

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE, on Tuesday, 13 August 2024 at 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Ros Wyke (Chair)

Cllr Dixie Darch
Cllr Richard Wilkins

Cllr Bill Revans

In attendance:

Cllr Simon Coles

Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Edric Hobbs
Cllr Mike Murphy

Cllr Marcus Kravis

22 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

No apologies for absence were received.

23 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee held on 27 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

24 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

Councillors present at the meeting declared the following interests in their capacity as a Councillor of a Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

SOMERSET COUNCILLOR	CITY, TOWN AND/OR PARISH COUNCIL
Richard Wilkins	Curry Rivel Parish Council
Ros Wyke	Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

25 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

No public questions were received by the submission deadline

26 Puriton Neighbourhood Plan - to be made - Agenda Item 5

The Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets, Councillor Ros Wyke introduced the Head of Planning, Alison Blom Cooper, who introduced the report. The report summarised that the Puriton, Downend and Dunball Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2032 ("the Plan") was a community led planning document which had been produced by Puriton Parish Council (as the Qualifying Body).

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Councillors welcomed the report and were pleased to see it come forward as an important part of the local community.
- Councillors raised the importance of the plan and gave thanks to the officers involved and understood the effort and time it took to create the plan.
- The Head of Planning highlighted that there were 1079 votes and that 874 were in favour, representing a 81% vote in favour of the Plan. Councillors were pleased to note the high turnout for voting.
- Councillors formally gave their best wishes to the Parish and the Plan going forward.

Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee RESOLVED: -

- A. That the Puriton, Downend and Dunball Neighbourhood Plan be 'made' (adopted) as part of the Development Plan and be used for pre-application advice, determining planning applications and any other development management purposes in the Neighbourhood Area which was the Parish of Puriton.

27 Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance - Agenda Item 6

The Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Asset, Councillor Ros Wyke, introduced the Garden Town Implementation Manager, Jenny Clifford, who introduced the report. The report detailed that following the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town in 2017, a Vision For Our Garden Town was adopted by Somerset West and Taunton Council in 2019. This Vision placed Taunton's waterways at the heart of the town and regeneration and sought to make the most of them and rediscover the historic connection between the town and its surrounding landscape. It reflected the Council's commitment to improve the quality of existing and new developments, strengthen connections between the town and the countryside through a network of green spaces, deliver a more prosperous Taunton to become greener and more resilient. The River Tone, its tributary waterways within the town and the Taunton and Bridgwater Canal were key elements to meet the Taunton Garden Town Vision.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Councillors welcomed the report and were excited that the waterways of Taunton were being showcased as a valuable asset.
- Councillors raised concerns over funding, and that it needed to be made

clear to the public that this project was externally funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) grant.

- Councillors praised officers for their hard work and the use of forums such as the garden board to gain feedback that was then built into the plan.
- Councillors queried which flood defences were crucial within the area.
The Garden Town Implementation Manager responded and advised that the flood mitigation and protection was complex. It would detail which project would benefit which area and was being carried out by specialist officers.
Councillors queried if there was resource within the council to complete this project.
The Garden Town Implementation Manager, responded to say there was resource within the Gaarden Town Team, and that funding was being finalised for the next 18 months to 2 years. The consultation period would help decipher the resources and support required.
- Councillors queried where the external funding streams would come from.
The Garden Town Implementation Manager responded to say that external funding opportunities had been identified and that it was targeted work going forward working in partnership with other waterway partners.

Councillor Dixie Darch proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Richard Wilkins.

Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee RESOLVED to:

- A. Approve the draft Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance and associated supporting documents for public consultation.
- B. Agree that the following were delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets:
 - I. The screening of the Taunton Waterways Strategy and
 - II. Guidance under the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations), EU Habitats Directive and associated Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, together with the production and consultation on resultant reports should they be screened as required.
 - III. Approve and make any minor changes prior to consultation.
 - IV. Approve and make any amendments necessary following public consultation and to finalise the documents.

28 Outcome of the review of the Minerals Plan - Agenda Item 7

The Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Asset, Councillor Ros Wyke, introduced the Service Manager for Development and Planning, Helen Vittery, who introduced the report. The report detailed that the Mineral and Waste Policy Team had concluded a review of the current Somerset Mineral Plan (SMP) which was adopted in 2015 and was due for review every 5 years.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Councillors noted that they were pleased officers were working in partnership

with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) over the policy changes.

- Councillors raised concerns over the objections and the volume of stone being removed from quarries for a prolonged period of time.
The Service Manager for Development and Planning responded to say that the quarries had a licence to do the removal and it was critical to the economy of the country not just the county that this continued.
- Councillors queried how reactive the policy/team could be to national changes.
The Service Manager for Development and Planning responded to say that if national changed it would not impact the policy.

The Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Asset, Councillor Ros Wyke, As Chair proposed an additional recommendation “To work closely with transport colleagues on the emerging Local Transport Plan, to ensure that the impact of quarry traffic on the local community is identified and mitigated appropriately where possible.” This was seconded by Councillor Richard Wilkins and the recommendation was carried.

Councillor Ros Wyke proposed an amendment to the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Dixie Darch that the recommendation to maintain a watching brief on proposed changes to plan-making process through planning reform be removed from the report. The Sub-Committee voted on the amendment and the recommendation was carried.

Councillor Richard Wilkins proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Dixie Darch.

Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-Committee RESOLVED to:

- A. Note the content of this report and endorse the conclusion herein that no update of the Somerset Mineral Plan was required at this time.
- B. Agree the following actions:
 - Publish the outcome of the plan review and inform industry.
 - Update the LDS to reflect the amended timescales for SMP review in 2029 (unless early review was triggered by monitoring processes).
 - Through the Local Aggregate Assessment process, continue to monitor the outcome of pending applications at Whiteball, Torr Works Blockworks (resolution to grant permission subject to S106), Westdown Quarry (resolution to grant subject to s106) and Moons Hill Quarry. Additionally, monitor if any further applications were submitted which could provide include in the landbank model if required).
 - Use the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) process to monitor supply (alongside LAA process as above).
 - Continue to monitor any changes in national policy, including on peat and energy minerals, which may trigger an early plan review.
 - Review the Sand and Gravel Memorandum of Understanding with Devon County Council and Cornwall Council. Continue engagement with Devon County Council on any forthcoming applications.
 - Work with Area planning teams to raise awareness and understanding of

SMP policies and how these policies were relevant to planning applications considered by area planning teams (e.g. mineral safeguarding areas).

- Update mapping layers and text on website – PEDL Licenses, Coal Authority etc.
- To work closely with transport colleagues on the emerging Local Transport Plan, to ensure that the impact of quarry traffic on the local community was identified and mitigated appropriately where possible

29 Forward Plan - Agenda Item 8

The Head of Planning, Alison Blom Cooper, introduced the forward plan. The Sub-Committee noted the following items due to be reported at the next meeting on Thursday 8th October:

- Cannington Neighbourhood Plan
- Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan to be made
- CIL spending priorities report
- Local Plan 6 monthly update report
- Local Transport Plan – draft for consultation.

(The meeting ended at 11.20 am)

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CHAIR