

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 April 2014

Present:

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

Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor M A Smith

Members in Attendance:

Councillor A P Hadley

Councillor E May

Officers in Attendance:

Martin Wilsher, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Toby Clempson, Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Krystyna Kowalewska, Meeting Administrator

LD14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Heywood and A H Trollope-Bellew.

LD15 Minutes

(Minutes of the Local Development Panel held on 14 November 2013 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Panel held on 14 November 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

LD16 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

LD17 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak.

LD18 Consideration of Designation of Stogumber Neighbourhood Area

(Report No. WSC 74/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to consider the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Stogumber in order to facilitate the preparation of the Stogumber Neighbourhood Plan.

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson who informed that following Stogumber Parish Council's wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, WSC had a statutory duty to facilitate this process and to provide assistance. He drew Members' attention to the application submitted by the parish council and advised that their interest in preparing a Plan related principally to the provision of a village hall, a new village green and a multi-use games area within the West Somerset planning authority area. The Council was obliged to advertise the application and a six week consultation on the proposed neighbourhood area had been undertaken. One response was received from Crowcombe Parish Council who agreed the area to be appropriate. The Officer went on to highlight the considerations which had to be made by the Council as planning authority in dealing with the application.

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) further advised that there was a significant cost involved in assisting the preparation a neighbourhood plan and central government provided financial assistance of £30,000 which was payable in instalments.

Councillor M A Smith proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor A F Knight.

During the discussion, the following main issues were raised:

- If assisting the preparation of a neighbourhood plan cost more than £30,000 the District Council would have to fund the shortfall from its own resources.
- The parish council had to fund the preparation of the plan document itself.
- Concern was raised regarding the financial and resource implications and it was suggested that a more effective course of action would be for the parish council to apply for planning permission for a village hall.
- The concept of neighbourhood planning was for communities to take more control of what was done in their own parish with their own resources.
- A meeting would be held with Stogumber Parish Council to ensure the neighbourhood plan was broadly compliant with the Local Plan, and the plan could be reviewed and revised in the future.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to resolve to approve Stogumber Parish Council's application for a neighbourhood area and designate the Stogumber Neighbourhood Area as shown on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report.

NOTE: With the agreement of the Chairman this item was brought forward on the Agenda.

LD19 West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Evidence base item describing the key strategic site identification process

(Report No. WSC 72/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to facilitate the addition to the evidence base of the attached document and its two appendices setting out the process followed by the Council to identify the Key Strategic Development Sites which form part of the proposals in the Revised Preferred Strategy of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032.

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson who explained the context and the process the Council followed to assess the potential key strategic development sites. He referred to a presentation made at a Members' Seminar which had not previously been in the public domain but formed an important part of the evidence where the areas of search were introduced thus giving rise to the proposed allocations.

Councillor I R Melhuish proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor S Y Goss.

It was noted that Appendix 2 to the report was very useful and clear and summarised the information in an easy to understand format.

RESOLVED that the document "Identifying the Key Strategic Development Sites for the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032" attached to the report as part of the Council's Local Plan evidence base be endorsed.

LD20 West Somerset Strategic Housing Viability Assessment – Evidence Review Update

(Report No. 73/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform members of the Panel of the contents of one of the three additional pieces of work that form part of the evidence-base for the emerging Local Plan to 2032 that were commissioned in response to the representations received to the Revised Preferred Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The item was presented in detail by the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher who advised that the report was concerned with looking at the strategic sites that had been referred to in Report No. WSC 72/14 and provided an updated assessment as to the potential viability of these sites. A more sophisticated method was factored in to the assessment to allow for changing economic and market housing conditions. He went on to make reference to various points of information contained in the report.

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

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher answered a range of questions from Members relating to various issues concerning the viability appraisals for various sites, and responded to concerns raised about the provision of affordable housing on the strategic sites.

In response, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the target publication date for the Local Plan would be September 2014, and at this stage the process would become the responsibility of the Planning Inspectorate. The Officer further explained that if the Inspectorate believed the Plan to be sound the Council would proceed to the submission stage following a statutory six week consultation period, and it was hoped the Council would be in a position to adopt the Local Plan during the first half of 2015, although he did stress that this part of the process was mainly out of the Council's control.

RESOLVED (1) that the findings of the study be accepted and endorsed, and the implications of the recommendations in the document particularly in respect of the consequences for larger, strategic housing development (250+ dwellings) allocations to be made through the emerging Local Plan to 2032 be acknowledged.

RESOLVED (2) that the Planning Committee be informed in respect of similar sized planning application proposals made through the Council's Development Management process.

LD21 Late Item – Planning Performance and Contribution

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher advised of a planning performance and planning contributions consultation being carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government which specifically dealt with securing affordable housing through planning obligations. The consultation proposed there should be no affordable housing contribution on sites of less than 10 dwellings and the officer informed that this proposal would have a fundamental impact on the West Somerset Local Plan. The consultation period would end on 4 May 2014 and, if the Local Development Panel agreed, the Principal Planning Officer (Policy) would circulate the response to Members prior to submission to DCLG.

The Officer confirmed the representations made would be on the basis of what was best for West Somerset and that Taunton Deane Borough Council was also preparing a report and submission to DCLG on this matter. During the discussion a request was made for the Officer to contact the LGA to discuss the implications of the consultation.

It was proposed and seconded that the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Martin Wilsher respond to the consultation.

RESOLVED that the Principal Planning Officers (Policy) be authorised to provide a response, on behalf of West Somerset Council, to the planning performance and planning contributions consultation.

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.

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

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

The Panel were advised that as part of the Localism Act, the Council had a duty to talk to neighbouring local planning authorities on relevant strategic issues which may have cross-boundary implications. The Officer confirmed that ongoing discussions with West Somerset Council's neighbours were currently being held at officer-level, and it was proposed that there would be opportunities in the future for Members to become involved.

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) advised that, as part of the evidence base, the Planning Inspectorate was prepared to accept a signed Memorandum of Understanding to demonstrate that officers and Members had discussed matters concerning cross boundary issues with neighbouring authorities and had reached a resolution, and it was reported that the documents pertaining to the Memorandum of Understanding would be presented to a future meeting of the Local Development Panel for approval.

During this item the Principal Planning Officer (Policy), Toby Clempson provided the Panel with a brief update on two additional evidence base studies which were almost complete, namely the key strategic sites landscape assessment and historic environment assets study.

The meeting closed at 4.18 pm.