

Local Plan member working group

5 March 2014

1.0 Present

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

1.1 Apologies

Cllr Andrew Connell
Cllr Hugh Harrison

1.2 Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as a true record.

1.3 Feedback from last meeting

Housing Targets

PF informed that the housing target had increased slightly from 197 per annum to 200 per annum, due to technical reasons. This is less than current target and there's already high level of developer interest so it should be more deliverable. Evidenced case will be needed to convince an inspector at Examination in Public as many plans recently have been found unsound due to low housing targets- the figure is above population projections, is above what we have been delivering and, with only one national house builder in the area, and is considered deliverable.

Alston

PF met with Alston parish Council, who are happy with the proposed Alston reuse policy but are progressing a Neighbourhood Area Application in the meantime.
Kirkby Stephen

The Town Council have submitted a Town Plan which is being taken into account when drafting the Local Plan.

Bolton

Bolton Parish has been approved by EDC Executive as a Neighbourhood Area.

1.4 Policy RUR4- Employment Development and Farm Diversification in Rural Areas

There will be no separate policy on Live Work Units- this policy and Reuse of Traditional Buildings (RUR2) will be used to assess Live Work applications.

The Upper Eden approach to allowing new builds on farms hasn't been included as it is too unrestrictive. An agricultural workers dwelling policy will still exist.

1.5 Policy HS1- Affordable Housing

Policy is based on existing policy/ SPD. In Towns and Key hubs there will be a requirement for 30% affordable housing (up to date evidence will be needed to justify this). In Villages and Hamlets some market housing will be allowed to cross subsidise affordable housing (developments of one unit will be affordable). In rural areas 100% affordable housing will be required. All affordable housing will be restricted to local occupancy. Where a developer submits a viability test to justify a reduced level of affordable housing, the Council pays for this to be assessed by consultants from the affordable housing pot (made up from 3% contributions).

3% affordable housing contribution will be required on market housing schemes- unsure whether an inspector will approve this as it's a tariff and should be done through Community Infrastructure Levy. Considering waiving the 3% contribution for conversions of traditional buildings/ self builds- however there is concern that this would mean missing out on a lot of potential income as such would be high value developments. 3% contribution will be better publicised, as it will be in the Local Plan and not just the SPD.

1.6 Policy RUR2- Reuse of Traditional Buildings

Executive feedback to Scrutiny Review on the reuse of traditional buildings included a recommendation for the location requirements to be firmer (point 7 of the policy). Current policy wording allows for flexibility to approve reasonable proposals and allows a professional officer judgement. Following the publication of the executive minutes Cllr Slee and Gwyn Clark will review the policy to ensure the recommendations from Executive are reflected. Good design is seen as the key to the policy.

The implications on the attractiveness of the area following if maintenance grants for barns were stopped was discussed.

1.7 Policy HS4- Older people and support

Possibility of allowing affordable housing off site and waiving on site contribution for housing build for the elderly (and restricted by condition), in order to increase amount of development. Concern raised around segregation and non-inclusive communities.

1.8 Policy HS5- Self build

Proposed policy is supported as a mechanism for delivering relatively affordable houses.

1.9 Policy ENV5- Wind Energy

Current policy in Core Strategy encompasses all renewable energies- the proposed wind energy policy will be supplemented by a more general renewables policy. Proposed policy seen as too generous and not going far enough to protect tourism, the environment and economy, and not taking into account Scrutiny review/ recommendations. Buffer zones were discussed and will be looked into further- concern over legality of these. Conditions already exist for the removal of unused turbines on all permissions. Members would support hydroelectric schemes; however

these are limited due to their environmental impacts specifically on SSSI's/ SAC's. Essential to ensure policy is in line with national policy.

1.10 Employment

For the purpose of the employment sites and policies document published in 2013 the Core Strategy target of 50ha to 2025 was used. Since then the employment forecasts have shown much less land is needed, and the bare minimum needed is now 3.73ha (gross). We have more than enough land to meet this and can allocate more- important as the forecasts were done in a recession. This reduced target doesn't mean less housing is needed- we need housing that's affordable to retain young people, ensure job growth and meet the demand from immigration.

Economic development colleagues are producing development briefs for employment sites so even if they aren't allocated we will welcome development and have a brief ready.

Proposed preferred sites for allocation in Penrith are- Newton Rigg, Gilwilly extension and Skirsgill (Council land). Other sites won't be allocated but will be priorities for chasing funding/ investment (e.g. Eden Business Park phase 2 and sites to the south). The LEP want to know our priority sites in order to direct any funding. Junction 41 would still be supported by the council but it's recognised how difficult it would be to develop given the constraints, and it would be most suitable for a single user.

1.11 Consultation

It was suggested that the following consultation methods were added to what had been done for the housing/ employment consultations:

- Parish magazines- these have long lead in times.
- Building rate/ council tax bills- inform of impending consultation in these.
- Target ward councillors and not just parish councils (especially in Penrith).
- Do presentations at drop in events.
- Use Radio Cumbria.

1.12 Next steps

Another meeting will be organised to discuss the housing site allocation in particular. Dates will be circulated when available.