

Copeland Local Development Framework Working Party Meeting

Minutes of Meeting Held on 1st September 2011

Present: Councillor G Clements (Chair)
Councillor S Haraldsen
Councillor D Riley
Councillor G Sunderland
John Hughes - Strategic Planning Manager (JH)
Chris Hoban - Senior Planning Policy Officer (CH)
Alison Earnshaw - Planning Officer – Notes (AE)

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2011** – Cllr Clements signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.
2. **Apologies** - 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
6. **Matters arising including Cllr Haraldsen's subsequent points**

JH said that he had received comments on the Core Strategy Strategic Policies section from Cllr Haraldsen and gave some clarification on a question raised regarding the development proportions in policy ST2. He explained that there was no magic formula for deciding what proportions of development should go to the different settlements but that we had calculated the percentages according to the relative size and role of each of the main towns of Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom. There is also concern about allowing for development in very small settlements and in general there needs to be a concentration towards larger settlements for sustainability reasons.

Issues raised following Councillors' Training Day:

There was some discussion about the LDF training and the Council's ability to control the amount of development coming forward. JH made the point that the market would not support much development at the moment and there was not a lot the Council could really do about that.

Another issue raised on the training day was the possible benefits of having one LDF for the whole of Copeland i.e. one LDF that covers the parts of the borough that are inside as well as outside of the National Park. JH explained that this would very unlikely to happen. The National Park Authority provides its own planning service to protect and enhance the special characteristics of the Park, while LDFs outside of the Park boundary (e.g. in the remainder of Copeland) are designed to support communities in the whole of the borough by providing housing, employment, services etc. and taking some development pressure off the Park. It should be noted that some limited development is allowed in the Park (equivalent to 6 dwellings per annum in the Copeland part of the Park). By working in this way it is expected that both LDFs will be complementary and this has been our experience to date.

Actions arising from minutes:

JH to speak to Tim Capper to organise LDF training day for Members – **Done**

JB to speak to Cllr Woodburn about the fact that there are no women on the LDF Working Party. JB did speak to Pat Graham and Cllr Woodburn. They acknowledged that this was the case but wanted to keep the membership as it is for now. **Done**

CB to revise the beginning of Section 2 of the Strategy for Infrastructure as Cllr Clements felt that it had been stated in rather negative terms. JH explained that the next draft of the Strategy for Infrastructure would be brought back to the Working Party to be signed off and that the necessary changes would be made in time for this.

CB to find out if coastal erosion in Mid Copeland was identified as an issue in the Shoreline Management Plan 2 – see above.

CB to amend the definitions of green infrastructure in the document as they are different on page 13 and page 29 of the document. Additionally Copeland Homes were not mentioned in the document as an owner of green infrastructure. CB has got a meeting with Copeland Homes next week where this issue will be discussed.

Cllr Haraldsen to send his comments on the Strategic Policies from the draft Core Strategy to JH – **Done**

7. Update on the Economic Blueprint

Consultants, GVA, have been commissioned by BECWC (using NDA money) to carry out an 'economic blueprint' study for West Cumbria. As this information will feed into Copeland's and Allerdale's LDFs, we are the clients and Steve Smith is the client officer for Copeland.

In addition to the economic blueprint the County Council are carrying out a socio-economic analysis as part of the commission. The County officers involved are Ginny Murphy and Frank Peck. They are working on a population projection model and therefore should be able to

provide economic and housing projections for the area. We will be basing our forecasts and scenarios in the Core Strategy on this (and this is important as we no longer have the RSS) and until the work is completed this remains a gap in our Core Strategy.

Members raised the question as to how the planning team would deal with the uncertainty of having or not having nuclear new build at Sellafield. JH explained that this would be handled by having different scenarios – plan A and plan B etc. The decision on whether to allow a new power station/connection to the Grid will be taken by the Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (MIPU). Traditional planning decisions relating to any additional development required to support the requirements of any nuclear new build (e.g. housing for construction workers) will be made by Copeland Borough Council.

The proposed power station at Hinckley is 2 years ahead of us in the process and the policies in the Sedgemoor Core Strategy that relate to the nuclear development have been challenged by EDF. We can learn lessons from the progress made in Somerset. So far we have been taught that it is much more important to get early accord with the developer and we are already working towards this.

There has been some delay with the GVA work as Sellafield did not get their workforce projections to the consultants until about 2 weeks ago. This is going to lead to slippage on the LDF delivery schedule. Cllr Clements asked what would be the implications of slippage. JH responded that there are no financial penalties, which there may have been in the past (e.g. a reduction in Planning Delivery Grant) and that the result of any slippage may only be embarrassment. JH went on to explain that there are other things that could cause slippage too – namely the new National Planning Policy Framework (currently being consulted upon). The Localism Bill, when it becomes law, will introduce neighbourhood plans and these will need a LDF to be in conformity with. Cllr Clements said that he had some slides on the Localism Bill and a Plain English guide to Localism if anyone wanted to see them.

JH said that there was a need to bring a paper to the Working Party on the National Planning Framework as the consultation for this ends on 17th October 2011. Therefore, a paper will be brought to the next meeting.

JH took Members through the LDS timetable and discussed when the team would be able to bring the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs to Full Council. A Full Council is already planned for 1st December but the documents may be ready to go to a special Full Council on 10th November if Members preferred this. Cllrs Riley and Clements felt that the subject was large enough and important enough to warrant a special Full Council. JH suggested that the Working Party meet again on the 29th September 2011 when this issue can be discussed further and this was agreed. If the GVA work is ready in the next couple of weeks then both DPDs should be able to go out to public consultation in Dec/Jan. However, if there are delays in producing the evidence base it may be that a special meeting of Full Council will need to be arranged for the new year to approve the final documents.

8. Update on Budgetary Matters

JH took Members through the budget for Planning Policy from 2011/12 to 2013/14 and explained where savings had been and could be made, what money needed to be spent, where various sums of money had come from etc. JH explained that he thought it was important that he shared this with Members and would come back to the Working Party with it again once he, Cllr Clements and Julie Betteridge had spoken to Finance about the savings that could be made. Cllr Riley said that he was happy that JH had shown that Planning Policy could make, and was making, savings.

9. Relaxation of Local Plan policy on King Street Whitehaven frontages (TCN11)

CH introduced the reasons behind the request to relax the policy and the consultation that had been agreed by the previous LDF Working Party in March 2011. AE then gave a brief summary of the consultees' responses to the various questions asked. Cllr Haraldsen voiced some concern regarding the fact that even though consultees had shown a strong preference for applying the relaxed policy to all vacant units, even those that had just become empty, the suggested wording of the policy introduced some controls including a period of time where the unit would have to be marketed for at least 6 months before the relaxation would apply. AE explained that it was important that some controls were put in place and that the period of marketing was very reduced at only 6 months (consultees had been asked about periods of 2 and 3 years). Additionally the 6 months period had been suggested by a senior officer in the Development Management department. Cllr Haraldsen said that he was happy with this explanation.

Members were then asked to endorse the new wording for policy TCN 11 outlined in the report to take forward as a recommendation to Full Council to approve a change in the Local Plan Policy. This was agreed.

10. Core Strategy text: Chapters on Transport and the Environment

JH took members through the changes that had been made to policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents. Members were given the opportunity to discuss the changes and ask questions but no comments were made. These policies will go forward as drafted into the pre-submission drafts of the documents.

CH informed Members that the Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside SPD Issues and Options document would be ready to be brought to the next Working Party on the 29th September.

11. Any Other Business – Member training on the LDF

Members were concerned about the uncertainty of whether nuclear new build was happening and how this would impact on the preparation of the LDF. They suggested it might be a good idea to have meetings with Parish Councillors and other interested parties on a locality by locality basis so that they would be aware of the issues covered in the Core Strategy and how they were tackled before the Full Council meeting. JH explained that members of the Planning Policy team had already been working with Localities Officers on the contents of the Localities chapter. However, JH will talk to the Committee team, Julie Betteridge and Pat Graham and if such meetings can be arranged then we will try to do it.

Cllr Clements suggested that Overview and Scrutiny should be a part of the consultation process on the LDF. JH explained that there had already been two major rounds of consultation on the two DPDs and that there will be another consultation before they are submitted to the Secretary of State. JH also said that Overview and Scrutiny could be consulted on the process of preparing and LDF but not necessarily the contents of the plan itself. Cllr Clements asked that a letter be sent to Jessica Hall, Scrutiny Support Officer, to bring the consultation to the attention of Overview and Scrutiny. AE to add Jessica Hall to LDF consultation database.

ACTION: AE

12. Next meeting – 29th September 2011, 5.00pm, Bainbridge Room

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

