

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

6 November 2007

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Wood (Chairman) (P)

Beckett (P)
Hollingbery (P)

Pearson (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Beveridge (P)
Busher (P)
Cook (P)

Jeffs (P)
Sutton

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Coates, Godfrey and Stallard

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Huxstep

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sutton.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 11 September 2007 be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr A Weeks (Winchester City Residents' Association) stated that because the Waitrose development at Weeke included a health centre, Friarsgate Medical Centre might relocate there. In addition, St Clements Health Centre was likely to be moved to another town centre location which would result in no health care provision within the Silver Hill development site. He asked whether a separate planning application would be considered for the sites vacated by these two health centres.

The Chairman suggested that Mr Weeks query would be best taken forward by putting it in writing to the Leader who would ensure a response from the appropriate officer.

Mr Weeks also expressed concern about the community involvement in the LDF process, which he considered to be insufficient and did not fulfil the requirements under the Council's Academy of Urbanism Membership.

In response, the Chairman confirmed that all papers relating to the LDF Committee were available on the Council's Website and spare paper copies were provided at the meeting itself (or in advance of the meeting on request, subject to a charge being made in most cases). However, it had previously been agreed that paper copies of the agenda, reports and minutes be sent to Mr Weeks and Mrs Slattery as a courtesy to assist their involvement in the process. The Chairman suggested that Mr Weeks contact him to advise of any additional specific requests.

4. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT STUDY**
(Report [CAB1542\(LDF\)](#) and [Appendix](#) refers)

The Committee noted that the Study itself (which formed an Appendix to the Report) had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the Study onto the agenda so that its conclusions could be considered at this meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism, Councillor Beckett, reminded the Committee that the Report set out various options which, if endorsed today, would form part of the 'Issues and Options' report and would be subject to further discussion at that stage. The Head of Strategic Planning advised that the draft 'Issues and Options' report would be submitted to the next Committee meeting on 6 December 2007 and published for public consultation from mid-December (although the formal six-week consultation period would not begin until January 2008). Following this time, the responses would be considered and a preferred option agreed in summer 2008, followed by a second formal consultation period.

The Head of Strategic Planning responded to detailed questions on the Report and the Study, as appended.

He provided some clarification regarding paragraph 7.12 of the Study, including the table outlining the assessment of overall employment land needs from 2006 to 2026. The figures quoted related to the 'baseline plus' projections and the table indicated a total employment land need of 84.4 hectares, which was approximately the amount already identified through existing allocations and planning permissions. However, the Study had found that a proportion of these existing sites were not fit for purpose and also recommended an additional element for market flexibility.

With regard to the pressure on employment sites to be used for residential purposes, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that the current Local Plan policies already offered protection to try and prevent this. In addition, the findings of this Study offered additional reasons for the Council to be able to protect employment sites identified as 'fit for purpose.' He clarified that the Study considered access in terms of general access to strategic roads, rather than considering particular congestion issues.

Councillor Hollingbery highlighted the significance of inward and outward commuting in the Study. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that this had been raised as a key sustainability issue, so the Council must demonstrate it had investigated measures to try and address this. In response to questions about consideration of infrastructure requirements, he advised that this would not be considered in detail until the Preferred Option stage, as it was assumed that adequate infrastructure would be required under all options.

The Head of Strategic Planning clarified that the matters set out in paragraph 2.23 of the Report were a summary of some of the main issues raised in the full Study. However, it did not preclude other matters raised by this or other studies from being included at the Issues and Options stage.

The Committee emphasised the great importance of the Study and suggested that all Members should be encouraged to read it. It was agreed that the recommendation be amended slightly to reflect the significance of this work.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out in above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That the Winchester District Economic and Employment Study be emphasised to other Members as being of particular importance in the LDF process, and the matters set out in paragraph 2.23 of the Report, be endorsed as some of the key economic and employment issues for the Local Development Framework.

5. **THE CENTRAL HAMPSHIRE AND NEW FOREST STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT**
(Report [CAB1543\(LDF\)](#) refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Coates drew attention to the fact that the commuting figures appeared to be different in this Report to those quoted in the previous Report CAB1542(LDF). The Committee noted this point and that the figures related to different components of the commuting figures.

Councillor Coates also queried the possible use of 'tariffs' and suggested that the current LDF work in Chelmsford be investigated further. The Chairman clarified that an alternative system of tariffs was being developed to replace the previous proposal for Planning Gain Supplement. The Head of Strategic Planning added that at the 'Issues and Options' stage, it would be most appropriate to consult on options for the different means by which the required infrastructure could be achieved (for example, via Section 106 agreements or tariffs), rather than the specific items of infrastructure that may be needed.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Godfrey outlined a number of specific actions he was requesting to address the shortfall in the delivery of affordable homes in the District. The points raised included the following:

- A request to allow more flexibility in the identification of exception sites;
- Changes in policy to encourage more exception sites to come forward;
- Highlighting the high average house price in the District preventing people buying homes for the first time;
- Requirement to address a shortage in the supply of affordable rented accommodation;
- Requirement to have regard to the ageing population in Winchester.

He agreed to supply a copy of his presentation to both the Head of Strategic Planning and Head of Strategic Housing to follow up the specific suggestions made.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that some Devon authorities were promoting a new policy in an attempt to insist on a much higher proportion of affordable housing in new developments in smaller villages. This was not an 'exceptions' policy (which must relate to sites for 100% affordable housing), but he considered that there were two possible means of achieving a higher percentage on sites in Winchester District:

- Once the settlement hierarchy had been agreed (through the 'Issues and Options' process), the Council could only permit development at the lower end of the hierarchy for local housing needs, by limiting schemes to those which included a high proportion of affordable housing.
- Sites could be allocated solely or for a very high percentage of affordable housing (although it might be difficult to persuade owners and/or developers of these sites to come forward).

Councillor Busher suggested that a joint Planning and Housing Informal Member/Officer Working Group be established to consider the issues raised in more detail. The Chairman agreed to consider this idea further.

The Committee noted that the Report outlined the main issues raised by the Housing Market Assessment in relation to affordable housing in paragraph 9.2. Following debate, it was agreed that the promotion of exception sites should be an issue that is consulted on through the Issues and Options document.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the provisional conclusions of the Central Hampshire and New Forest Housing Market Assessment be noted.
2. That, subject to any changes necessary as a result of the viability assessment when complete, the issues identified in Section 9 of the Report be agreed to inform the preparation of the Winchester Local Development Framework, including the emerging Core Strategy Issues and Options paper. In addition, the matter of exception sites for affordable housing should be included in the Issues and Options consultation paper.
3. That the possibility of the establishment of an Informal Member/Officer Working Group, comprising of Officers and Members with experience in both Housing and Planning, be considered further.

6. **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**
(Report [CAB1544\(LDF\)](#) refers)

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning clarified that the size of natural green spaces stated in paragraph 67 of the Appendix to the Report, was not definite at this stage.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Report and its associated technical paper be noted and, from these, the range of issues which can be used to inform the preparation and subsequent publication of the Core Strategy's 'Issues and Options' paper.

7. **UPDATE ON THE OPEN SPACE AND BUILT FACILITIES ASSESSMENT**
(Report [CAB1545\(LDF\)](#) refers)

Some Members expressed concern about the reliance on school playing fields for open space provision as accessibility to these areas could, in practice, be very limited. It was suggested that the 'Issues and Options' report only include school playing fields as an exception, rather than as a rule.

Some concern was also expressed about the use of sub-areas within Winchester District, as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the Report.

The Committee noted that paragraph 8.2 of the Report summarised the open space issues raised through the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. The Committee agreed that the 'Issues and Options' paper also include other issues raised in discussion, such as the possibility of increasing the open space provision through altering policies on planning gain and exceptions to allow some 'enabling' development.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the initial conclusions of the Winchester City Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study be noted.

2. That the matters set out in paragraph 8.2 of the Report be endorsed as a basis for identifying some of the key open space issues for the Local Development Framework subject to inclusion of issues raised in discussion above, pending completion of the study.

3. That a further report be brought to this Committee on completion of the Study.

8. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – RENEWABLE ENERGY – INTERIM ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT**
(Report [CAB1546\(LDF\)](#) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning clarified that it was anticipated that a recent study undertaken by PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) into options for energy policy and infrastructure in South Hampshire, might provide sufficient information on the potential for different renewable energy technologies. However, if the information was not adequate to provide a sound evidence base for the whole District, it might be necessary to employ consultants to undertake additional work specifically in relation to Winchester District.

The Committee suggested that such work should not be commissioned until the results of the PUSH work were available and that officers contact neighbouring

authorities to ascertain how they were approaching the requirements of the LDF process in this area, in order that the possibility of shared working could be investigated.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out in above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress being made with the Renewable Energy Issues and Options Paper for the Core Strategy be noted, and the content be agreed as the basis for developing options for the Core Strategy.

2. That the background studies be noted and that no consultancy work be commissioned to test the renewable energy options in the District until the adequacy of the PUSH study was known and the possibility of shared working with neighbouring Districts had been investigated.

9. **SPARSHOLT VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT – RECOMMENDED ADOPTION**
(Report [CAB1547\(LDF\)](#) refers)

Councillor Wood declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as a resident of Sparsholt.

Councillor Beveridge stated that he considered paragraph DG13 of the Statement was potentially confusing in its referral to both listed buildings and those within a conservation area in relation to protecting from demolition. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that this should not be an issue as there was a presumption against demolition of all buildings in a conservation area, provided they did not detract from its character, whether listed or not.

The Committee suggested that the Sparsholt Village Appraisal Group be encouraged to reduce the production of paper copies of the Design Statement as far as possible by considering alternative means of making the Statement available (for example, electronically). This was agreed.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out in above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 'Design Guidelines' of the Sparsholt Village Design Statement, as proposed to be amended (as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report), be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

2. That an offer of up to £1,000 be authorised as a contribution towards the costs of publication of the final document, and Sparsholt Village Appraisal Group be encouraged to reduce paper copies of the Design Statement as far as possible.

3. That the Village Appraisal Group be thanked for producing the Design Statement.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.25pm

Chairman