

**CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE**

**10 November 2011**

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Beckett (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Weston (P)

Humby (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Jeffs (P)

Learney (P)

Evans (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Collin and Cook

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Hutchison and Mitchell

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 28 September 2011 be approved and adopted.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO "PLANS FOR PLACES – RELATING TO WINCHESTER TOWN"**

(Report CAB2243(LDF) refer)

Councillor Godfrey declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in matters relating to Hampshire County Council, as he was a County employee.

Mr H Cole, Mr I White, Mr M Carden and Councillor Collin spoke on this item during public participation and their comments are summarised under the item below

Mr H Cole stated that the City Council had successfully defended the proposed Barton Farm development at the Public Inquiry on the premise that the reserve site would not be released unless a compelling justification was demonstrated, but this was not reflected within the report.

The Corporate Director (Operations) responded that the Council's position was consistent with that argued at the Planning Appeal. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had determined that the decision on the release of the land should be made at the conclusion of the Blueprint exercise and therefore be decided locally. This process of local decision-making was continuing and was not altered by Cala Home's recent appeal to the High Court to overturn the decision of the Secretary of State.

Mr I White spoke on behalf of the Save Barton Farm Group. He referred the Committee to the Secretary of State's letter, which concluded that the development of this attractive greenfield site would undermine the character of the landscape and the key characteristics of the relevant Landscape Character Areas. The development would also alter a valued part of the setting of the historic city of Winchester and there was no compelling justification for release of the site. It was a Secretary of State's view that a decision to allow the appeal and grant planning permission would not be in line with PPS3. He added that there was no solid evidence for the figure of 4000 additional dwellings in Winchester over the next 20 years and that the estimate of 11,000 dwellings for the District was on the high side and a lower estimate should be considered.

In response, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that officers' interpretation, which was also reflected in coverage in the professional press and the Cala legal challenge, was that the Secretary of State's main reason for deciding that there was not a compelling justification for the scheme was that he wanted to give the Council the opportunity to complete the Blueprint exercise. Having concluded that there was no compelling justification, the Secretary of State rightly applied current Local Plan countryside policies and identified the harm that would be caused to these by the proposal. However, the Planning Inspector had concluded that the landscape factors were a disadvantage, but were not an overriding reason, individually or cumulatively, to dismiss the Appeal.

As mentioned, the Blueprint exercise had now been completed and come to its own conclusions. It was explained that the housing figures in the Housing Technical Paper had been on the Council's web site since June and this extrapolated from Office for National Statistics projections. The DTZ study in August 2011, which had taken into consideration the current downturn in economic activity and its possible effects on housing requirements, came to the conclusion that the figure of 11,000 continued to be justified in the light of updated evidence and alternative scenarios. In parallel, the Planning Inspector for the Cala Homes application had undertaken an assessment of housing numbers by an alternative method and had reached a very similar conclusion, which gave added confidence to the figures.

With regard to the Save Barton Farm Group's point about household occupancy, the Head of Strategic Planning said that they had misdirected their calculations by looking just at the increase in population and housing, rather than looking at the total population and housing size at 2031. If this was calculated in the correct way the resulting household size was consistent with what SBFSG suggested (about 2.3 persons per household).

Mr M Carden spoke on behalf of the City of Winchester Trust. He stated that the Trust objected to the inclusion of Bushfield Camp, which was a speculative project and was not viable and would impact on the City setting due to its visibility. Proposals should be brought forward with proper justification when time was right for its development. The Bluesky proposals put forward by WinACC should be given greater consideration, and Members were encouraged to attend a presentation on this subject on 15 November 2011. In addition, a strategic framework should be developed, as was currently being debated by the Winchester Town Forum. Finally, if Barton Farm was developed, which was not favoured by the Trust, then its inclusion in the Local Plan should be subject to policies to control the development to achieve the most appropriate scheme.

The Chairman welcomed the comments regarding Barton Farm, suggesting that to negotiate from a position of strength with Cala Homes could achieve a high quality scheme with enhanced landscaping for example. In respect of Bushfield Camp, he stated that there was a need to provide for the developable part of the site for a 25 year period to pre-empt any proposals for unsuitable development by defining criteria to any application and to retain the planning authority's control. It was noted that the Church Commissioners, the owners of the land, favoured its use for knowledge based and creative industries.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Collin encouraged special consideration of the Carfax site clustered around the railway station, which provided opportunities for economic growth with reduced visual impact. Proposals for the development of this area had the support of the Winchester Town Forum through its Vision for Winchester exercise. He also encouraged the relaxation of planning rules to allow residential and employment uses to be located nearby to each other and enable the churn of employment premises being converted to housing and then reverting to employment uses. He also asked that the principles of gradual change be applied to the supply of housing to ensure that there was a variety of mixed tenures to meet housing need. In conclusion, he also asked that the quality of the public realm be included within strategy development.

In reply, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that in addition to policies to support the town centre, policies to encourage the economic development of the Carfax area could be pursued. The Core Strategy would not include the differentiation between retail types as this was covered by government guidance; however the local planning authority should be able to retain control of the balance between retail, employment and residential use. In respect of the supply of mixed housing tenures, the issues related more to land supply and the ability to build quality accommodation.

In considering the detail of the Report, the Head of Strategic Planning explained to the Committee why it was necessary to progress the Core Strategy. As Winchester did not have a five year land supply, then any planning application received in the period without an adopted Plan would be subject to a presumption in favour of development. This situation would be reinforced by guidance expected to be contained in the National Planning

Policy Framework. The Secretary of State had also made his decision on Barton Farm on the assumption that Blueprint would be brought to a prompt conclusion without unavoidable delay. Although the Government had indicated in recent press reports that it may allow a two year transitional period for district councils to prepare their local plans, to use this period to continue to debate a plan, but not publish it, would put the City Council in a worse position in terms of defending speculative planning applications throughout the District. It could also be negatively viewed by the Secretary of State in deciding upon any future referred applications.

The Committee debated the timetable for adopting the Local Plan. It was questioned whether, with the current uncertainty over Cala Home's High Court appeal and with changes forthcoming to the National Planning Policy Framework, this was the correct time to approve the Core Strategy. The Chairman noted the points made for delaying a decision, which had to be balanced against the negative implications of not having an adopted plan. The Committee agreed to the resolutions as set out in the report and noted that the Core Strategy was still to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 28 October, at Cabinet on 7 December and at a special meeting of Council on 8 December 2011.

RESOLVED:

1. That the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in relation to the Cala Homes (Barton Farm) appeal be noted;
2. That the responses to Plans for Places...*after Blueprint*, in relation to questions 4a and 4b on Winchester Town, be noted and used to inform the preparation of the pre-submission/submission version of the Core Strategy, to be reported and agreed at the next meeting of the Cabinet (LDF) Committee.

3. **STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA) – UPDATE**

(Report CAB2244(LDF) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning answered questions in respect of sites at Knowle and Wickham. It was also noted that site 425 at Littleton (Map 15) was partially built upon and this would be corrected in the published document.

Further to the meeting of Council held on 20 July 2011, the Committee gave consideration to Councillor Cook's Notice of Motion, as detailed below:

*"That this Council remove the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) designation from green field land when it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest for such land to be used for public recreation or sport or where it can be demonstrated that such land is not required to meet the agreed housing targets."*

Councillor Cook added to his Notice of Motion that an area of land at Alresford was desired by New Alresford Town Council for recreational use, but its inclusion within the SHLAA had led to a hope value being placed against the land, rendering it beyond the financial means of the Town Council to purchase. Through Plans for Places the Town Council was to make increased provision for additional residential development and the supply of land for recreation provision (and burial land) needed to keep pace as the town grew.

The officers responded that it was the location of this land, in relation to the settlement, which gave it its hope value rather than inclusion in the SHLAA. Inclusion within the SHLAA was part of a process of collecting evidence rather a decision about the land's suitability for development and these sites have to be mapped in the SHLAA unless they were demonstrably undevelopable.

Following debate, the Committee agreed that to exclude the parcel of land at Alresford would have implications for other sites within the SHLAA and therefore the recommendation to Council below was supported.

In reply to a Member's question, the Head of Strategic Planning outlined the sequential approach that could be included in the Core Strategy's policies to limit the amount of greenfield site development, which included consideration of housing needs, whether they were up to date and looking at the capacity for development within the settlement boundary.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT WITH REGARD TO THE NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR COOK RELATING TO THE SHLAA (CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL ON 20 JULY 2011), NO CHANGES BE MADE TO THE SHLAA OR THE CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF SITES IN IT IN RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE OF MOTION, AND THAT THE DESIGNATION OF LAND USES CONTINUES TO BE MADE THROUGH THE STATUTORY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK/LOCAL PLAN PROCESS, FOLLOWING THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES, CONSULTATION AND EXAMINATION.**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2011 SHLAA be published as part of the evidence base for the LDF.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning to add summary sheets for each site and to make any minor editorial changes necessary, prior to publication, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement.

4. **SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**  
(Report CAB2256(LDF) refers)

In reply to Members' questions, the Head of Strategic Planning explained that the guidance could be a material consideration and may have some weight when applications were considered at Planning Development Control Committee, prior to the Council adopting policies on this matter within the Core Strategy. Although the Guidance was principally for physical building work, the Core Strategy would also include additional guidance for the other elements of sustainability.

During the public participation session, Mr.E Shelton representing WinACC, raised various questions in respect of the guidance. The Head of Strategic Planning replied that the draft Core Strategy would include the requirement for new residential dwellings to comply with Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 for energy and 4 for water; that the strategy would address all aspects of carbon including embedded carbon and materials selection, energy generation and transport and civic amenities; and, should Barton Farm proceed, it would be the subject of a Master Plan to include consideration of carbon emissions.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the content of the document attached at Appendix 1 to the above report be noted and its publication be agreed;
- 2 That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning to make any minor editorial changes necessary, prior to publication, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement.
- 3 That the thanks of the Committee be expressed to the members of the working group, for their contribution to the development of the Sustainable Buildings Guidance for Planning Applications.

5. **COMPTON AND SHAWFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**  
(Report CAB2245(LDF) refers)

Councillor Beckett declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as he was a Compton and Shawford Parish Councillor.

The Head of Strategic Planning reported that as a result of consultation with the South Downs National Park Authority over the Village Design Statement, it appeared that the National Park Authority was expecting Village Design Statements to be more technical in their nature. As a result, the guidance of the South Downs National Park Authority would need to be sought regarding the content of future village design statements.

The Head of Strategic Planning agreed to circulate to all Members and Parish Councils advice on the production of Village Designs Statements affecting the South Downs National Park, as referred to above, and to also include clarity on the terminology used within the Statements.

## RESOLVED:

- 1 That the 'Design Guidelines' of the Compton & Shawford Village Design Statement, as proposed to be amended, be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 2 That the Village Design Statement Committee be thanked for producing the Design Statement.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and concluded at 1.00pm.

Chairman