

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

12 November 2008

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Wood (Chairman) (P)

Beckett (P)

Pearson (P)

Coates (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Busher (P)

Jeffs (P)

Pines

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Allgood, Barratt, Evans, Godfrey and Humby

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Cook, Learney, Lipscomb, Stallard and Worrall

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Beckett declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a member of Compton and Shawford Parish Council. He remained in the room, spoke and voted.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 21 October 2008 be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mrs C Slattery, Save Barton Farm Group (SBFG) and Mr J Hayter spoke regarding Report CAB1743(LDF). Their comments are summarised under the relevant agenda item below.

Mr A Weeks (Winchester Residents' Association) spoke under the general public participation procedure. In summary, he expressed concern about the

effect of the current economic climate on the proposed Silver Hill development. He also stated that the proposals for carbon reduction set out in the Climate Change Bill would impact upon the plans for a new Park and Ride and additional parking at the Silver Hill development.

Councillor Beckett advised that Principal Scrutiny Committee was considering a report on Silver Hill that evening and invited Mr Weeks to make his comments at that meeting.

4. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS – FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND SUGGESTED PREFERRED APPROACH ON VARIOUS TOPICS**

(Report [CAB1743\(LDF\)](#) refers)

The Committee noted that this was the second in a series of three reports drawing together the results of the consultation exercise on the Core Strategy Issues and Options. It contained a detailed analysis of the responses received in respect of some parts of the Core Strategy and suggested a preferred approach, as set out in the Appendices A to F. Due to the detailed information contained in the Appendices, the Committee considered each separately as outlined below.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that this Report was proposing a preferred approach for agreement by the Committee. This would be fed into the Council's "Preferred Options" which would be submitted to the Committee in March 2009 for agreement and referral to Cabinet and Council. Following agreement, the "Preferred Options" document would be subject to further public consultation in May/June 2009.

Mrs Slattery (SBFG) spoke regarding paragraph 4.4 of the Report which mentioned the possibility of the early release of reserve sites. She outlined the reasons why SBFG strongly opposed the early release of the site at Barton Farm, including planning policy arguments and the constraints of the site. Mrs Slattery advised that SBFG supported the recommendation that the current threshold for affordable housing should be removed.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans queried when Winchester Town would be considered by the Committee. The Head of Strategic Planning advised that this would be included in Reports submitted to the 16 December 2008 meeting.

On a general point, the Committee extended its invitation to the Liberal Democrat Group to nominate a representative to attend and offer views at Committee meetings. Councillor Evans thanked the Committee for its offer and stated she would consult the Group accordingly. However, she reiterated the reasons why the Group had declined to nominate a Member to date, particularly the fact that they would not have any voting rights.

4.1. Appendix A - Settlement Hierarchy incorporating: Key and Local Hubs; The Rural Area

The Head of Strategic Planning gave a presentation explaining the proposals regarding the Settlement Hierarchy.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that the rural exception policy would be applied across all categories of settlement. He clarified that “enabling” development (to facilitate a high proportion of affordable housing) could only be applied to settlements where additional market housing would not normally be considered acceptable (i.e. at the lowest level of the settlement hierarchy, proposed to be referred to as “villages”). Another reason for limiting the application of enabling development was that the Taylor Review on Rural Economy and Affordable Housing recommended against this approach.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Allgood, Godfrey and Evans spoke regarding this item. Mr Hayter also spoke during the public participation period.

Councillor Allgood welcomed the proposal to remove the terms ‘key hubs’ and ‘local hubs’, but did not agree that the term “market town” was always appropriate. For example, Denmead could be referred to as a “rural town” to better reflect its character and status.

Councillor Godfrey highlighted the difficulties of categorising the various settlements within the District due to their different characters. He requested that the proposals include increased flexibility with regard to how each settlement was dealt with, so as not to overly restrict development if considered appropriate.

Councillor Evans also supported the removal of references to “hubs” but shared misgivings regarding the term “market towns” as she believed it implied a large settlement. As a Ward Member, she highlighted that Wickham was often referred to as a village and also queried why certain settlements did not have a catchment area shown. Finally, she queried why more development was not considered appropriate for the largest two categories of settlement.

Mr Hayter made a number of detailed comments regarding the proposal. In summary, he believed the categorisation of settlements should have more regard to their sustainability in terms of required journeys in and out. He disputed the assumption that “market towns” were more sustainable as, for example, a large number of residents of Bishops Waltham were required to travel out of the town for both employment and other reasons, such as shopping. He was disappointed that his full response to the ‘Issues and options’ consultation had not been included in the Appendix.

In response, the Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that the sustainability of a settlement included consideration of a package of criteria, not simply journeys in and out, although this had been taken into account.

During discussion, the Committee noted the concerns raised about the proposed new terminology, particularly the term “market town”. Although Members appreciated that the proposed terms were designed simply as a means of categorisation, they also highlighted the difficulties of being classified in a certain way, particularly regarding public perception.

Some concern was also expressed about the weight given to potentially transient services in classifying settlements. For example, an existing bus route might be withdrawn or a local shop might be forced to close. The Committee considered it would be helpful to have illustrative examples of which settlements were likely to come within each of the four hierarchy categories before a decision was made.

The Committee therefore agreed that the recommendations relating to Appendix A be deferred to a future meeting to allow officers to give consideration to the comments outlined above.

4.2. Appendix B - Rural Affordable Housing; Rural Exception Housing; Affordable Housing

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Godfrey and Humby spoke regarding this item.

Councillor Godfrey generally supported the recommendations, but requested that the proposed policies be more flexible to ensure rural exception sites could be brought forward.

Councillor Humby highlighted the difficulties faced by many villages because current planning policies overly restricted expansion. One consequence was that local people could no longer afford to live in the villages due to lack of affordable properties available. In addition, opportunities for new employment sites in local rural communities were also restrictive. He requested that the proposed approach be reviewed to address these points and also take account of the findings of the Taylor Review.

The Head of Strategic Housing clarified that the recommended proposals would remove the threshold below which affordable housing was not required. Therefore it was recommended that a target of 40% of dwellings to be affordable housing be set on *all* new residential development. This proposed policy change was welcomed by the Committee.

During discussion, the Committee highlighted the importance of the Taylor Review and requested that the Heads of Strategic Housing and Strategic Planning re-examine proposals to ensure its recommendations were being met. In particular, the Committee requested that the recommendations regarding “Local Connection Sites: exception sites” be strengthened to reflect Members’ views that sustainable criteria should not overly restrict provision. The recommended approach should have regard to the question of establishing need and proportionality.

The Committee therefore agreed the recommendation actions as set out in Appendix B in principle, subject to the need for the drafting of future policies to have regard to the comments outlined above.

4.3. Appendix C - Spatial Strategy: Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Area

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Allgood and Evans spoke regarding this item.

Councillor Allgood supported the recommended approach of concentrating development at Whiteley and stressed that this should be of such numbers so as to require a secondary school to be built. He also highlighted the desirability for a train station to be provided at Whiteley and also the provision of Whiteley Way. He requested that the Council should not seek to impose additional housing numbers at West of Waterlooville, above the 2,000 currently proposed.

As a Ward Member for Wickham, Councillor Evans supported the recommended rejection of Option 1 of the 'Issues and Options' paper as she believed the area had already been allocated a large amount of development. She highlighted that some of the development required under the Eastleigh Strategic Development Area (SDA) could also fall within the District. She also requested support for the Fareham SDA development being located solely within the Fareham Borough Council area and did not support any of the related green infrastructure being located within the Winchester District.

Councillor Beckett noted the comments regarding the SDAs and stated the Council's current position and that he would report back to local Members when more information was available.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed the recommended action as set out in Appendix C.

4.4. Appendix D – Strategy for Climate Change

One Member highlighted that the Strategy included more issues than facilitating renewable energy sources, although this was obviously important. For example, he requested that policies be developed which enabled people to build carbon neutral homes. The Head of Strategic Planning agreed that these comments could be taken into account in drafting the relevant policies.

The Committee agreed the recommended action as set out in Appendix D, subject to the above comments.

4.5. Appendix E – Transport

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Barratt expressed concern that climate change issues were not given adequate regard in consideration of

transport requirements. She also requested clarification of when more radical approaches to transport issues might be considered appropriate.

The Head of Access and Infrastructure advised that more radical approaches would be considered when the scale of development made it necessary. These approaches could include bus rapid transport routes or rail links.

Councillor Busher raised the following points in relation to transport:

- Requirement for parking provision in rural towns to be addressed, including the possibility of park and ride;
- the County Council should be encouraged to provide rural footpaths to enable residents living just outside a settlement to be able to walk safely to use its facilities;
- More pressure on Network Rail to respond more positively in relation to possible new stations;
- Highlight possible methods to address the issues surrounding “school run” traffic.

The Committee agreed the recommended action as set out in Appendix E, having noted the above comments.

4.6. Appendix F – Open Space, Recreation and ‘Green Infrastructure’

The Committee agreed the recommended action as set out in Appendix F.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommended actions in relation to the Core Strategy’s options on the following be agreed and incorporated when developing the ‘Preferred Options’ version of the Core Strategy for consultation:

- a) Options for growth in the PUSH area (Appendix C of the Report);
- b) Climate Change (Appendix D of the Report);
- c) Transport (Appendix E of the Report);
- d) Open space, recreation and green infrastructure (Appendix F of the Report)

2. That the recommended actions in relation to Settlement Hierarchy, comprising key and local hubs designation/rural settlement options (Appendix A of the Report) be deferred to a future meeting to allow further consideration of issues raised and summarised above.

3. That the recommended actions in relation to affordable housing, affordable housing in the rural area and rural exception sites (Appendix B of the Report) be agreed in principle, but a further report be submitted to a future meeting (in conjunction with the settlement hierarchy issues) having regard to issues raised and summarised above.

5. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

It was noted that the following dates had been agreed for future meetings of the Committee (all meeting to be held in the Walton Room, Guildhall, Winchester): 16 December 2008 (10am); 28 January 2009 (10am); and 25 March 2009 (9.30am)

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.35pm.

Chairman