

Minutes of Joint Working Group for Crossways and Moreton Meeting - 3rd May 2018 – Westport House, Wareham

Attendees:

Nigel Bundy (NB) (Chair) – WDDC Councillor
Peter Wharf (PW) (Vice-Chairman) – PDC and DCC councillor
Alan Thacker (AT) – WDDC Councillor
Cherry Brooks (CB) – PDC Councillor
Laura Miller - PDC Councillor.
Andrew Brewer (AB) - Crossways Parish Council
Phil Brinson (PB) – Moreton Parish Council
Mike Garrity (MG) – DCC Planning (County Planning, Minerals and Waste Team Leader)
Trevor Badley (TB) – DCC Minerals (Planning Policy Manager)
Terry Sneller (TS) – DCP Planning
Ken Bean (KB) – PDC Planning
Steve Boyt – PDC Planning

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of last meeting (5th December 2017) and any matters arising

The minutes were agreed. No other matters arising raised.

3. Update on Unitary Authorities

Cllr Wharf provided an update explaining that the consequence of delays by MHCLG in making the vesting order meant that in the limited time available efforts would need to focus on ensuring that the new authority was legal, safe and operational. The Structural Change Order stating that there will be 82 councillors in the new authority 'Dorset Council' is anticipated shortly enabling the Shadow Authority and Shadow Executive to be set up that would operate in parallel alongside the existing councils up until 9th April 2019 with elections for the new authority due to take place on 2nd May 2019.

The Shadow Authority is being set up to prepare for the new authority and will consist of 206 council seats across the Dorset Area, but accounting for twin hatted Members, this equates to 175 councillors. It will have a shadow executive committee of 20 members providing a balance of representation from the Dorset Area and appoint a Shadow Executive which would then take charge of the vast majority of the transition function and agree the new Council's budget. The first meeting is expected to take place in mid-June.

A warding task and finish group is looking into changes to ward boundaries as part of local government re-organisation. The group will make recommendations for the

Boundary Commission to consider before elections in May 2019. The group is considering reducing the number of wards to 82 (an equal split between each level) across the county: public consultation anticipated July / August. If the boundary commission does not agree the changes the existing ward structure (with 2 members for each) will be taken forward into the new councils. The task and finish group's will be presented to all Councillors in July. Cllr Wharf offered to give a fuller presentation at the next meeting.

The joint working group briefly discussed possible ward boundaries around: Crossways, Moreton and Wool, and whether Moreton would be likely to fall inside the same ward as Crossways.

4. Updates of Local Plan progress

Dorset County Council

TB provided an update on the publication of the Draft Minerals Sites Plan and the Draft Waste Plan. Following a period for representations, both plans were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for examination. No changes had been issued for consultation to either plan in the light of representations made which had been forwarded to PINS for consideration at the respective examinations.

To assist the respective Inspectors and inform discussions at the respective examinations, DCC would, in the light of representations made, where considered necessary produce a list of proposed changes. If accepted by the Inspector, proposed modifications would then need to be formally consulted on following the hearing sessions.

PINS had appointed separate Inspectors to examine each plan and hearing dates (26 to 28 June) had already been set for the Waste Plan (Nick Palmer is the Inspector for the Waste Plan). The Inspector for the minerals examination had also been appointed, (Elizabeth Ord - the same Inspector who considered the Minerals Strategy, adopted in May 2014), although hearing dates had not yet been set, it was anticipated would take place in Dorchester during September.

The format of plan examinations, (Inspector led structured discussions focussing on outstanding issues and therefore much less formal than old style inquiries), was explained. Prior to the hearing sessions all who had made representations on each draft plan would be notified of the matters that the respective Inspectors wished to discuss and afforded an opportunity to produce statements addressing these issues. Also, through the programme officer appointed to assist the Inspector in ensuring the smooth running of the examination, parties seeking modifications to the plan would be invited to attend the hearing sessions to give oral evidence.

ACTION: DCC to notify all of hearing dates for the waste plan and mineral sites plan once advertised

West Dorset District Council

TS gave a presentation (circulated with these minutes) updating on the West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Review. The plan has reached Preferred Options stage with the intention to consult for an 8 week period from 13th August until 8th October.

In terms of housing need, applying the Government's new standard methodology resulted in a slight increase to 780 dwellings per annum compared with 775 in the current plan. Having assessed the current supply, there is a need to allocate sites to deliver around 3,000 new homes however the intention is to allocate an additional amount to build flexibility within the supply.

TS explained the ongoing site selection work focussing on new allocations and in particular the strategy for Crossways. In relation to Crossways attention is being focussed on sites south of the railway as the large site to the north with estimated capacity for c5000 dwellings is considered undeliverable over the plan period. TS stated that Dorset Councils Partnership (DCP) were considering allocating land to deliver a further 730 homes (at: Frome Valley Road, Woodsford Fields, and West of Crossways). 500 homes have been given planning permission through the existing local plan on a site to the south of Warmwell Road. TS provided further detail on the infrastructure that DCP considered was needed to support the new homes (including: SANGS, identifying Crossways as a Local Centre, improved transport links between the village and the railway station and to the West Stafford bypass and contributions towards school provision across the pyramid).

AB and Cllr Bundy expressed the firm view that Crossways did not need extra homes and, just because it had fewer constraints, should not necessarily be continually expected to accommodate homes that other places were not able / prepared to provide. They noted that it felt as though the new homes being considered for Crossways would give it the character of a town. Taking account of growth at Moreton, strong concerns were expressed around the impacts on infrastructure – particularly traffic congestion and the lack of services and facilities. It was highly likely that Crossways would effectively become a larger dormitory settlement for Dorchester. AB stated that the level and nature of engagement with the developer had been far from satisfactory – to date no proper consultation with the Parish Council had taken place.

Cllrs Thacker and Wharf noted that the new homes being considered in Crossways were also likely to have some impact on the surrounding local roads (Cllr Wharf noted the junction at Waddock Cross in particular, as well as a section of the B3390 which runs through Affpuddle to the junction with the A35). Cllr Brooks stated that the County Council was reviewing the capacity of the local highway network and would be considering possible improvements to the network of local roads and as well as mitigation measures.

TS explained that, in terms of funding for transport infrastructure improvements, Central Government are making amounts available to bid for where facilitating the delivery of new homes.

Changes from the existing plan would also be made in order to take account of proposed policy changes signalled in the consultation draft revisions NPPF once published in its final form which is anticipated this summer.

In relation to the draft NPPF, and particularly mindful that shortly to become one authority, Cllr Wharf requested that both District Councils and the County Council liaise to seek to ensure that as far as possible consistent, and certainly not contradictory, consultation responses be sent to MHCLG.

ACTION: DCC, WDDC and PDC officers to check responses to the draft NPPF for consistency

Purbeck District Council

KB outlined the timetable in order to ensure that the Purbeck Local Plan is submitted to PINS for examination before the end of March 2019. To meet this date it would be necessary to draft the plan over Spring / Summer and then, following Council approval, publish for the statutory 6 week period for representations in early November.

Given the prospect of local government re-organisation Cllr Wharf asked officers to make preparations for the examination of the Purbeck Local Plan after the new councils had been formed in April 2019. In particular he stated that it would be important for the councils to consider who would be best placed to attend the examination on Purbeck's new local plan and respond to questions relating to the evidence/new plan.

PDC were pleased with the response rate to the recent New Homes for Purbeck consultation with nearly 7000 returns to the questionnaire sent to each household (including those in Crossways) and c1000 respondent telephone survey. Results and analysis from the consultation had recently been published which PDC would now need to take account of drafting the publication version of the Purbeck Local Plan.

KB briefly summarised the key findings from the consultation which were as follows:

- Of the 3 options consulted on, a preference for allocating sites in accordance with option A spreading future development across the District. KB noted that, particularly in the light of the draft NPPF, (raising the bar for demonstrating exceptional circumstances), it was likely that PDC would need to undertake more work in order to be able to robustly justify any Green Belt releases.
- Strong support for inclusion of a second homes policy – consideration needing to be given to geographical extent of coverage and treatment of holiday lets.
- Support for inclusion of a small sites policy – consideration needing to be given as to how the policy is couched i.e. taking a proportionate approach mindful of cumulative impacts, and stipulation of any threshold site size figure.
- Affordable housing policy approach - discussion of social rented percentage and prioritisation of low cost market housing for those with local connections and key workers.

AB from Crossways Parish Council expressed gratitude for being formally included in the consultation. He also noted this as an example of co-operation and joint working between councils. AB also noted that the impacts from the new homes on the sites at Redbridge Pit and Moreton Station would need to be addressed in Crossways. For these reasons AB suggested that the majority of section 106 contributions, and CIL, collected from development at these sites should be directed toward Crossways rather than Moreton.

Cllr Bundy noted that the sites Purbeck District Council (PDC) is considering at Redbridge Pit and Moreton Station were closely related to Crossways. As a consequence the occupants of the homes were likely to make use of the services/facilities in the village as well as the surrounding infrastructure. Cllr Bundy suggested that officers in DCP and Purbeck PDC should collaborate to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to planning the new homes and addressing the cumulative impacts from development in Purbeck and West Dorset.

PB (Parish Councillor) explained that Moreton had a small population which would not generate large number of responses to PDC's latest consultation. Cllr Miller reassured PB that the Council had taken note of all responses and processed the information in way which allowed PDC to take note of how local people felt about the options for new homes which was likely to have the greatest effect on their community.

In discussion DCC, WDDC and PDC officers made reference to another proposal arising from the NPPF, the need to produce with neighbouring authorities a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), production of which was being discussed at the Strategic Planning Forum meetings. KB noted that in Purbeck's case two iterations of this document would be needed – the first one pre LGR to accompany publication of draft plan and to go to PINS as part of the submission package of supporting documentation. Then at examination stage, post LGR, a revised SoCG reflecting the situation with the two unitary authorities having been established.

5. Any other business

None

6. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 12th July 4.30pm at South Walks House Dorchester