

Executive – 15 June 2011

- Present:** Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Cavill, Hayward, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Stock-Williams and Mrs Warmington
- Officers:** Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director), Ralph Willoughby-Foster (Planning Policy Advisor), Simon Lewis (Strategy and Corporate Manager), Roger Mitchinson (Strategy Lead), Nick Bryant (Strategy Lead), Tonya Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)
- Also present:** Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Coles, Denington, Ms Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Hall, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, Ms Lisgo, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Mullins, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, Reed, Mrs Reed, Gill Slattery, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Stone, Swaine, Tooze, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp and Wren Stephen Walford (Transport Policy Manager, Somerset County Council and Mrs Anne Elder (Chairman of the Standards Committee)

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

46. Apology

Councillor Edwards.

47. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 April 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

48. Public Question Time

Councillor A Wedderkopp drew attention to the recent construction of the “Willow Cathedral” on land at Longrun Meadow, Bishops Hull. He felt this structure was a real credit to Taunton Deane but feared it might be targeted by vandalism in a similar way as the original Willow Man alongside the M5 Motorway. He asked whether a CCTV camera ought to be installed at Longrun Meadow as a deterrent.

The Chairman, Councillor John Williams, reported that the Green Cathedral had been made from living willow which he understood was difficult to ignite. However, he would bring Councillor Wedderkopp’s concern to the relevant officers as to whether any security measures should be installed.

49. Declaration of Interests

As a farmer who both owned and rented land in the Monkton Heathfield area, Councillor Cavill declared a prejudicial interest in the following Core Strategy item. He left the meeting before any discussion on the item took place. Councillor Mrs Adkins declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council.

Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as the owner of an area of land at Cotford St. Luke.

50. Taunton Deane Core Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Considered report previously circulated, regarding 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 which aimed to:-

- Produce a vision for the future of places based on evidence, a sense of local distinctiveness and community derived objectives;
- Translate this vision into a set of policies and land allocations together with the public sector resources to deliver them;
- Create a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes economic, environmental and social well being for the area;
- Coordinate and deliver the public sector components of this vision with other agencies and processes;
- Create a positive framework for action on climate change; and
- Contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development.

Adequate infrastructure planning was an essential process in developing a sound Core Strategy and PPS12 recommended that the infrastructure planning process should identify:-

- Local infrastructure needs and costs;
- The phasing of development;
- Sources of funding; and
- Responsibilities for delivery.

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 was 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 was 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 (residential and non-residential) 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 arising out of the development 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 the following actions which should be taken in order that the growth outline in the Core Strategy was accompanied by sufficient infrastructure:-

- The Council should not take an overly optimistic view about public funding;
- An appropriate balance should be struck in identifying the maximum level of developer's contributions that could be achieved without making development unviable;
- Opportunities should be maximised to secure funding from other sources (such as the New Homes Bonus);
- Clear priorities should be determined for the use of funding that might become available; and
- Mechanisms such as deferred payments and sharing in value uplift should be explored.

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 majority of the IDP consisted of an analysis of infrastructure needs, grouped under the following headings:-

- Physical Infrastructure (e.g. Flood alleviation, transport);
- Utilities (e.g. electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telecommunications);
- Social and Community Infrastructure (e.g. education, health, faith, sports and recreation, arts and culture, children's play, community halls); and
- Green Infrastructure (e.g. green wedges, country parks, open spaces and links).

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.

The SA process was divided into five stages:-

- Stage A: Setting the context, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope;
- Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the SA Report;
- Stage D: Consulting on the Core Strategy and SA Report; and
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan.

Noted that, to date, the first three of these stages had been achieved.

Resolved that:-

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

51. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.19 pm.)