

Local Plan member working group

19 February 2014

1.0 Present

Cllr Malcolm Smith (Chair)
Cllr Michael Slee
Cllr Sheila Orchard
Cllr Michael Holliday
Cllr Grattan Bowen
Cllr David Huxley
Cllr Margaret Clark
Cllr Hugh Harrison
Gwyn Clark
Paul Fellows
Cameron Austin-Fell
Samantha Bradley

1.1 Apologies

Cllr Andrew Connell
Cllr Chris Harrison (deputised by Cllr Huxley)

1.2 Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as a true record.

1.3 Points for clarity

- Housing target it 'completed' dwellings and we can't control what is actually built. A Member briefing on 5 year land supply implications in planned for March.
- The timescale between Executive and Adoption is so long due to consultations and Examination in Public process- out of our hands.
- Kirkoswald may be removed from the Key Hub list due to the railway station being located miles away.
- Grammatical error at bottom of page 52 of Housing Distribution Technical paper.

1.4 Housing Target

Background and introduction

Need to update housing target due to introduction of NPPF, loss of RSS and out of date evidence. It's the first time LA's have developed their own targets- have to meet *objectively assessed need*- there's no guidance how to do this and inspectors are inconsistent.

Steps in developing a housing target:

1. Evidence Base

Government Projections:

2008: 189 households per annum

2011: 125 households per annum

Proposed Target: 190 dwellings (not households) per annum – derived from splitting the difference between the 2008 and 2011 figures and converting from households to dwellings.

Cumbria County Council POPGroup projections: No surprises from this- all population growth in Eden will be from in migration.

2. Policy aspirations

190 figure has been increased slightly to ensure those in need locally could have an affordable house in 5 years and in-migrants (from projections) are catered for.

In doing this we have considered:

- Whether we should have a higher figure to attract job growth
- Have we accounted for the shortfall from previous years
- Is there a market for more or less housing
- Do we have any duty to cooperate issues (to meet our neighbours need)

3. Reality checks

- Can the market deliver (considering low development rates of recent times)
- Is there the demand and is there available land

4. Summary

A target of 197 per annum has been suggested- this is lower than the current target but above projections. This figure could be argued up or down- need to remain aspirational without causing 5 year land supply issues.

Clarification of points

- An expert is to review technical information and ensure soundness of argument.
- Any schemes in the 'pipe line' (in the 5 year supply of sites) will be taken off the total target figure for the plan period before sites are allocated.
- Figure is a target and not a cap, and gives a justification for refusing unsuitable applications.
- Affordable housing target (30%) is based on district wide viability evidence (from 2009). Through the development management process there's flexibility for developers to negotiate this based on site specific viability- to lower the target would require evidence, and it's not felt would increase house building rates.
- Social housing is included as affordable housing, and the percentage of each will be determined at application stage based on need.
- The council can't legally limit who can buy a house/ whether it can be bought for a second home unless it is an affordable house with occupancy restrictions (section 106). Limiting all new housing to local occupancy (as in LDNP) couldn't be justified and would massively reduce housing development rates.

Policies

1.5 Reuse of traditional buildings

More flexible approach proposed, but not a free for all.

Reasons to have a less restrictive policy (allow conversions outside of main towns and settlements without it being affordable housing):

- Large number of traditional buildings in the district
- NPPF calls for more flexibility
- Scrutiny review- Members keen for more flexibility
- Potential change to Permitted Development/ Change of use rights
- Requiring Affordable housing may jeopardise design and character

Comments

- Potential for high income generation for the local economy- increased Council Tax, NHB, 3% AH contribution, employment of local people (good skillset in the area for such).
- Permitted development rights would be removed to ensure impact on the landscape is minimal and managed.
- Government reforms may dissolve the need for this policy.

1.6 Renovation in Alston Moor

Similar to the reuse policy but with more flexibility for less structurally sound buildings/ piles of stones. Design and character more of an issue given AONB- will have to adhere to AONB planning guidelines and design guide at Development Management stage.

Members agreed the policy was well written and suited to Alston given its unique issues, and stressed the importance of modern building standards internally.

1.7 Tourism Accommodation Policy

Strong support for tourism in the NPPF and through Cumbria LEP.

Proposed policy would allow non-permanent holiday accommodation outside of locational strategy if it is well screened, and permanent holiday accommodation in line with locational strategy.

Planning permission would be required to remove occupancy restrictions for full time residential occupation.

1.8 SWOT

The SWOT analysis was presented and the following points were raised:

- Broadband could be perceived as an opportunity and a weakness as, despite recent rural outreach schemes promoted by BT and the Alston Cybermoor project, many rural areas have not yet benefitted from upgrades.
- Many young people would not stay in the area even if housing was more affordable and wages were higher, as often the draws to of the city lead to losses of younger persons which are never replaced. PF noted that the area is desirable due to its charm, low crime and good schools. Whilst 18 year olds may leave, the aim is to encourage young families to the area. The vision is a form of marketing which can be used to draw on the assets in the district and push the area to prospective age grounds.
- The Local Plan is not able to encourage reduced business rates, so that average wages could be increased.

- The issue of ageing population is perceived as a threat due to the impact on the functioning of healthcare services. However, inward migration of all ages ensure vitality of the district as local economies will be supported by additional population. The increase in First Responders as a method of emergency care in rural areas was noted.
- The prevalence of wind turbines in the district is perceived as a threat to local tourism. PF advised that the Local Plan is the appropriate mechanism to ensure a balanced approach for the district, which would help direct development accordingly.

1.9 Vision

The vision was presented and the following comments made:

- The vision for the area may not be what is there now, but how we want to encourage these areas to grow in the next 15 years.
- Eden Communities team encompass tourism and economic development and take a steer of the many local organisations promoting similar objectives.
- In relation to the Appleby vision it was noted that the town is short in industrial areas.
- It was noted that in many of the towns there is a need for additional green space, which can be difficult for new developments to include- the KS town plan specifically noted the need for new green spaces in the town.

1.10 Next steps

Next meeting- 5 March 2014

- Feedback from second meeting
- Development Management policies
- Employment strategy
- The consultation process- MS highlighted press releases and BBC Cumbria as consultation tools he has found effective. These were noted, and will be considered in the next session.