

Commencing: 6.00pm
19 July 2004
Bourne Hill
Salisbury

MINUTES

Present

Councillor P D Edge (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs E A Chettleburgh (Vice Chairman)
Councillor A J A Brown-Hovelt
Councillor Mrs J A Green
Councillor J B Hooper
Councillor Ms S C Mallory
Councillor L Randall
Councillor J M Walsh
Councillor S R Fear (substituting for Councillor I Tomes)
P Roquette (Agenda21 Representative)
R Bryder (Agenda21 Representative)

In Attendance

E Teagle (SDC)
J Meeker (SDC)
J Iles (SDC)
S Draper (SDC)

Apologies

Councillor Mrs C A Spencer
Councillor P M Clegg
Councillor A G Peach
Councillor I R Tomes

Public/Observers

I

69. Public Questions/Statements

There were no public questions or statements

70. Councillor Questions/Statements

Councillor Randall stated that he had several concerns about the designation of the New Forest as a National Park. His main concern was that the reduced boundary now excluded Landford from the New Forest designation area whereas it was previously included as part of the New Forest. The areas within the old designated area were afforded protection from overdevelopment. Grazing rights were also restricted in those areas. Councillor Randall stated that he had attended a meeting with the Secretary of State (Alun Michael) and had been informed that local authorities must now provide some protection for this land. Councillor Randall felt that the policies protecting this land must be introduced alongside the new policy governing the National Park to ensure that the edge of the former forest was not left vulnerable.

John Meeker, Principal Planning Officer, stated that he had attended a meeting at New Forest District Council where he was informed that a joint New Forest Plan covering the designated areas in New Forest, Test Valley and Salisbury District was to be created to protect these areas. He further informed members that the previous Local Plan policy protection measures would remain in place until at least 2005, after which time the new proposals from a National Park Authority would begin to emerge. Members were also informed that the New Forest was an area that had already been highlighted for attention when the new Local Development Framework was drawn up.

The Chairman confirmed that the resolution at the last meeting to review the changes made to the planning application process was to include not only a review of the speed with which applications were processed but also to examine issues of the quality of both the service and the results if Councillors so wished.

71. Minutes

Following the insertion of Councillor Mrs Green's name into the attendance list, the minutes of the meeting of 10 June 2004 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

73. [Sustainability Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)

Members of the Planning & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the report of the Planning Officer (previously circulated). During a discussion the following points were raised:

- Members felt that this was a very important policy.
- Members sought clarification as to the type and size of development that this checklist would be applied to. The planning officer informed the panel that all minor applications, including FASTRACK applications, would be expected to have regard to this checklist. However, he stated that national policy covered issues of sustainability for major developments as each major development was required to have a design statement covering these issues. Major applications would be expected to include far more evidence of sustainability considerations and much more sophisticated schemes than the checklist could capture.
- Members asked how much weight this checklist was given in determining an application and if it was possible to refuse an application on the strength of the checklist. The Planning Officer stated that the checklist was not compulsory therefore an application could not be refused solely on the strength of the checklist. However, a consideration of sustainability issues was compulsory according to existing Local Plan policies and therefore an application could be refused because it had not adequately resolved those issues. The checklist had been designed as a useful tool for applicants to prove that they had complied with sustainability policies but it was feasible that a minor application could comply with such a policy without having used the checklist.
- Members questioned how much extra work this might create for officers. The Planning Officer replied that it would create some extra work for officers but that the long-term benefits of the improvement in developments justified the extra work. The checklist was designed to act as a tool to consider issues that should already have been addressed according to Local Plan policy, so in theory this was not an extra task.
- A question was raised as to whether the County Council would be adopting similar practices. The planning officer stated that this particular document only applied to planning applications within the Salisbury area however the County Council did have a policy of its own.
- Members were interested in whether officers felt that this would help SDC to raise the standard of developments. The Planning Officer stated that this would play a part in raising standards. However, he emphasised that this was only a statement of what the Council would like, how developers answered it was at their discretion. He added that it did give the local authority more weight to demand these measures.
- A scheme was suggested whereby applications be graded gold, silver and bronze to indicate the level of sustainability built into the scheme. The Head of Forward Planning and Transportation stated that the grading system was something that the department could look into.
- A comment was raised about the necessity of making specific policies mandatory in areas with specific problems. For example consideration of measures to alleviate flooding should be mandatory in areas with flooding problems.

- Views were divided between those members who felt that sustainable development would be harder to achieve on smaller sites and that the policy would be much more successful in the City and the towns of the district; and those members who felt that incrementally the effects of one or two houses becoming sustainable could amount to a big improvement over the years. The Planning Officer replied that economies of scale would have an impact and it would be unrealistic to expect a two bedroom house to have an entire sustainable drainage system for example. However, smaller houses could be designed to incorporate energy efficiency and waste management measures.
- A concern was raised about the minor changes that people could make to their properties that could have a serious impact on sustainability. For example people could contribute to flooding by resurfacing their driveways. The Planning Officer stated that in certain respects the Council was bound by national planning guidelines and until those changed some things could not be prevented.
- A comment was made that some of the language in the form would not be easily understandable to all the members of the public and perhaps it should be simplified. The planning officer stated that he would look into this but at the very least there would be a number to call for help when completing the form.
- It was suggested that an item on run off be added to the checklist, section 5 (relating to site drainage).
- Members congratulated the officers on their work in producing what they felt to be a very helpful and presentable document.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that the draft guidance be released for public consultation; and
- (2) that an item on run-off be added to the checklist under point 5 (relating to site drainage).

74. [Introduction to the Local Development Framework](#)

The Panel received a presentation from the Principal Planning Officer (previously circulated). In terms of issues that remained unresolved, the officer informed the panel that when the Inspector has made his final recommendations, those recommendations would have to be adopted straight into the plan and the plan will then become an official document. This raised an issue of whether liability, in the event of legal challenges, would rest with the Council or with the Planning Inspectorate. This matter appeared to remain unresolved. The officer stated that he would inform the panel once a decision had been reached. During a discussion the following points were raised:

- The panel asked who would be responsible for drafting the Regional Space Survey (RSS). The Principal Planning Officer replied that this would ultimately be coordinated by the Regional Planning Body. A draft of this was due to be published next spring and the panel would be consulted on it at that stage. The panel could then make recommendations to Cabinet, and Cabinet would then make the final response to the Regional Development Agency from SDC.
- A member asked if the RSS was intended to entirely replace the old Regional Planning Guidance and, if so, what factors would be considered when compiling it? The Principal Planning Officer informed the panel that the RSS would include strategic level considerations such as road networks, areas of landscape/environmental quality, ports/airports, retail centres, economic development and then use these to guide an overarching distributional strategy. In addition to this it would also consider the policy development of public bodies in the region for example the NHS. He informed that panel that the aim of increasing the scope of the RSS was to ensure a much greater coordination of services, resources and spending than in the past. A member informed the panel that Councillor Collier was the District Council's representative on the Regional Development Agency and Councillor Sample was a representative for the County Council. The RSS was being formulated at present by a very diverse working group to attempt to incorporate as many local concerns as possible.

- Members stated that they would like the Council's affordable housing policy to be reviewed and the review should include an examination of the possibility of extending it to more instances of shared ownership housing rather than just renting.
- Members felt that the lack of office space in the City needed to be reviewed.
The Principal Planning Officer stated that the Structure Plan would allocate an extra 20 hectares of employment land in the area. The Economic Development Manager was investigating addressing the lack of space for businesses to expand through the LDF. He also commented that affordable housing was an area that could be reviewed.
- Concerns were expressed that members had not been informed that Community Plans would be so integral to the new LDF. Therefore members felt that whilst the Community Plans were a good start they were not robust enough to feed into the LDF at this stage. It was stated that enough resources had not been made available to create the kind of Community Plan that was necessary to help inform the LDF. Members felt that more integrated working was required to achieve this aim and that WCC needed to dedicate more than 40 days of officer time to this project. It was stated that workshops with parishes and other stakeholders were a good way to achieve comprehensive community plans. The Principal Planning Officer informed members that the government guidance had been slow to emerge on this issue and therefore the planners themselves could not advise Community Planners about the direct link to LDFs until the current Community Plans were well advanced. He assured the panel that if elements of the plans needed further work to underpin their validity and robustness this would be done before they were feed into the LDF.
- A point was raised about efficient use of land and that consideration should be given to ways to utilise older sites that needed updating.
The Principal Planning Officer informed members that the Action Area Plan within the LDF would enable detailed plans for regeneration and land assembly to be developed which could improve land use efficiency. The Head of Forward Planning and Transportation stated that this would be a very opportune time for members to consider the rationalisation of strategic sites within the city. For example the introduction of the Park and Ride sites would create many free car parking spaces and therefore some car parks may be prime areas for redevelopment.
- The issue of the flexibility of the housing policy boundary was raised. Some members felt that the rural areas were not receiving the regeneration that they needed, and that affordable houses were needed for local people. Further to this a member commented that Salisbury District was lucky to have two railway stations and therefore this facility should be exploited by creating affordable housing and economic development sites close to these facilities.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that the informative content of the attached slides be noted;
- (2) that section 5 of the report be noted and the methodology concerning the prioritisation of work elements for inclusion within the Council's Local Development Scheme be agreed; and
- (3) that Cabinet be informed that the Planning & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers that more resources should be dedicated to the formulation of the Community Plans and that Cabinet be asked to recommend to WCC that more officer time and resources be invested in the preparation of the plans.

75. Date of the Next Meetings

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 9th August 2004**

The meeting closed at 2010hrs