used as a benchmark for decisions made at Planning Committee.
- The provision of attractive useable routes to schools, shops, community buildings etc was very important.
- Concern was expressed that different architectural designs could increase the cost of the house.

- The Design Guide and Major Developments SPD would be specific to larger developments and would not replace the current Planning Obligations SPD.
- 'Life-time' homes approach.

Councillor M Smith proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor A F Knight.

RESOLVED (1) that the work to begin the Proposed SPD – Design Guide and Major Developments be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that progress would be reported to the Panel in due course on the production and various stages of consultation/engagement, and to Cabinet/Council as work progressed.

The meeting closed at 5.08 pm.