

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

### **Minutes of Meeting Held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 9.00am – Nicholson Room**

**Present:** Councillor G Clements (Chair)  
Councillor S Haraldsen  
Councillor D Riley  
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 26 October 2011** – At the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, Cllr Riley had asked if any progress had been made on his suggestion to have a ‘pop up’ from the home page of the Copeland website asking if people want to take part in the Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside SPD consultation. Officers in the Policy team had spoken to Communications who have control over such matters and reported back to the Working Party at the last meeting. The consultation had finished on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and so it was too late to make any changes to the publication of that consultation but the idea would be taken forward for future consultations. Cllr Clements pointed out that he had asked that all Councillors respond to the Town Centre SPD consultation.

Members had asked if it would be necessary to supply a Copeland response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation. Copeland officers had contributed to the joint response coordinated and submitted by Cumbria CC but JH had undertaken to ensure that additional Copeland comments were submitted alongside the County Council joint response following discussion with the Director of People and Places and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Working Party. JH confirmed that additional comments had been made, although these were merely small points.

Councillors asked that an amendment be made to the minutes (under the heading ‘Design SPD: Scoping Paper’) stating that it had been agreed that the Scoping Paper was the basis for the Design SPD.

- 2. Apologies** - Cllr J Downie, Cllr A Norwood
- 3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Agenda Items** – Cllr Sunderland stated he may need to declare a personal interest and would state this if necessary.

- 4. Order of Agenda Items**

Agenda items to be followed as laid out.

- 5. Items for which the Press and Public will be Excluded**

Whilst there were no members of the press or public present at the meeting, JH pointed out that a number of the appendices were on grey paper. The work contained within these documents was not yet complete and, as such, could not be published.

**6. Copeland LDF Progress**

**a. Presentation on the 'Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Deployment Study'**

CH talked Members through the contents of the Renewable Energy Study report. He said that the study had been funded by the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. Barrow was the only authority not to be represented on the steering group, due to resourcing issues. (The study only looked at onshore capacity as offshore turbines are not dealt with within the normal planning system.) The report gives an idea of capacity for each of the Local Authorities in Cumbria to 2030. The total capacity for Cumbria (not taking into account any constraints) is 4542MW and with constraints this figure is reduced to 606MW. The Copeland total is 46MW. The National Park is considered for micro and biomass renewables – mainly small scale hydro schemes.

Recent cuts in the national PV tariff are damaging for Copeland – this would have been a good income stream for us. Cllr Clements said that it was important that Copeland get involved in the manufacture of wind turbines.

The full report is now available in the Planning Policy office. If Members would like to see it or would like their own copy, please get in touch with CH. The LDF Working Group welcomed the study as an additional contribution to the background Evidence Base.

Cllr Haraldsen joined the meeting at 9.40am.

**b. Core Strategy text in relation to Policy ER2 – Planning for the Renewable Energy Sector**

CH took Members through the text of policy ER2 and the related Development Management policy, DM2. The text of the policies has not changed very much from the Preferred Options document but policy DM2 now protects geodiversity as well as biodiversity. The 46MW of capacity in Copeland is an aspiration, not a target. There is no longer a requirement to set targets for renewables in planning documents now that the RSS target has gone.

Cllr Haraldsen said that the current wording of the policy is good as it talks about the visual impact of the development and gives planners more scope to refuse proposals on this basis.

Cllr Clements asked Members if they would like to approve the text of policies ER2 and DM2. JH said that there would be another chance to do so when the consolidated documents are brought back to the Working Party.

**c. Core Strategy Text for the rest of the Economic Opportunity and Regeneration Chapter (ER1, ER3-6) and Associated Development Management Policies (and background and evidence base material in support of these).**

CB took Members through the Employment Land topic paper. This has been prepared for Members and the Inspector so that there is no need for them to read through the extensive evidence base. (The paper will be submitted along with the Core Strategy, as will a number of others, dealing with issues such as nuclear, housing etc.) Members asked that a statement regarding the number of permanent jobs, created by the nuclear new build project, (on page 7) be amended to make it clearer that the 1000 permanent jobs would be 'operation' and not 'construction'.

**ACTION: CB**

The Economic Blueprint will form part of the evidence base for the ER policies too. This has not been brought to Members as it has not been signed off yet and won't be until February. The Core Strategy is not going to Full Council until March. In the meantime we are aware of the information in the Blueprint so we can still use it and be ready for March.

Cllr Sunderland asked if there would be space in the Albion Square for non-nuclear workers. CB explained that there would probably not be but the development in itself would demonstrate that Whitehaven has an office market and this would attract more office developers.

CB explained that Copeland has a lot of employment land – enough to meet current and future needs i.e. both the nuclear supply chain and other unrelated employers.

Cllr Fallows expressed concern that there was nothing in the topic paper for South Copeland and that road and rail connections to and from Sellafield were not adequate. JH responded that the Duddon Estuary barrage had been shown to be unviable but that this may change in the future. Therefore it could appear in a future plan. Cllr Fallows asked for a copy of the Arup Railway Capacity Study.

**ACTION: AE**

Cllr Haraldsen asked about the methodology that had been used for assessing the quality of the land for employment/housing. JH responded that GVA had merely used the same methodology as that employed by DTZ when they carried out a similar study in 2008.

CB took members through policies ER1 and ER3-6. ER1 and ER4, 5 and 6 are more or less the same as they were in the Preferred Options. The revised ER3 is more complex than the Preferred Options version and sets out how we will approach commenting on nuclear new build and the grid applications.

The funding for Albion Square is coming from BECWC but the private sector has to fund the actual construction of the offices. Sellafield might want to use the offices but they probably won't want to actually build them. The Council have no control over any of this and can only make the land available.

CB briefly took Members through the Nuclear New Build Legacy Strategy. It expresses how the Council would like to see nuclear new build taking place. It also suggests where off site development can happen. Cllr Clements said that the document mentions Workington port but not Barrow. CB responded that Workington is closer but Barrow might be an option. JH added that Members did not have to agree the Legacy Strategy straight away and that it would continue to develop over time. Cllr Clements added that it would be very important to retain the statement no. 10 on page 9 of the Strategy – 'To ensure that the benefits (including financial contributions) are enjoyed by local communities and that there are lasting benefits to mitigate against the loss of economic activity which will follow the departure of the construction workforce.' It is vital that this principle gets passed down the supply chain. CB responded that something would be put in place that ensures that NuGen are held responsible for making sure that all contractors and subcontractors sign up to this principle.

Cllr Fallows added that it was important that local people get access to the construction jobs. CB said that he would have to check what regulations govern these issues now.

There is a desire to improve the road infrastructure to the South of the borough although the workforce should be transported on buses – there is potential for park and ride facilities. (Hinkley Point has two park and ride facilities).

It is important that the Council learns from the mistake that Somerset made i.e. they wrote their policy as if they would be the deciding authority and with no evidence behind the text. The Inspector gave EDF's lawyers the opportunity to rewrite the policy and they took it.

**d. Whitehaven Town Centre Primary Frontages – amendment to Local Plan Policy TCN11**

JH tabled copies of a report that had been brought to an earlier LDF Working Party meeting on the relaxation of the uses on King Street. Although the Working Party had approved the changes to the adopted policy it had not been approved at Full Council. This was due to concerns about takeaways opening up as ancillary uses to new A3 units that would be allowed under the relaxed policy. JH asked for clarification from Members as to what had been agreed at Full Council as to how to proceed. Cllr Clements said that it had been decided to come back to the issue in six months to see if circumstances improve in that time. There was, however, some uncertainty about this and it was agreed that JH would look back at the minutes of the meeting with Tim Capper.

**ACTION: JH**

It is important to be sure what had been decided because, currently, there is no relaxation in the equivalent new LDF policy DM6. Members will have to make a decision on what to recommend to Full Council at the next LDF Working Party. JH will speak to Cllr Clements about this in more detail in the meantime.

**ACTION: JH**

JH added that it would probably be possible to stop ancillary A5 uses springing up through the use of conditions.

Cllrs Riley and Haraldsen left the meeting at 11.50am

**e. Neighbourhood Planning Regulations Consultation**

JH took Members through the consultation on the new Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. There is a lot of information missing as yet, making it very hard to understand how the process will work. There is a need for a Code of Practice or some guidance to be produced.

JH is to complete the response form along the lines discussed at the meeting and submit this to DCLG following consultation with Cllr Clements.

**ACTION: JH**

LK said that it would be important to find out what involvement planning officers would have in the neighbourhood planning process i.e. consultation of statutory consultees etc. There is some uncertainty around this as well as sources of funding at the moment.

LK also informed Members that a new version of the draft SPD for Whitehaven Harbour and Town Centre would be brought to the LDF Working Party in the new year – perhaps to the 26<sup>th</sup> January meeting but subject to the level of other business likely.

The meeting closed at 1.15pm