

Minutes of a meeting of the **Policy Group** of the Purbeck District Council held in the Council Chamber, Westport House, Wareham on Wednesday 20 September 2017 at 7.00pm.

Present:-

Councillor Gary Suttle (Chairman)
Councillor Barry Quinn (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Cherry Brooks, Laura Miller, Bill Pipe and Peter Webb

Also present: Councillors David Budd, Fred Drane and Carol Tilling.

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Fiona Brown, Housing Manager; Alex Clothier, Enterprise Zone and Regeneration Manager; Bridget Downton, General Manager – Planning and Community Services; Sue Joyce, General Manager – Resources; Steve Mackenzie, Chief Executive and Kirsty Riglar, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager.

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Group).

29.17/18 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

30.17/18 **Urgent items**

The Chairman reported there were no urgent items.

31.17/18 **Public participation time**

Mrs Fraser of Save Our Spaces referred to a statement made by the Chief Executive at a previous meeting that paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) did not relate to small pockets of land and sought clarification on this. In relation to the proposed development on land at Upton, she informed Members that this would exacerbate parking issues and remove the use of the remaining open green space by the community. The Chief Executive explained that the provisions in the NPPF were concerned with strategic sites for development, whereas the pockets of land at Upton were small windfall sites. In order for the Council to dispose of open space, there was a requirement for consultation but this was less than for a strategic site.

Mr David Underhill of Upton expressed the concerns of local residents about the lack of consultation on the proposals to build housing on the open spaces in the Dacombe Drive area. He referred to a statement in the report accompanying item 6 on the agenda that the original intention was that a planning application would not be submitted until East Boro Housing Trust and the Council's housing team had carried out detailed consultation with the occupants of neighbouring properties and the local community. He asked whether this would happen. The Chief Executive explained that whilst the potential developer had sought pre-application advice from the Council, a planning application had not yet been submitted for any of the sites.

32.17/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2017 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

33.17/18 **Declarations of Interest by Members**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

34.17/18 **Consideration of Motion about land at Upton**

Councillor Drane introduced the Motion that he and Councillor Tilling had submitted to the Council Meeting in August 2017 relating to the Council's consideration in June 2016 of a proposal from East Boro Housing Trust to use Council owned land in Upton to provide sixteen affordable rented homes. He explained that the Motion sought to ensure that consultation was undertaken with local stakeholders, including ward councillors, town and parish councils and local residents, before the Council agreed to sell any surplus open space and requested that the Council should review any sale of the green spaces on Dacombe Drive, Dacombe Close and Factory Road, Upton, until after any affected residents were properly consulted. He considered that this should have been undertaken at an earlier stage and, if this had been done, officers would have been made aware that local residents had the use of these open spaces in the deeds to their properties. He also explained that there had previously been discussion about passing the open spaces to Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council to maintain but this had been superseded by the proposed development of housing.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the plots of land in Upton had been identified as capable of development and a report had been presented to Council in June 2016 seeking a view on both the proposals by East Boro to use this land to provide affordable rented housing and the sale of the land, subject to the grant of planning permission. Council had agreed to this and a preferred developer to develop social housing on the land had been identified.

The developer had then sought pre-application advice which had identified that some of the sites should not be developed but that others were a possibility. The Chief Executive pointed out that this development would not be viable as social housing alone and therefore some level of grant support would be required from the Council. He reiterated that the land had not been sold and would only be sold if planning permission was granted and that no planning application had yet been received. He confirmed that consultation would be carried out before a planning application was submitted. In general terms, he considered that it was appropriate to seek the views of Council on the possible disposal of land before consultation took place with local residents and stakeholders, as there was unlikely to be sufficient detail available to consult upon at that stage.

The Local Communities Portfolio Holder, as one of the Ward Members for Lytchett Minster and Upton West, reported that there was no public appetite for the use of the plots of land in Upton. Open spaces were at a premium in the east of Upton and he would not want to see those remaining built upon. He proposed that sites A and C, as indicated on the plans attached to the report, should be withdrawn as possible development sites and that all sites A-G be passed to Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council to maintain in perpetuity. This was duly seconded.

The Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that it was the Council's policy to consider infill opportunities and disposal of Council land in order to provide housing and how rare it was for development to be for social housing only. She drew attention to the housing need in the area; since April 2017, only one two-bedroom house had become available in Upton but in August 2017 there were 41 households on the housing register requiring two-bedroom general needs accommodation. She considered that the opportunity to develop social housing without market housing in Upton should be pursued.

In relation to the issue of the deeds of local residents indicating that there would be open space, officers explained that this was due to the nature of the planning permission for the housing estate. A new planning application would overcome that. It was also reported that the Solicitor to the Council had confirmed that there were no other encumbrances on the plots of land.

The Chairman moved a counter-proposal to that on the table; that site C not be developed as it was a significant area of amenity land, that East Boro be asked if it would be interested in providing social housing only on site A and that sites B-G be offered to the Town Council to maintain in perpetuity. This was duly seconded.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

Resolved that a report be submitted to Council recommending that:

- (1) site C be removed from the scheme and East Boro Housing Trust be asked if it would be interested in the continuation of the scheme in respect of site A only to provide 4 x two-bedroom three-person flats;
- (2) the Council's policy for the disposal of land is accepted to be fit for purpose;
- (3) land valuations be obtained from the District Valuer Service for site A only in order to proceed with the proposed disposal of the land to East Boro; and
- (4) Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council be contacted about the possible transfer of sites B-G to be maintained as open space in perpetuity.

35.17/18 **Revenue budget strategy 2018/19**

The General Manager - Resources presented a report seeking support for the budget assumptions and timetable being used as the basis for the preparation of the 2018/19 draft revenue budget. She informed Members that whilst the approved Financial Strategy identified that savings of £330,000 would need to be made in 2018/19 and assumed the use of £100,000 from reserves to reduce the savings target to £230,000, the latest indications were that the funding gap had reduced to below £100,000. It was therefore not anticipated that it would be necessary to use reserves.

Resolved that a report be submitted to Council for endorsement of the Budget Strategy and proposed timetable to be used as the basis for preparing the 2018/19 draft revenue budget.

36.17/18 **Dorset Innovation Park capital and revenue spend**

The Enterprise Zone and Regeneration Manager presented a report seeking approval for a capital contribution towards the landowner costs of the agreed 5-year investment

plan for Dorset Innovation Park and to secure a revenue budget to fund the Council's share of the predicted short-term revenue deficit on the running costs for the site.

Members were informed that the management board had agreed projects that were needed in the first five years to deliver a successful Enterprise Zone. These had been split into strategic projects and landowner responsibility projects. The strategic projects would be funded through the retained business rates for the site and funded from borrowing through the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership's accountable body, Dorset County Council. Officers confirmed that it was anticipated that the landowners' capital costs would be covered through the sale of plots on the site.

The Chief Executive reported that Dorset County Council's Cabinet had agreed to finance half of the project costs and was told that the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would finance the rest. However, the LEP had confirmed that this was unlikely. Therefore, there was currently insufficient funding in place to ensure that the necessary projects were undertaken to provide a vibrant Enterprise Zone at Dorset Innovation Park.

The Economy and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder expressed her support for the recommendations set out in the report. She reported that she had raised the issue of the insufficient funding agreed by the County Council's Cabinet with Members of the County Council and hoped that this would be revisited and a positive outcome achieved.

Resolved that a report be submitted to Council recommending that:

- (1) £200,000 be allocated in the capital programme for the Council's share of the landowner projects in the agreed 5-year investment plan for the Dorset Innovation Park;
- (2) the projects in the investment plan be implemented; and
- (3) a supplementary estimate of £15,000 be approved to provide a revenue budget for the running of the Dorset Innovation Park estate for 2017/18 and £15,000 be added to the base budget for 2018/19.

37.17/18 **Local Plan Review – verbal update**

The General Manager – Planning and Community Services informed Members that the Government had now published its consultation on the methodology for calculating housing numbers. This provided figures for every council in the UK for the period 2016 – 2026. Officers were currently reviewing the consultation document to identify the implications of the proposals for future housing sites in Purbeck and seeking advice on the implications for the adopted Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 and the post-2026 period. In view of the timescale for the consultation on the Purbeck Local Plan Review, it was anticipated that this could be achieved by the end of 2017.

38.17/18 **Forward Plan for Policy Group and Council meetings**

The Policy Group considered the current Forward Plan. It was noted that, as the recommendations agreed earlier in the meeting relating to the land at Upton would be considered at the Council meeting in October, the capital grant request from East Boro Housing Trust would not be considered by Policy Group at its meeting on 18 October 2017. The Forward Plan would be amended accordingly.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be received.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.

Chairman