

**Dorchester Town Council**

**Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held via the Zoom Video Conferencing**

**Platform**

**7 September 2020**

Present: The Mayor, Councillor R Biggs and Councillors A. Canning, L. Fry, J. Hewitt, S. Hosford, E.S. Jones, G. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, R. Major, R. Potter (Chairman), M.E. Rennie and R. Ricardo.

Apologies: Councillor T. Harries

Also in attendance: Councillors S. Biles, F. Hogwood and D Leaper

**26. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Fry stated that as a member of Dorset Council's Area Planning Committee, he would keep an open mind on the planning applications and consider all information available at each stage of the decision process. He would take part in the debate but not vote on planning applications at this meeting.

Councillors Fry and Rennie stated that as existing and former members of Dorset Council's Licensing Committee they would keep an open mind on agenda items 4 and 5 and consider all information at each stage of the decision process. They would take part in the debate but not vote on agenda items 4 and 5 at this meeting.

**27. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 August 2020 were confirmed and approved to be signed by the Chairman.

**28. Dorchester South Station**

A Member of the Committee raised concerns about the appearance of Dorchester South Train Station, in particular the Alfred Road entrance. The Committee heard that the wall to the Station had collapsed a number of years previous and had been left unsightly and susceptible to litter which had become further apparent after vegetation works had been previously completed, therefore creating a poor impression of the Town to visitors and residents. Despite previous requests to Network Rail to repair the wall, no improvement had been made.

The Committee requested that the Clerk to the Committee contact Network Rail and request that the wall be repaired and the litter removed as a matter of urgency.

**Resolved**

- I. That the Clerk to the Committee contact Network Rail and request that the wall be repaired and the litter removed.

**29. Dorset Council Draft Licensing Policy**

The Committee noted the Dorset Council's draft licencing policy. The Committee authorised the Clerk to the Committee to in consultation with the Chair to the Committee to make a response.

**Resolved**

- I. That the Clerk to the Committee be authorised to make a response to the Dorset Council's draft licensing policy in consultation with the Chair to the Committee.

**30. Dorset Council Draft Gambling Policy**

The Committee noted the Dorset Council's draft gambling policy and wished to make no comment.

**31. Changes to the Current Planning System Consultation on Changes to Planning Policy and Regulations**

The Committee considered the draft response to the Ministry of Local Housing, Communities and Local Government's Consultation on Changes to Planning Policy and Regulations and agreed on various points to submit.

**Resolved**

- I. That the Clerk to the Committee in consultation with the Chairman submit the Committee's response (included in these minutes set out in Appendix 1) to the Ministry of Local Housing, Communities and Local Government's Consultation on Changes to Planning Policy and Regulations.

**32. Cycling and Walking Plans**

The Committee noted a report on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The Committee agreed that it would support plans for walking and cycling improvements in Bridport Road and Fairfield Road which were being considered by the Dorset Council should they be proposed.

The Committee felt that that a more complete plan to connect the surrounding towns and villages to Dorchester, was needed, in particular the route to Kingston Maurward would be beneficial to the Town.

**33. Flood Risk Management Works in and Around Dorchester**

The Committee noted the Environment Agency's August update and welcomed the proposed improvement works.

**34. Planning Applications for Comment**

The Committee considered the planning applications referred to the Council for comment by Dorset Council (Appendix 2).

**35. Minute Update Report**

There were no minute updates to report.

**36. Planning Issues to Note**

The Committee noted that Application WD/D/19/002627 DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL, WILLIAMS AVENUE, DORCHESTER, DT1 2JY would be going before the Dorset Council's Northern Area Planning Committee on 15 September 2020. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Committee would submit a statement that reiterated the previous comments of the Planning and Environment Committee.

## Appendix 1

### Dorchester Town Council

### Planning and Environment Committee 7 September 2020

### Changes to the Current Planning System

#### **Step 1 Setting the baseline – providing stability and certainty by incorporating a blend of household projections and stock**

*Q1: Do you agree that planning practice guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is whichever is the higher of the level of 0.5% of housing stock in each local authority area OR the latest household projections averaged over a 10-year period?*

No, we believe that the appropriate baseline for the standard method should be based on household projections only. There is no merit in insisting on new homes where there is no need within a particular locality.

*Q2: In the stock element of the baseline, do you agree that 0.5% of existing stock for the standard method is appropriate? If not, please explain why.*

No, 0.5% of existing stock for the standard method is not appropriate. If the duty to cooperate has been removed, a Unitary Authority with tightly drawn borders would be unable to cope with additional housing away from where it was required.

#### **Step 2 Adjusting for market signals – maintaining price signals using the current affordability ratio and the change in affordability over the last 10 years**

*Q3: Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio from the most recent year for which data is available to adjust the standard method's baseline is appropriate? If not, please explain why.*

Yes, however it is still not enough to meet the needs of the local community living on low incomes. Dorset suffers from South West wages and South East property prices. Local property prices need to reflect local wages.

*Q4: Do you agree that incorporating an adjustment for the change of affordability over 10 years is a positive way to look at whether affordability has improved? If not, please explain why.*

No and particularly not during the current climate. It is impossible to know what will be required in the future. The country is in recession and the 'new normal' has yet to be defined.

*Q5: Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the standard method? If not, please explain why.*

No, affordability has not been given an appropriate weighting. The answer should not be to increase the level of building until the small percentage of allocated affordable housing has finally met the needs of the local community but to increase the percentage of affordable housing to meet the existing needs

*Do you agree that authorities should be planning having regard to their revised standard method need figure, from the publication date of the revised guidance, with the exception of:*

*Q6: Authorities which are already at the second stage of the strategic plan consultation process (Regulation 19), which should be given 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination?*

**No response**

*Q7: Authorities close to publishing their second stage consultation (Regulation 19), which should be given 3 months from the publication date of the revised guidance to publish their Regulation 19 plan, and a further 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate?*

**No response**

*If not, please explain why. Are there particular circumstances which need to be catered for?*

*Q8: The Government is proposing policy compliant planning applications will deliver a minimum of 25% of onsite affordable housing as First Homes, and a minimum of 25% of offsite contributions towards First Homes where appropriate.*

*Which do you think is the most appropriate option for the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions?*

*Please provide reasons and / or evidence for your views (if possible):*

*i) Prioritising the replacement of affordable home ownership tenures, and delivering rental tenures in the ratio set out in the local plan policy.*

*ii) Negotiation between a local authority and developer.*

*iii) Other (please specify)*

***i) Prioritising the replacement of affordable home ownership tenures, and delivering rental tenures in the ratio set out in the local plan policy. This avoids lengthy negotiations and trade off between the developer and local authority which would provide clarity and certainty, resulting in increased efficiency and faster build times.***

**With regards to current exemptions from delivery of affordable home ownership products:**

**Q9: Should the existing exemptions from the requirement for affordable home ownership products (e.g. for build to rent) also apply to apply to this First Homes requirement?**

**No response.**

**Q10: Are any existing exemptions not required? If not, please set out which exemptions and why.**

**The eligibility restriction of 'new builds only' should be removed from the Help to Buy Equity loan.**

Q11: Are any other exemptions needed? If so, please provide reasons and /or evidence for your views.

*There should be no exemptions. All sites should be required to deliver affordable homes as a prerequisite to development*

### **Local plans and transitional arrangements**

Q12: Do you agree with the proposed approach to transitional arrangements set out above?

*No, policies require consistency. If the policy is right, then it should be adhered to.*

### **Level of discount**

Q13: Do you agree with the proposed approach to different levels of discount?

*Yes.*

*In reference to paragraph 61, It must be remembered that First Homes will still contain people, therefore the Community Infrastructure Levy must still be so as to ensure that all levels can provide proper amenities.*

Q14: Do you agree with the approach of allowing a small proportion of market housing on First Homes exception sites, in order to ensure site viability?

*In principle yes, but 'small' must be clearly defined and must be small. For instance, 1 out of 3; up to 3 out of 10; no more than 15% thereafter.*

Q15: Do you agree with the removal of the site size threshold set out in the National Planning Policy Framework?

*Yes*

Q16: Do you agree that the First Homes exception sites policy should not apply in designated rural areas?

*Yes*

For each of these questions, please provide reasons and / or evidence for your views (if possible):

Q17: Do you agree with the proposed approach to raise the small sites threshold for a time-limited period?

*No, for example; 40 homes without an affordable component is far too large.*

Q18: What is the appropriate level of small sites threshold?

i) Up to 40 homes

ii) Up to 50 homes

iii) Other (please specify)

*The threshold should remain at 10, anything above is too high for areas such as Dorset where local wages do not reflect local house prices. A development of up to 40 homes in Dorset is quite considerable, in order to meet the local need for affordable housing to reflect the average wage in the area focus must be given to these needs ahead of SME's.*

Q19: Do you agree with the proposed approach to the site size threshold?

In principle, yes.

Q20: Do you agree with linking the time-limited period to economic recovery and raising the threshold for an initial period of 18 months?

No response.

Q21: Do you agree with the proposed approach to minimising threshold effects?

No response.

Q22: Do you agree with the Government's proposed approach to setting thresholds in rural areas?

No response.

Q23: Are there any other ways in which the Government can support SME builders to deliver new homes during the economic recovery period?

It would be beneficial if Central Government helped to enable SME's to refurbish brownfield sites.

Q24: Do you agree that the new Permission in Principle should remove the restriction on major development?

No, this would be advantageous to large developers at the expense of SME's. To alleviate this it would not be unreasonable to raise the threshold to 50 or 2HA.

Q25: Should the new Permission in Principle for major development set any limit on the amount of commercial development (providing housing still occupies the majority of the floorspace of the overall scheme)? Please provide any comments in support of your views.

Yes. The need is for more housing and particularly more affordable housing. Some commercial / retail is obviously essential, but this should be no more than 25% of the area.

Q26: Do you agree with our proposal that information requirements for Permission in Principle by application for major development should broadly remain unchanged? If you disagree, what changes would you suggest and why?

Yes.

Q27: Should there be an additional height parameter for Permission in Principle? Please provide comments in support of your views.

Yes, but in meters, not in storeys. High-rise buildings are very unlikely to be suitable in a rural area and the local authority should be able to give an early indication that such a development would be unwelcome.

Q28: Do you agree that publicity arrangements for Permission in Principle by application should be extended for large developments? If so, should local planning authorities be:

- i) required to publish a notice in a local newspaper?
- ii) subject to a general requirement to publicise the application or
- iii) both?
- iv) disagree

Both and more. This is vital for local accountability. Local newspapers may not exist or be widely read, local radio stations are also in wide decline, so wide use of all media, social and traditional as appropriate for local circumstance. Statutory bodies and local councillors should be informed early in the process.

Q29: Do you agree with our proposal for a banded fee structure based on a flat fee per hectare, with a maximum fee cap?

Yes.

Q30: What level of flat fee do you consider appropriate, and why?

We don't have sight of what the costs might be so cannot comment.

Q31: Do you agree that any brownfield site that is granted Permission in Principle through the application process should be included in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register? If you disagree, please state why.

In principle, yes.

Q32: What guidance would help support applicants and local planning authorities to make decisions about Permission in Principle? Where possible, please set out any areas of guidance you consider are currently lacking and would assist stakeholders.

No response

Q33: What costs and benefits do you envisage the proposed scheme would cause? Where you have identified drawbacks, how might these be overcome?

The obvious advantage is that it would probably be easier to get permission in principle than outline planning permission at present.

The main disadvantage of this proposal is that planning permission in principle may encourage speculative plans which will not lead to viable development due to the constraints of other policies such as the 7 core principles of the NPPF, the constraints in NPPF chapters 7 to 12 and policies covering landscape, building design and positioning and the amenity of neighbours, existing and future residents.

Q34: To what extent do you consider landowners and developers are likely to use the proposed measure? Please provide evidence where possible.

The relaxed measures will provide some landowners and developers to gain permission for plans that in normal circumstances would not be approved. It is imperative that Local authorities and the Planning regime as a whole continue to consider each application for its suitability and viability for the local area.



**Appendix 2**  
**Dorchester Town Council**  
**Planning and Environment Committee 7 September 2020**

**East Ward (Councillors T. Harries, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and R. Major)**

**E1. [WD/D/20/001650 33 EDDISON AVENUE, DORCHESTER, DT1 1NX](#)**

Erect two storey rear extension.

Objection

The Committee were concerned that the extension would be overbearing and detrimental, in particular that the proposed extension would impact negatively on the daylight enjoyed by the neighbouring properties and that the proposed extension would also adversely affect the amount of sunlight into neighbouring gardens, contravening policy ENV.16 of the adopted Local Plan.

The Committee also considered the proposed materials and design of the extension to be out of character with the existing street scene and felt it would not be harmonious with the existing buildings, nor relate positively with the adjoining buildings, due to the size and height of the proposed extension, severely contravening policy ENV12 of the adopted local plan.

**E2. [WD/D/20/001757 1 LANCASTER ROAD, DORCHESTER, DT1 1QH](#)**

Erection of flat roof front extension.

No objection.

**E3. [WD/D/20/001672 FLAT 6, FORDINGTON HOUSE, ICEN WAY, DORCHESTER, DT1 1NP](#)  
[\(Listed Building Consent\)](#)**

Works to Replace sections of roof tiles.

Objection.

The Committee agreed that as Fordington House was Grade II\* listed it would be inappropriate for the alterations to the roof to be inconsistent with the existing roof. The Committee were concerned that the proposed slates and ridge would not be in keeping with the rest of the building.

**North Ward (Councillor A. Canning)**

**N1. [WD/D/20/001758 THE BLUE RADDLE, CHURCH STREET, DORCHESTER, DT1 1JN](#)**

Change of use of first floor residential accommodation to rooms to be used in conjunction with the public house.

No objection.

**N2. [WD/D/20/001775 6 ALBERT ROAD, DORCHESTER, DT1 1SF](#)**

Application for certificate of lawfulness to confirm that planning permission 1/E/87/137 has been implemented & can be completed.

Objection. The Committee felt strongly that a new application and plans should be submitted.

**West Ward (Councillors L. Fry, J. Hewitt and R. Ricardo)**

No applications received to date.

**South Ward (Councillors G. Jones, R. Potter and M. Rennie)**

**S1. [WD/D/20/001674 WEYMOUTH AVENUE RECREATION GROUND, WEYMOUTH AVENUE, DORCHESTER](#)**

Display of 1.no non illuminated free standing advertising board.

As Dorchester Town Council is the landowner, no comment will be made on this application.

**S2. [WD/D/20/001762 64 MONMOUTH ROAD, DORCHESTER, DT1 2DG](#)**

Erection of timber annex (demolition of existing garage).

Objection.

The Committee considered the application and raised concerns that the annexe accommodation would be considered a separate dwelling to the hosting property.

The Committee felt that the proposed design and materials were inconsistent with the existing street scene, Monmouth Road properties being predominantly built from brick and felt the use of powdered coated aluminium to be inappropriate and would not conform to the nor enhance the local identity therefore contravening both ENV10 and ENV12 of the adopted Local Plan.

**S3. [WD/D/20/001555 83 WEATHERBURY WAY, DORCHESTER, DT1 2EE](#)**

Erection of single-storey 'wrap around' extension.

No objection.

**Poundbury Ward (Councillors R. Biggs and S. Hosford)**

No applications received to date.