

Copeland Local Development Framework Working Party Meeting

Minutes of Meeting Held on 26th January 2012 at 4.00pm – Bainbridge Room

Present: Councillor G Clements (Chair)
Councillor S Haraldsen
Councillor J Downie
Councillor G Sunderland
Councillor J Fallows
John Hughes - Strategic Planning Manager (JH)
Alison Earnshaw - Planning Officer – Notes (AE)
Chris Hoban – Senior Planning Officer (CH)
Chris Bamber – Senior Planning Officer (CB)
Louise Kirkup – Senior Planning Officer (LK)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2011

The minutes were formally agreed with the following actions:

- AE to send out the original consultation documents regarding the relaxation of Local Plan policy TCN11 (Primary Frontages) on King Street, Whitehaven to all Councillors. Action carried forward.

ACTION: AE

- Councillors asked JH to check with Building Control how much extra it would cost, per dwelling, to construct to 'Lifetime Homes' Standard. Action carried forward.

ACTION: JH

- Members asked CB to send the consultation questionnaire for the Planning Contributions Framework SPD to all Councillors – Done

2. Apologies for absence – Cllr D Riley, Cllr A Norwood

3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Agenda Items – None

4. Order of Agenda Items - Agenda items to be followed as laid out.

5. Items for which the Press and Public will be Excluded – None (there were no press or public present)

6. Copeland LDF Progress

Relaxation of Local Plan Policy TCN11 (Primary Frontages) on King Street Whitehaven: JH reminded Members that the subject of King Street Primary Frontages needs to be addressed in both the new Core Strategy/Development Management Policies document (2012-2027) as well as the existing Local Plan. Policy DM6 in the new document refers to this subject and a revised version is included in item 6c below which accords with the approach being put forward for the Local Plan. The difference is that the Local Plan change was identified as a short term relaxation whereas now there is a general feeling that the prospects for town centre prosperity are unlikely to improve for many years and that the policy

“headroom” should be incorporated into the local planning regime long term. Consideration of the Local Plan Policy TCN11 changes should still go ahead in accordance with Min C56 of Full Council to ensure the change is incorporated within the current regime as soon as possible. This will involve consultation with all Copeland Councillors prior to a recommendation on 22nd Full Council agenda.

6a. Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-submission Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD

AE introduced the document explaining why it was required and the process of carrying the assessment out. Scott Wilson (consultants) prepared the Scoping Report and had developed the 17 sustainability objectives against which each of the policies in the Core Strategy had been assessed.

Cllr Haraldsen suggested that the ‘very negative’ impact assessed for the nuclear new build development on the proposed ‘Moorside’ site for policy ST3 (page 21) could be considered to be merely ‘negative’ as residents would be used to seeing a large industrial development in that general area. JH added that a ‘very negative’ impact could be used as rationale for planting a Copeland Forest to help soften the impact.

Cllr Haraldsen asked that the source of the 17 Sustainability Objectives be referenced. Currently they are not.

ACTION: AE

Cllr Fallows asked about the timescale for the Sustainability Appraisal. AE explained that the Appraisal would cover the same time period as the Core Strategy i.e. to 2027.

Cllr Clements asked whether the Transport Interchange would go ahead. JH explained that there is a will for it to go ahead and that it is in the County Council’s Local Transport Plan although the funding is not there at the moment.

Cllr Sunderland arrived at 4.28pm.

6b. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Pre-submission Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD

AE introduced the document and the reason that the Council had to prepare it. She also explained that the draft that had been brought to the LDF Working Party was not the final version. Natural England had made some comments as to how the document could be improved and these amendments were in the process of being made. Members agreed to delegate the final approval to officers and the Chairman, once Natural England is happy with the work that has been done.

6c. Localities Chapter for the Core Strategy and Chapter 1

LK gave a short introduction to the Localities chapter and explained that there is a large background paper that will detail the locality profiles currently being prepared. The Localities chapter does not have the weight of policy but merely describes the implications of the policies in the Core Strategy for each of the localities.

Cllr Clements highlighted that there are some references in the Whitehaven and Howgate/Distinguon chapter that are mixed up. These two sections should be double-checked for such errors.

ACTION: LK

Howgate and Distinguon Locality: Cllr Sunderland questioned the use of the term 'A595 Eastern Relief Road/Bypass'. This should be referred to as the 'Eastern Relief Road' for clarity. Cllr Sunderland also commented on the separate settlement boundary around Common End. JH explained that Common End is regarded to be part of the settlement of Distinguon but that to draw one settlement boundary around both would be to include quite a lot of agricultural land. Para 1.2.6 refers to an area called Distinguon West. Cllr Sunderland asked for clarification on where this is. LK explained that the information used to construct the profiles for the localities has been provided for 'Lower Super Output Areas'. These are smaller than electoral wards and are usually made up of about 1500 people. They are generally used for reporting census results.

Whitehaven Locality: Cllr Clements queried whether 'South Whitehaven' was now called 'West Whitehaven'. JH explained that South Whitehaven was Woodhouse and the area to the South. West Whitehaven covers Marchon and the Coastal fringe.

Councillors asked about the likelihood of the Transport Interchange going ahead. JH explained that whilst the funding was not available at the moment, the project is still an aspiration for the town and keeping it in the Core Strategy reflects this. There may be opportunities in the future to argue that major development should help to pay for it. Cllr Clements asked if the Interchange was still included in the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP). AE to send a copy of the LTP out to Councillors.

ACTION: AE

Cllr Sunderland referred to para 1.3.15 and asked if flooding was still a risk in Whitehaven. LK explained that the Flood Risk Assessment has to discount the defences that are currently in place just in case they are ever breached.

Cllr Clements pointed out that on page 16, 'Keels' should be 'Kells' and 'RSLs' are now referred to as 'Registered Providers'.

Cllr Haraldsen made the following points:

- the representation of national retailers in Whitehaven is likely to decrease over time and we would need to make this clear in the Localities Chapter. Currently we do not.
- Para 1.3.10 refers to 'perceived geographical isolation'. The word 'perceived' should be removed from the sentence.
- On page 14, the University of Manchester should be added alongside UCLan.
- Page 21 – remove 'An' from 'An A595 capacity improvements'.

Cllr Haraldsen asked if it is important to make reference to the updated Ward Plans. JH explained that this is not necessary as they had contributed to the Locality Plans.

Councillors voiced concerns that the Localities Chapter may be focussing too much on the deprivation in Whitehaven. The town is a diverse place with affluent and deprived areas in close proximity and this should be made clear.

North East Copeland Locality: Cllr Downie commented that the buses in this locality were possibly not as frequent as suggested, especially in more rural areas such as Lamplugh and Rowrah. Cllr Sunderland asked that this section be updated to reflect this and include detailed and clear information, highlighting the disparity between urban and rural areas.

Cllr Downie referred to the poor state of healthcare provision in Frizington and Arlecdon. With the aging population and new housing development in these areas the healthcare facilities are being stretched and residents now have to go to the surgery at Cleator Moor.

Cllr Sunderland referred to para 1.4.10 and asked what is meant by 'higher rate'. LK explained that this is the higher rate of aging. Cllr Sunderland suggested that this sentence be redrafted for clarity.

Cllr Haraldsen asked that comments about lack of public transport be added to the second bullet point in the 'Accessibility and Transport' box on page 30.

Cllr Haraldsen asked whether it is a good idea to be asking the energy sector to provide a range of transport improvements as part of a 'community package of benefits'. It will be important to be careful about the language that is used in this section.

Para 1.4.4 is worded in such a way as suggests that the Phoenix Enterprise Centre has been in existence since WWII. This is not the case and the sentence should be reworded.

Cllr Fallows pointed out that wave and tidal renewables are mentioned on page 27. As the locality does not have a coast line, only wind and hydro renewables should be referred to.

West Copeland Locality: Cllr Haraldsen asked that the 'Egremont MTI' be expanded to say 'Egremont Market Town Initiative' (page 41).

Mid Copeland Locality: Cllr Clements asked what is meant by the 'potential for some general needs housing allocations' i.e. is this just for people from the Mid Copeland Locality? CB explained that this just means general market housing. The sentence needs to be redrafted for clarity.

South Copeland Locality: Cllr Fallows queried para 1.7.4 stating that Millom and Haverigg provided 10% of Copeland's non-Sellafield jobs. CH explained that there are factory jobs in this area and Haverigg Prison employs a significant number of people.

Councillors agreed to delegate the approval of the final draft of the Localities Chapter to the Chairman and Officers.

Chapter 1: JH explained to Councillors that this chapter still needs some refining and needs to include a section on the Council's approach to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). This chapter must tell the reader that the Council will not be the deciding authority for this type of application. CB has drafted a short **piece** that will be incorporated into Chapter 1. It was agreed that approval of the final draft of Chapter 1 should be delegated to the Chairman and Officers. Cllr Sunderland asked that the names of the localities be updated in Figure 1.1.

Policies ER1 and DM1: NuGen has made some comments on the drafts of the nuclear related policies and this has resulted in some changes to the texts of policies ER1 and DM1. CB explained the changes to Members and said that it is important that our policies cover nuclear developments that are not considered to be NSIPs. The term 'community benefits' has been replaced with 'package of measures' in DM1. Cllr Haraldsen asked that the first sentence of ER1 be revised as it did not read very well anymore.

Policy DM10: Members agreed the addition of new text regarding the storage of bins.

Policy DM6: JH asked Members to agree the new supporting text for Policy DM6. This introduces the relaxation to the policy on King Street (i.e. allowing A1, A2 and A3 uses along the Primary Frontage, where before only A1 uses were permitted, subject to certain safeguards). Cllr Clements made reference to the sentence that says that an empty property would have to be marketed at a reasonable price for 6 months before a non-retail use would be considered and asked who determines the 'reasonable price'? JH explained that no one sets a reasonable price but that Development Management Officers will have to be satisfied with the evidence that the property had been marketed at a rent level/sale value that reflects the value for that location. Members agreed that there was a need to draw Councillors attention to this particular section of supporting text in the report to Full Council in advance of the Local Plan Policy TCN11 relaxation.

Policy DM7: JH asked Members to agree additional wording for the supporting text of DM7 regarding the proximity of takeaways to schools and other educational establishments. No actual distance has been specified but each application will be considered on its own merit. Members approved the addition.

Retail Assessment Addendum Report – JH tabled a report produced by GVA that will act as an addendum to the Retail Assessment carried out by White Young Green (WYG) in 2009. The report confirms that the growth scenarios that WYG used are consistent with the GVA scenarios and therefore Copeland can continue to use the WYG work as part of the evidence base for the LDF i.e. there is no need to update the study. Members agreed this.

- 6d. Village Services Matrix to determine the Local Centres for the LDF** – JH introduced a matrix showing all the smaller settlements in Copeland, providing details on the number and types of services available in each. Cllr Haraldsen said that it was clear that Thornhill was one of the larger settlements with a higher level of services available and therefore should not be considered to be open countryside. Cllr Clements reported that Cllr Riley, after seeing the matrix, agreed that Thornhill should be considered a Local Centre. Members therefore agreed that Thornhill should be included as a Local Centre.

Members highlighted that there were some parts of the matrix that needed to be updated i.e. some bus services now cancelled, the presence of the church at Arlecdon etc. AE to check accuracy of information. Members to bring any amendments to AE.

ACTION: AE

The meeting closed at 6.30pm