

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

22 July 2010

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Learney (Chairman) (P)

Collin (P)

Evans (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Beckett (P)

Jefferies (P)

Johnston

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Barratt, Pearson and Stallard

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Bell, Huxstep Mitchell, Phillips and Tait

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 12 March 2010 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr G Hollingbery MP, Ms C Dibden (Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), South Hants), Mrs G Busher and Mr N Lander-Brinkley (Denmead Parish Council) all spoke regarding Report CAB2040(LDF) and their comments are summarised under the agenda item below.

Mrs C Slattery spoke on Report CAB2040(LDF) and general matters relating to the work of the Committee. With regard to the Report, she welcomed the recommendations regarding affordable housing, but requested that a glossary of terms be provided to ease understanding of its contents. She believed that the Government's removal of the requirements under the South East Plan would enable the Council to refer back to responses to Hampshire County

Council's "Where Shall We Live" questionnaire and remove the need for development at Barton Farm.

Mrs Slattery drew attention to statements previously made by Councillor Learney, whereby she had proposed an amendment to Core Strategy policy WT2 that the housing allocation at Barton Farm only be released if and when required. In addition, the Leader had requested in 2008 that the consultation results for the PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) and the non-PUSH areas of the District be separated. In conclusion, Mrs Slattery requested that Winchester residents be consulted about what they wished for Winchester itself.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Slattery for her comments which would be addressed under the next item of business.

3. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) UPDATE** (Report [CAB2040\(LDF\)](#) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning outlined the complexities involved in responding to the new Government's changes and developing the LDF process, as summarised in Section 3 of the Report. Although the Regional Spatial Strategies (such as the South East Plan) had been revoked, there remained a need to produce a Core Strategy and to ascertain the housing requirements for the District. A review of the PUSH Economic Strategy had been agreed and the Council would be able to respond to consultation on this, which was expected to commence shortly.

The Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that the new Government had also indicated its intention to make further changes to the planning system and it was consequentially important that the Council retained a degree of flexibility in its approach in order to deal with such changes.

The Head of Strategic Planning highlighted that some of the District fell within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and as such, would ultimately be covered by the Park Authority's own Core Strategy (from 2014 at the earliest). Council Officers would work in partnership with Park Officers and keep under review the benefits of continuing to include this part of the District within its own Core Strategy.

The Head of Strategic Planning updated Members on a recent decision by Eastleigh Borough Council (BC) that the Hedge End Strategic Development Area (SDA) should not be progressed in its LDF. As a consequence, this removed any requirement for Winchester City Council to plan for any of the SDA development within its District. However, he emphasised that this did not remove the requirement on Eastleigh BC to plan for new housing, but development would not necessarily be of the same numbers or in the same location.

Mr G Hollingbery MP, Mrs C Dibden (CPRE, South Hants), Mrs G Busher and Mr N Lander-Brinkley (Denmead Parish Council) all spoke during the public participation period and their comments are summarised below.

Mr Hollingbery MP welcomed the decision by Eastleigh BC and asked that the Council continue to resist any development close to the borders with Eastleigh, as he considered it was not a sustainable location, particularly in terms of infrastructure. He also welcomed the Report and its contents as containing a good analysis of the Government's intentions, as far as they were known. He agreed with the value of consultations carried out under the LDF process to date, and emphasised that the proposed changes offered the opportunity for the Council to further engage with local communities to meet their requirements. He did not object to large-scale developments if they were in the right place and highlighted that the Government would offer incentives to local authorities (for example, 125% Council Tax for affordable housing).

On a specific point, Mr Hollingbery emphasised the difficulties of finding suitable sites within the District for the travelling community and asked that the Council seek to remedy this as soon as possible.

Mrs C Dibden also welcomed the decision of Eastleigh BC regarding the Hedge End SDA. She disputed the assertion that the PUSH housing figures were locally derived and requested that the Council consult again in the PUSH area. She mentioned that the CPRE South Hants had joined with other local groups in the area to form an action group (SHUV) to counter the PUSH requirements.

Mrs G Busher also welcomed the Report but expressed concern over the implication that residents within the PUSH area would not be offered the same consultation opportunities on the changed arrangements, as those in other parts of the District. She also queried what sections of the Bishops Waltham area were within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) as this was not clear on the map contained as Appendix to the Report. She noted that the Park boundary appeared to cut through communities and parishes and asked how planning applications would be dealt with in these cross-boundary areas. Finally, she queried whether windfall sites could not be included within the Council's projected five year land supply.

Mr Lander-Brinkley concurred with comments made by the previous two speakers regarding the PUSH area. He believed the Government's changes offered the opportunity for the Council to leave the PUSH group and in particular highlighted that Denmead Parish Council did not want to be part of the PUSH area.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Pearson questioned what consultations were planned for settlements outside of Winchester town and requested clarification of how the previously agreed settlement hierarchy would be dealt with. He emphasised that the southern part of the District had already had significant areas of development and it was important to try and

retain gaps between settlements. Councillor Pearson also raised queries regarding the differing treatment of biodiversity matters within the SDNP area of the District and other areas. He also asked about the links between parish plans and the proposed settlement profiles.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that in developing the Core Strategy, the Council had divided the District into three areas:

- Winchester Town;
- South Hampshire Urban Areas, comprising of the built-up parts of South Hampshire, including Whiteley, the proposed North of Whiteley MDA, the West of Waterlooville MDA and part of the proposed Fareham SDA (relating to green infrastructure provision);
- The Market Towns and Rural Area, including the part of the District within the SDNP.

The Corporate Director (Operations) confirmed that those residents within the PUSH area of the District would be consulted regarding their housing requirements, as those in the remainder of the District. However, he emphasised that consultation in the PUSH area had already resulted in two strategic allocations being identified (West of Waterlooville and North Whiteley) which were both progressing with technical evidence and ongoing discussions with a range of stakeholders and the community. Therefore, it was considered that there was a strong case for retaining both of these proposed allocations.

The Chairman advised that she was the Council's representative on PUSH and their recent meetings had confirmed the "City First" strategy. She believed it was important for the Council to continue to be part of the organisation in order to maintain its influence both locally and nationally.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the whole of the built-up area of Bishops Waltham was excluded from the SDNP, but sections of the Parish were included within the Park's boundaries. She reported that detailed maps of the SDNP boundaries were available via the DEFRA website: <http://www.naturalengland.gov.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/new/southdowns/default.aspx>. The Corporate Director (Operations) advised that cross-boundary applications with the SDNP would be dealt with in the same manner as at the current time, with applications involving neighbouring local authorities.

The Corporate Director (Operations) advised that pitch requirements for gypsy and traveller sites would have been included within a partial review of the South East Plan. However, with the revocation of the SE Plan this matter would still need to be addressed in the Core Strategy, so it would form part of the evidence that the Council were required to produce.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that there had not been any change in Government advice regarding how 'windfall' sites were to be dealt

with, but this was of less relevance now the Council did not have to meet regional housing numbers.

The Head of Strategic Planning acknowledged the importance of Parish Plans, particularly in view of the new 'localism' agenda, and confirmed that, where available, these Plans would be utilised. However, there was incomplete coverage by such Plans across the District. The Committee noted that profiles existed for Level 1 and 2 Settlements and it was intended that these be updated and also rolled out to smaller settlements.

Councillors Jeffs and Beckett raised concerns about the "sustainability trap" (as raised in the Taylor Report) facing some smaller villages within the District. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that consultation would include smaller settlements and it was open to such communities to promote the requirement for new housing within their areas. He referred to the work being commenced as part of the CLG Rural Masterplanning project, which would assess the settlement hierarchy in the light of the Taylor Report's recommendations. However, he emphasised that any such small scale developments were not likely to be of sufficient size to support new service provision, such as new schools or shops.

On a general point, the Corporate Director (Operations) emphasised the significance of the new Government's decision to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies (which imposed housing numbers) and introduce a 'localism' agenda. The Council would be asking local communities, including parishes, what they wished to happen in their areas in terms of future development.

Councillor Beckett supported the decision by Eastleigh BC regarding the Hedge End SDA. He believed it was important that the City Council remain a member of PUSH, so as to exert influence from within the organisation. However, he did not consider it appropriate that the Council should continue to adopt the housing requirement figures set out by PUSH, as he believed these had been imposed to some extent. With regard to the Report's Recommendation 1(v), he queried whether the Council expected further Government guidance on how this research and consultation should be undertaken.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that, whilst he felt the Council should remain within PUSH, the housing requirement figures could change as a result of the proposed review, although he was not anticipating any radical alteration. The Council would continue to use its membership of PUSH to direct development to the 'South Hampshire Urban Areas' rather than spreading it around the more rural settlements within the Winchester part of PUSH.

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that it was not yet known whether or not the Government would provide any further guidance on how the consultation would be undertaken. This created difficulties, as the Council did not wish to commence a process which could potentially be deemed

unsuitable at a future date. However, with regard to the tight timetable, it would be necessary to commence the consultation process soon, with or without Government guidance.

In response to questions, the Corporate Director (Operations) confirmed that the capacity within the proposed Fareham SDA was estimated at between 7,000 and 8,000. However, the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategies removed the requirement to meet housing targets, but there remained a requirement to address housing need. With regard to the West of Waterlooville MDA, the Corporate Director confirmed that outline consent for 2,000 dwellings had been approved. There was provision within the Local Plan for a further 1,000 homes and the justification for this would have previously been provided by housing figures contained within the South East Plan. However, the evidence now would come through the Council's participation in PUSH and the review of its Economic Strategy.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the content of the Report be noted and, in light of recent changes to the spatial planning system with the revocation of the South East Plan, it be agreed:
 - (i) not to proceed with publication of the Core Strategy in its current format in October 2010 as proposed in the agreed Local Development Scheme;
 - (ii) to retain and progress the Winchester Local Development Framework (LDF) to consist of the Core Strategy (in the format set out in Paragraph 6.6 of the report) and Development Management and Allocations Development Plan Document;
 - (iii) to agree to continue to be part of PUSH (assuming it continues as a local partnership) and to use the review of the PUSH Economic Strategy and associated work to update locally-derived housing and employment requirements for the PUSH part of the District;
 - (iv) to continue the development strategy for the PUSH part of the District proposed in the Core Strategy Preferred Option, of meeting large-scale housing requirements through strategic allocations in the 'South Hampshire Urban Areas' spatial area (including at West of Waterlooville and Whiteley);
 - (v) to undertake research and consultation to determine the local housing needs and requirements for the 'Winchester Town' and 'Market Towns and Rural Area' parts of the District (including that part within PUSH);
 - (vi) to agree the indicative programme for LDF preparation for the remainder of 2010/early 2011 as set out in Section 7 of this report.

2. That the position in relation to that part of the District that now lies within the South Downs National Park (and will as of 1 April 2011 fall within the remit of the South Downs National Park Authority for LDF purposes) be noted and work continue on the basis that this part of the District is likely to be dealt with in the City Council's LDF, pending clarification of the programme proposed for the Council's and the National Park Authority's LDFs.

4. **REVISIONS TO PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 2: HOUSING (PPS3)**
(Report [CAB2037\(LDF\)](#) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning emphasised that, despite the impression given by some of the new Government's announcements, the changes proposed were relatively minor in scope. This was particularly the case in the Winchester District as existing (Local Plan) policies did not differentiate between brownfield and greenfield lands, but instead had regard to whether a proposed site was within a settlement boundary.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Pearson, Barratt and Stallard addressed the Committee.

Councillor Pearson raised concerns about the limited changes proposed in the Report. He highlighted the importance of retaining gardens as "green corridors" in terms of reducing climate change, and queried whether the Council would adopt a mitigation policy if gardens were used for development. He queried how garden land would be dealt with if it was neither designated as greenfield or brownfield. He also asked why there was no mention of amending Core Strategy policy CP12 to remove the minimum requirement of 30dph.

Councillor Barratt stated that the lack of clarity in the Government guidance made it difficult for the Council to deal with planning applications. She believed that it was not feasible to prevent development on gardens and emphasised that there remained a requirement for additional housing (particularly affordable housing) within Winchester, despite the removal of the numbers contained within the South East Plan. She suggested that the Council could consider allowing development at higher densities without provision for parking. Finally, she queried whether the change in policy required a change to existing Design Statements.

Councillor Stallard also highlighted the lack of changes to policy contained within the Report. She queried whether removal of a maximum of 50 dwellings per hectare (dph) could result in developments of more than 50 dph.

The Head of Strategic Planning pointed out that the Report outlined the alterations to national policy, as a result of Government changes. He concluded that the changes were not major and also emphasised that the

Council's current policies already required that greater regard be had to design and character issues, rather than density.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the Government's changes effectively returned policy to the situation prior to the introduction of a definition of brownfield land in PPS3. He advised that there was no policy requirement to mitigate against loss of garden or allotment land, in terms of its food production value.

The Head of Strategic Planning clarified that the changes proposed removing the minimum density requirement and that 50dph was part of a range of minimum densities, not a maximum level. He explained that the changes placed more emphasis on character assessment over density, and this was already incorporated into the wording of Core Strategy policy CP.12, although the wording would be reconsidered in the light of the changes to PPS3. However, it was important that developers did not use this shift to avoid meeting the minimum numbers above which the requirement for affordable housing provision was triggered. However, the Core Strategy aimed to remove the thresholds for affordable housing to avoid this problem.

The Head of Strategic Planning advised that there was no need to change Local Design Statements to reflect the changed policy.

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

RECOMMENDED (TO CABINET):

1. That in determining planning applications for housing, emphasis is placed on local 'character' issues, in accordance with Local Plan policy, but that the Council should not seek to resist development simply because it is on garden land or of a higher density than surrounding development.

2. That the changes to PPS3 be taken into account in developing policies on density and design through the emerging Local Development Framework (or any replacement planning policy system), along with consideration of the emphasis to be given to the various potential sources of housing land supply.

5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: UPDATE ON EVIDENCE STUDIES

(Report [CAB2039\(LDF\)](#) refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Pearson expressed disappointment at the apparent lack ambition and recommendations contained within the Low Carbon Planning Policy Viability Study. He emphasised that "green" developments at Woking and other towns showed

what could be achieved. He also queried why the full text of the evidence studies was not made available on the Council's Website.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that the purpose of the Report was to gain the Committee's approval to the publication of the studies on the Website. (NB: Following the meeting, studies available via the following link: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/EvidenceBase/>) He clarified that the documents were part of the evidence-gathering programme and therefore, as such, were not policy documents or published for consultation. However, comments would be welcomed at the appropriate stage on the proposed policies which would follow from the evidence studies.

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

RESOLVED:

That the further evidence-gathering work programme referred to in this Report be noted and the publication of the recently completed studies (Section 3 of the Report) on the Council's Website be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.20pm.

Chairman