

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

12 March 2010

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Wood (Chairman) (P)

Beckett
Coates (P)

Pearson (P)

Deputy Members in attendance:

Allgood (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Busher (P)
Jeffs (P)
Pines

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Evans and Stallard

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Bell

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 15 December 2009 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Evans requested further information on the recent announcement by Fareham Borough Council regarding the development of an eco-town of 7,000 dwellings in their District. She queried whether this would be on the same site as the previously proposed SDA and also sought assurance that Winchester City Council would continue to oppose any of the development being located within its District.

The Head of Strategic Planning responded that the decision by Fareham had been in response to a recent Government invitation for a second round of applications for eco-town status. The City Council had not been previously aware of Fareham's intentions, but it was understood that the development would take place on the same area as the Fareham SDA. The SDA was for development of 10,000 dwellings, whereas the eco-town was for 7,000 dwellings, so it was considered that this should result in less pressure for development outside of the Fareham Borough Council administrative area.

However, Members expressed concern that if the proposed site was for 3,000 fewer dwellings, there would be increasing pressure on other parts of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) area to meet this shortfall, as the South East Plan stipulated a total of 80,000 dwellings within the PUSH area. The Head of Strategic Planning said that Fareham had asked PUSH for advice on this issue and the Corporate Director (Operations) explained that he had spoken to the Leader, who had confirmed his previously stated opposition to any extra housing being placed within the Winchester District.

Mr Lander-Brinkley (Denmead Parish Council) and Mrs Slattery (Council for the Protection of Rural England – CPRE) spoke regarding Report CAB1983(LDF) and their comments are summarised under the appropriate agenda item below.

3. **CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTION – FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION (CHAPTERS 7 - 16)**

(Report [CAB1983\(LDF\)](#) refers)

Councillor Pearson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item, due to his membership of Swanmore Parish Council, which had made representations on the Core Strategy. He also declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as the Council's representative on the Council for the Protection of Rural England, which had also made representations. However, he had no involvement in the formulation of either organisations representations and therefore remained in the room, spoke and voted thereon.

3.1. **Chapter 7 – Spatial Strategy – Market Towns and Rural Areas**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Evans spoke regarding Chapter 7 and in support of the comments made by Wickham Parish Council, that new development in Wickham should not contain 40% affordable housing, because of the relatively high levels of deprivation in the area (Appendix A, page 43). The Parish Council wished to highlight that there had already been a high level of affordable housing development and had concerns that these had not been allocated to local people.

Councillor Evans also spoke regarding the increasing problems caused by flooding and queried whether the LDF process could be utilised to restrict the amount of hardstanding included within new developments.

In response to comments made regarding Wickham, one Member highlighted that the deprivation indices related to a wide range of factors and were affected by such matters as a lack of facilities. He also emphasised that any Council House tenants from Wickham moving into the 100% rural exception sites (RES) Local Connection would be replaced in the Council Houses by 50% with a Local Connection, rather than possibly 100% non-Wickham tenants from the top of the Housing Register.

Mr Lander-Brinkley (Denmead Parish Council) spoke in opposition to the proposal to delete references to housing numbers in Policy MTRA2 as he was concerned this could encourage development in these settlements, as the removal of a ceiling on numbers could make potential sites more attractive to developers.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Stallard supported these comments and suggested that the policies be rephrased “no more than X numbers of new dwellings”. She also shared concerns raised above regarding the possible pressure on the District to accommodate some of the shortfall of 3,000 dwellings arising from Fareham Borough Council’s new proposals.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that the proposal to delete references to housing numbers was in response to specific advice from the Planning Inspector, that the Core Strategy should concentrate on high level strategy and leave the detail to development plan documents. However, it was emphasised that the removal of these numbers was subject to the outcome of a joint study to be undertaken with East Hants District Council, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The aim of the study would be to help define the scale, nature and form of development which would be most appropriate for the various rural settlements across the District.

A number of Members expressed concern regarding the proposed deletion of reference to housing numbers, as it was believed that without these numbers, there was no difference between Level 1 and Level 2 settlement hierarchy. One Member suggested that the settlement definition could instead refer to a proportional increase in the size of settlements. The Head of Strategic Planning acknowledged these concerns, but emphasised that the Council should seek to follow the Inspector’s advice in order to produce a Core Strategy that was considered sound. It was anticipated that the DCLG study might provide the evidence that was required to justify specifying numbers for different levels of the hierarchy. If so, this could justify retaining the detail of development proposed, including numbers.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Committee's concerns regarding the proposed deletion of housing numbers and possible other means of differentiating between settlements be referred to the consultants for further consideration. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the results of the study would be referred back to the Committee.

The Head of Strategic Planning drew the Committee's attention to Paragraph 1.6 of Appendix A which summarised the responses to consultation on Chapter 7. The conclusion was therefore that the approach to four levels of settlement hierarchy was an appropriate one and should be retained.

A number of Members expressed concern that the Core Strategy should stipulate the appropriate phasing of development, otherwise there was a risk that all the required dwellings could be built at the start of the 20 year plan period. In addition, there was some discussion about the level of housing numbers stipulated in the current South East Plan and whether there was a requirement for such levels, together with comments that the numbers required might be reduced following any change in Government in the forthcoming elections.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) outlined the capacity for development within settlements and sought to anticipate when land was likely to come forward. An updated SHLAA would be submitted to the next Cabinet on 17 March 2010 which would look at potential sites outside settlement boundaries. In addition, the housing market would to some extent limit the amount of development that could come forward at any one time.

The Committee agreed that the consultants be requested to consider the level of housing need, together with the rate of development and the possible need for phasing policies.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that Policies MTRA 3 and 4 considered the wider countryside in broad, strategic terms and further detail (for example, regarding its specific use for tourism and leisure purposes) would be contained within other forthcoming development plan documents.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out, subject to the various concerns outlined above being forwarded to the consultants to take account of in the DCLG study.

3.2. Chapter 9 – Health and Wellbeing

The Committee did not raise any concerns regarding this Chapter and agreed with the recommended approach as set out.

3.3. Chapter 10 – Safe and Strong Communities

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that the phrase “to promote transport self-containment in masterplanning new development” related to seeking to ensure that new developments contain a balance of uses, so as to generate the minimum amount of traffic flow in and out. He emphasised that an element of planning was to ensure that the development was situated to reduce journeys. However, it was obviously not possible to force people to live and work within a settlement.

Committee Members were reminded that the Core Strategy would not consider detailed elements of transport provision, such as methods of alternative transport.

The Head of Strategic Planning also reminded the Committee that Transport for South Hampshire were undertaking studies regarding the traffic implications of the proposed MDAs and SDAs in the PUSH area and these studies were nearing completion.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out.

3.4. Chapter 11 – Economic Prosperity

A Member suggested that it was important to provide for economic development in villages, as well as housing.

The Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out.

3.5. Chapter 12 – High Quality Environment

Mrs Slattery (CPRE) welcomed the recognition of the importance of the natural environment, particularly the emphasis on setting. She supported the Council’s policy on retaining local gaps and requested that the wording be strengthened, particularly for areas adjoining the South Downs National Park. Mrs Slattery advised that the CPRE supported the policy on biodiversity, but was concerned that the Biodiversity Action Plan was drafted before 2005 and required significant updating, to take account of recent developments regarding climate change impacts, to ensure it remained relevant for the whole plan period. Finally, she stated that Policy CP7 must address concerns highlighted by the River Itchen Study and new measures from DEFRA.

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that consultants were examining provision of green infrastructure at a District level and, although the results had not yet been received, it might identify shortfalls. He clarified that references to the Area of Outstanding National Beauty would be removed as it would no longer exist following establishment of the South Downs National Park. Similarly, it was not considered necessary to formulate detailed policies for those areas of the District covered by the National Park, as the Park Authority would be required to produce its own Core Strategy.

Members highlighted the importance of protecting the status of gaps to ensure that settlements did not merge and sought assurances that the Strategy would maintain them.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that it was being recommended that all gaps would be maintained as currently defined and would be split into one of two types, as set out in the recommended approach on Appendix E, page 8. He clarified that rural settlements included towns such as Bishops Waltham and Swanmore, and agreed that the phrase “rural settlement” should be used consistently in this context (as opposed to “smaller settlement”).

One Member raised concerns that the requirements of the proposed Policy CP13 were not stringent enough and the Council should seek to achieve a higher standard of “green” developments (for example, at Code for Sustainable Homes (COSH) Level 6), such as encouraged in cities such as Brighton. The Corporate Director (Operations) emphasised that the proposals were more onerous than those currently stipulated by the Government and to introduce even more stringent requirements risked the Strategy being judged “unsound”, because the viability of development would be undermined.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out, subject to the substitution of the phrase “rural settlement” for “smaller settlement” in relation to the policy on gaps.

3.6. Chapter 13 – Inclusive Society

The Committee noted Councillor Evans comments above relating to affordable housing in Wickham.

The Head of Strategic Housing clarified that the 35% target for affordable housing referred to in Policy CP18 was an overall target from all supply, recognising that the current Local Plan policy did not require all sites to contribute affordable housing and that this would continue to apply until the adoption of the Core Strategy. This was not to be confused with the stated 40% target for affordable housing which just related to provision on “quota” sites.

The Head of Strategic Housing explained that “windfall exception sites” were “opportunity led” sites, as differentiated from sites that were specifically allocated by the Council.

The Head of Strategic Housing advised that the main changes proposed related to Policy CP20 which sought to increase the support of affordable homes in rural areas (on sites not normally suitable for housing development). He confirmed that the Development Management and Allocations development plan document would examine their exact locations, but it was possible that development might be located on greenfield sites. The criteria that should be applied to such exception sites would be considered carefully and brought back to Committee for agreement, and was likely to be similar to that currently in place for rural exception sites.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out.

- 3.7. Chapter 14 – Infrastructure and Developer's Contributions
Chapter 15 – Implementation and Monitoring
Chapter 16 – Core Strategy Delivery Plan
Appendix B – Evidence Base

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that with the 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) Regulations would become effective from 6 April 2010 and a Report would be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting about whether the new system should be introduced. The Corporate Director (Operations) acknowledged that there were significant issues that would need to be determined in relation to whether CIL should be adopted, and if so, for what purposes.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed with the recommended approach as set out.

RESOLVED:

That the responses to comments received to Chapters 7-16 of the Core Strategy Preferred Option consultation be noted and the Recommended Approaches be agreed, subject to changes detailed above, to enable matters raised to be taken into account when preparing the next stage of the Core Strategy.

4. **LITTLETON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT REVISION 2009**
 (Report [CAB1986\(LDF\)](#) refers)

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that Village Design Statements (VDSs) should still be prepared under the general principles outlined in the 2005 guidelines.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the 'Design Guidelines' of the Littleton Revised Village Design Statement, as proposed to be amended, 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 version of the VDS.
3. That the Littleton Village Design Statement Group be thanked for producing the Design Statement.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.50pm

Chairman