

## **Copeland Local Development Framework Working Party Meeting**

### **Minutes of Meeting Held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 4.30pm – Nicholson Room**

**Present:** Councillor G Clements (Chair)  
Councillor G Sunderland  
Councillor S Haraldsen  
Councillor J Jackson  
Councillor D Riley

Chris Hoban – Senior Planning Officer (CH)  
Louise Kirkup – Senior Planning Officer (LK)  
Alison Earnshaw - Planning Officer – Notes (AE)

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012** – The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting. Cllr Clements expressed disappointment at the poor attendance figures at the drop-in events for the South and West Whitehaven SPDs (only 4 attendees).
2. **Apologies** – Cllr Norwood, Cllr Williams, Cllr Downie
3. **Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Agenda Items** – Councillors agreed that they would raise any issues as they came up.
4. **Order of Agenda Items** - Agenda items to be followed as laid out.
5. **Items for which the Press and Public will be Excluded** - No members of the public or press present.
6. **South Whitehaven Draft Supplementary Planning Document for Consultation**

LK introduced the new draft of the South Whitehaven SPD, explaining that it was quite different to any previous versions of the document in that there was now a lot more detail i.e. design guidance and development principles. This draft also reflects the comments that were received during the recent consultation in Nov/Dec 2012. There is also a lot more detail on the regeneration of Woodhouse and Greenbank. It is important that the old and new communities are not seen as two communities sitting beside one another, but one integrated community. A new school sitting on the boundary of the two areas should help this to be the case.

Regarding the guidance on design issues, LK said that the Government are keen to encourage high quality design but that the Council cannot be too prescriptive. Our role is only to try and raise the general standard of design in the plan area.

Cllr Clements said that the Council had spoken to GPs in the area regarding the potential for a new health centre that would serve this larger community. The response was that it would be better to spend the money on improving accessibility to the existing facilities in the town centre.

Cllr Riley asked how such a large housing site (550 dwellings) would affect Copeland's housing trajectory. CH responded that the market could only provide 30-40 per annum on that site so it would not affect the release of sites elsewhere. Phasing is very important.

Cllr Clements wanted to know if there was an issue with affordability on the new site. CH replied that affordability is not the main driver for South Whitehaven. There is a lot of social rented housing in the Woodhouse and Greenbank areas.

Cllr Sunderland asked how much contact there had been with bus companies regarding improved services into the area. LK said that it was the responsibility of the developer to support the bus company in providing an enhanced bus service, until it becomes financially viable.

Suggested amendments to the draft:

- DG7 – Cllr Haraldsen that text be added to this point to say that the cost of maintaining the open space will lie with the developer. LK said that a common way of dealing with this issue was for the developer to set up a management company that would be funded by service charges paid by the residents. This could potentially cause problems as the maintenance of the grounds would be paid for by the residents but could, in effect, be used by anyone. CH agreed with the principle of asking the developer to pay and said that there was a policy in the Core Strategy that would support this approach.
- DG14 – Ambulances should be added to the list that highways on the new estate should be able to accommodate.
- DG17 – to be combined with DG14 (this will lead to a renumbering of the design guidance points DG18 – DG28).
- DG21 – (Now DG20) should include the word indigenous so that the statement now reads, 'Species used in landscaping should be indigenous and appropriate to supporting local biodiversity objectives'.

Cllr Sunderland asked if the Masterplan would be the planning application. CH responded that it be submitted in support of the outline application for the whole site and that, in addition to this, there would be a detailed application submitted for the southern portion of the site. Cllr Sunderland asked if this would be supported by a travel plan etc. CH confirmed that it would.

Cllr Clements commented that there was no vehicular access between the Woodhouse estate and the new estate. LK explained that there would be pedestrian access between both and that the new school would be on the boundary of the two estates helping to link them and make them feel more like one community.

Cllr Clements let Members know that the South Whitehaven SPD would be going to Planning Panel for consultation in 2 weeks' time.

Members asked about mine shafts on the site. LK said that 7 shafts had been identified and that the layout had been designed so that there was open space in these areas. No building would take place on

top of them. Cllr Clements said that there were also known to be drift mines in the area and asked if the developer knew where they were. LK assured Members that the developers had investigated the site.

Cllr Jackson asked about the response to the Draft South Whitehaven SPD consultation before Christmas. LK informed Members that the level of response had not been very good. However, this may have been because, generally, people are happy with what is being suggested and it isn't a controversial plan.

Members approved the final version of the SPD subject to minor design and editorial changes, and recommended the Adoption of the SPD to Full Council.

## **7. Neighbourhood Planning**

The Council has agreed to designate the parishes of St Bees and Millom Without as Neighbourhood Plan Areas after a consultation in December 2012. Both parishes are currently producing their plans. Copeland Borough Council has a responsibility to provide support in the way of organising press notices and the independent examination and referendum for each Neighbourhood Plan, together with officer time to support the process by, for example, providing guidance and checking conformity with the Core Strategy.

CH explained the size of the Policy team is due to reduce over the coming months and that there will only be 1.8 FTE Planners remaining. Therefore, the Council needs to clearly state that help will be limited in terms of staff time. It is proposed that the Council agrees a protocol with the Parish Councils outlining clearly the roles of both in the process. The text of the protocol (set out in Appendix 1 of the report) has been agreed with the other Cumbria Authorities and CALC.

Cllr Clements asked which party paid for the referendum. CH explained that Copeland would have to finance the referendum in each case but that money was being made available by DCLG (£30K for each Neighbourhood Plan) to cover all of the costs relating to the preparation, examination and adoption of each Plan. To date, the Council has been able to apply for £10K to cover the costs of advertising the boundaries of both the Neighbourhood Planning Areas in December last year (£5K each).

Cllr Clements asked if the Neighbourhood Plans would go to Planning Panel. CH explained that the Plans would be assessed for soundness at an independent examination and that part of that 'soundness' would have to be that the plan is in conformity with Copeland's Core Strategy.

Cllr Haraldsen asked that the Neighbourhood Plans be made available on the Copeland website, as they would form part of Copeland's LDF. CH agreed to get permission from the Parish Councils to do this and look into how this would be done.

Members suggested that the Protocol be reviewed annually. Members approved the Protocol with the amendment that it be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **8. LDF Update (not on Agenda)**

CH reminded Members that the Core Strategy had been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2012. The Council has received initial feedback from the Inspector, asking for

clarification on some matters. Officers have provided that clarification and the Inspector is happy for the examination to continue. The hearing was initially meant to be held in February but has been postponed to 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> April.

The Council has recently received the programme of hearing sessions along with a list of questions that will form the basis of the hearing discussions. There are 57 questions on the list which is considered to be an insignificant number in comparison to other Core Strategy examinations. Officers are currently drafting responses to these questions and will submit these in the next 2 weeks. The hearing sessions are open to the public and will take the form of round table discussions.

After the hearing sessions are complete the Inspector will write a report and declare the Core Strategy to be sound, unsound or sound with changes to be made/additional work. It is anticipated that the report will be ready by end of May or early June. Once this is received it will be brought to the LDF Working Party and will be taken to Full Council in September for Adoption. The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD will replace most of the policies in the Local Plan i.e. those not relating to specific sites.

The Annual Monitoring Report is virtually complete. A copy will be made available in the Members' Room and further copies will be made available on request.

Cllr Clements thanked Members for attending and Officers for their continued hard work.

CH said that the next meeting of the LDF Working Party would either be in April or the summer months and would be called specifically to consider the next draft of the West Whitehaven SPD. The timing of this would depend on how much funding could be found to secure LK to complete this work.

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.