

Dorchester Town Council
Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held via the Zoom Video
Conferencing
Platform
5 October 2020

Present: The Mayor, Councillor R Biggs and Councillors A. Canning, L. Fry, 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 and J. Hewitt.

Also in attendance: Councillors S. Biles and F. Hogwood

27. 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.

28. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 September 2020 were confirmed and approved to be signed by the Chairman.

29. White Paper: Planning for the Future

The Committee considered the draft response to the Ministry of Local Housing, Communities and Local Government's Consultation the White Paper, Planning for the Future 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 the White Paper, Planning for the Future.

35. Planning Applications for Comment

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

36. Minute Update Report

There were no minute updates to report, however a member of the Committee raised concerns about Minute 14 of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 6 August 2018, application WD/D/18/000622. The Committee heard that the then West Dorset District

Council had refused planning permission for the Erection of raised decking area (Retrospective) on 3 October 2018, yet the decking remained in place. The Committee requested that the clerk to the Committee contact the Dorset Council to request that the decision be enforced.

Resolved

- I. That the clerk to the Committee contact the Dorset Council to request that the decision to refuse application WD/D/18/000622 be enforced.

37. Planning Issues to Note

1) The Committee noted that the Dorset Council had appointed a company called Terraquest on a temporary basis to assist with clearing a backlog of planning applications that were awaiting validation. The Committee expressed its disappointment that a local company had not been employed.

2) A member of the Committee raised concerns about the recent flooding on the A35 from the Stadium Roundabout to the turning to the A352. The Committee heard that on a number of occasions the road had been closed and a number of restrictions had been imposed due to flooding, causing increased volumes of traffic in Dorchester Town Centre. The Committee requested that Highways England identify a suitable diversion should the road be closed again in the future due to flooding.

The committee also expressed concerns that the flooding experienced at the nearby Max Gate Roundabout had possibly contributed to the problems experienced on the A35. The Committee requested that the Clerk to the Committee contact both Highways England about the A35 and the Dorset Council about the Max Gate Roundabout as a matter of urgency to request that works be completed on the A35 to improve the drainage and alleviate the problems experienced.

Resolved

- I. The Clerk to the Committee contact both Highways England about the A35 and the Dorset Council about the Max Gate Roundabout as a matter of urgency to request that works be completed on the A35 and the Max Gate Roundabout to improve the drainage and alleviate the problems experienced.

Appendix 1
Dorchester Town Council
Planning and Environment Committee 5 October 2020

Ministry of Local Housing, Communities and Local Government's Consultation on the White Paper: Planning for the Future

Pillar One – Planning for development

Q. 1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

Democratic, accessible, professional.

Q 2(a). Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area?

Yes

Q 2(b). If no, why not?

No response required

Q 3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

[Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post /

Other – please specify]

Planning Authority website with automated prompts (if signed up) plus on site notices

Q 4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area?

[Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

In no particular order:

- The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change
- Increasing the affordability of housing
- Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas

Proposal 1: The role of land use plans should be simplified. We propose that Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected.

Q 5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?

No - We need much more detail on how the land types will be identified, and by whom; how places will be allocated to the different categories; precisely what 'substantial' development means; what 'suitable development' will mean in practice; what limitations can be applied on height, density etc., and by whom.

'Growth' and 'Renewal' should be kept separate so that developments can be spread over a rural area when this is appropriate.

Key Concerns

- The proposals are a Charter for unnecessary overdevelopment in Dorset with significantly higher numbers than are needed.
- There is a significant loss of local democracy and a reduction of the public involvement in the planning process - Dorset Council need to Stand up for Dorset rather than give in to demands from Westminster.
- The proposals do not guarantee adequate protection for the precious environment of Dorset and in fact are a threat.
- The lack of democracy in the decision making process.

Proposal 2: Development management policies established at national scale and an altered role for Local Plans.

Q 6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

No. There are vastly different requirements in different areas. Dorset is not like Shropshire, let alone Surrey. Weymouth is not like Beaminster.

The design guides and codes would most definitely need to be produced for smaller areas and in some circumstances certain sites as the character and landscape can vary significantly within local authority boundaries let alone across the Country.

Proposal 3: Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory "sustainable development" test, replacing the existing tests of soundness.

Q 7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of "sustainable development", which would include consideration of environmental impact?

Not Sure. A test of "sustainable development" needs to be robust and wide-ranging.

Q 7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

The Duty to Cooperate should be retained to ensure infrastructure does not collapse at a border.

Proposal 4: A standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification

where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met.

Q 8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?

Yes - but only if the Local Authority has the right to appeal against a centrally imposed figure. The proposal as it stands is undemocratic as there is no local input into the housing number for the area.

Q 8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

No. More concentrated development will lead to more pressure on infrastructure.

Proposal 5: Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.

Q 9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

No. An Infrastructure agreement must come first.

Paragraph 2:36 is simply not good enough to protect neighbours from inappropriate development.

Automatic outline permission would remove all democracy from the local community, it is unacceptable.

Measures need to be put in place to prevent 'Land Bankers' from cashing in on the initiative. Tight time periods should be imposed from automatic outline permission being granted to the time of development. It is not acceptable that a development should be granted automatic permission and for it then not to be built within a period of say 2 years as the value of the land would increase considerably over time whilst not meeting the 'needs' defined by the proposal for the Growth area.

Q 9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?

No. Clear safeguards against inappropriate developments will be needed.

Again, this removes all democracy from the local community and is unacceptable.

Q 9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

Yes. The buck should stop with the minister.

Proposal 6: Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology

Q 10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?

No.

In response to 'The delegation of detailed planning decisions to planning officers where the principle of development has been established, as detailed matters for consideration should be principally a matter for professional planning judgment.'

This removes democracy, particularly if the development has previously been granted automatic outline permission.

In response to 'We propose that applicants will be entitled to an automatic rebate of their planning application fee if they are successful at appeal.' it should also be included that Local Authorities are also entitled to a similar rebate of fees if they were to win at appeal.

Also, the digitally disadvantaged must be catered for - just as we do those physically disadvantaged

Proposal 7: Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new template.

Q 11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?

Yes - as long as the 'digitally disadvantaged' are catered for in some way and the Local Plans should be available in all languages.

Proposal 8: Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable for key stages of the process, and we will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so.

Q 12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?

Yes, if allowance is made for exceptional circumstances such as Covid, sudden loss of planning officer and/or system.

'Reviews should be undertaken sooner than five years where there has been a significant change in circumstances, for instance where issues with land supply have been identified through regular monitoring.' Clarification on a 'Significant change in circumstances' is needed, as is confirmation on who would monitor changes in circumstances.

Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools

Q 13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

Yes, they are good for local input.

Q 13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

Offer grants to enable Town and Parish councils to access planning expertise, perhaps from the Local Authority.

The development of a Neighbourhood plan is extremely time consuming and costly, for very little reward. Neighbourhood plans are often overridden by the Local Planning Authority. To make them more attractive to Town and Parish Councils the offer of grants to enable Town and Parish councils to access planning expertise, perhaps from the Local Authority would be extremely beneficial by making them more affordable and by giving them more gravitas and strength.

Proposal 10: A stronger emphasis on build out through planning

Q 14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?

Yes and include penalties for developers who are not making progress at any stage.

Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Q 15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area?

It has been variable, some of it has been very good, some of it has been very bad and some of it hasn't even happened.

Q 16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area?

Energy efficiency, attention to all infrastructure needs.

Proposal 11: To make design expectations more visual and predictable, we will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement, and ensure that codes are more binding on decisions about development.

Q 17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?

Not Sure. Adherence to locally produced guides and codes should be an essential prerequisite of a proposed development.

Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making.

Q 18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

Agree to support design coding. Nearly all Local Authorities will (initially at least) need several such officers, more locally based than to cover a large rural county.

Proposal 13: To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England's strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

Q 19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

Fine words, but will Homes England have any statutory input or enforcement role?

Proposal 14: We intend to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.

Q 20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

No.

Paragraph 3:18 'Second, where plans identify areas for significant development (Growth areas), we will legislate to require that a masterplan and site-specific code are agreed as a condition of the permission in principle which is granted through the plan.....' **is welcomed.**

Paragraph 3:19 'Third, we also propose to legislate to widen and change the nature of permitted development, so that it enables popular and replicable forms of development to be approved easily and quickly....' **is definitely NOT welcomed.**

Replicable forms of development will lead to clone settlements. Local distinctiveness can be an important contribution to the form of a development.

Paragraph 3:20' To take this approach forward, we intend to develop a limited set of form-based development types that allow the redevelopment of existing residential buildings where the relevant conditions are satisfied....' **is definitely NOT welcomed. It will lead to bog-standard (and low-standard) estates that would be all too reminiscent of those of the 1950s and '60s we have moved away from.**

There is a danger that there will be a perception that a 'Fast Track for Beauty' would take precedence over creating developments that meet the needs of the community, that are accessible for those who will habit them. By enabling permitted Development in such circumstances there is the risk that the required infrastructure would not be in place.

Proposal 15: We intend to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits.

Proposal 16: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England.

Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century

Proposal 18: To complement our planning reforms, we will facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.

Proposals 15 - 18 These are all good thoughts and words, but that is all they are at present. Let's have some teeth to get them enacted!

Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

Q 21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

[More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify

Infrastructure and affordable housing.

Proposal 19: The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished.

Q 22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

No. Some developments will require more contribution in order to make them locally sustainable. For example, a new estate across a river from its main retail and employment centres will need a new bridge.

Q 22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?

[Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

Locally, for the reason above.

Q 22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?

[Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

More - unless funding for extra infrastructure can be provided from elsewhere, such as central government.

Q 22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?

Yes. Infrastructure usually needs to be in place before an Infrastructure Levy is fully paid. However, the risk of financial burden upon the local authority should the dwellings not be occupied is concerning. It would also be particularly unpopular should a development that had automatically been granted outline permission and had been opposed by the local community not be occupied due to lack of demand.

Proposal 20: The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights

Q 23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights?

Yes. Permitted development will increase pressures on Local Authorities and should be paid for.

Proposal 21: The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision

Q 24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

Yes, though this may be variable across the country.

On site provision should be the default position. Off site provision should only be permitted under very exceptional circumstances due to space, rather than commercial constraints.

Q 24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?

Right to purchase by Local Authority with a mechanism to ensure continued affordability.

Q 24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

Not Sure. Will the differing needs of different Authorities lead to more divergence?

Q 24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

Yes, definitely. Poor quality will lead to extra costs for the Local Authority in the future.

Proposal 22: More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy

Q 25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

Yes, though the core obligations must be clearly set out so that it is easy to see that they are being met.

Q 25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed?

Yes. On-site delivery rather than contributions in kind is necessary to ensure compliance.

Proposal 23: As we develop our final proposals for this new planning system, we will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms. In doing so, we propose this strategy will be developed including the following key elements:

Proposal 24: We will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions

Q 26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

Ensure that all community organisations such as Gypsy and Traveller Liaison groups and Race Equality groups are consulted.

Appendix 2
Dorchester Town Council
Planning and Environment Committee 5 October 2020

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

- E1. WD/D/20/001839 LAND AND GARAGES REAR OF, 13-19 EDDISON AVENUE, DORCHESTER**
Demolition of existing garages and erection of 2no.3 bed houses, 1no.2 bed house and 1no. 1 bed house and associated landscaping and parking provision.
No objection.
- E2. WD/D/20/001905 15 GARLAND CRESCENT, DORCHESTER, DT1 2SX**
Replace existing rear conservatory with single storey pitched roof extension.
No objection.
- E3. WD/D/20/001960 4 FORDINGTON GREEN, DORCHESTER, DT1 1LU**
Replace existing timber garden room with new timber garden room.
No objection.
- E4. WD/D/20/001961 4 FORDINGTON GREEN, DORCHESTER, DT1 1LU (Listed Building Consent)**
Replace existing timber garden room with new timber garden room.
No objection.

North Ward (Councillor A. Canning)

- N1. WD/D/20/001875 11 CORNHILL, DORCHESTER, DT1 1BQ**
Installation of 2.no non illuminated panel signs.
Objection.
- The Committee felt that the advertising boards were not appropriate for a Conservation Area, contravening ENV4 of the adopted local plan and would also contravene ENV14 of the adopted local plan as they they were not compatible with and would not respect the building's surroundings in terms of size, proportions, form, design, materials, and use of colour and level of illumination.
- N2. WD/D/20/001840 GARAGE SITE OPPOSITE, 30-44 CHESTNUT WAY, DORCHESTER**
Demolition of existing garages and erection of 2no. 3 bed houses and 2no. 1 bed flats and associated landscaping and parking provision.
- No objection subject to an up to date drainage and water enquiry. The Committee expressed concerns about reports from nearby residents of flooding and sewage being a part of the floodwaters and requested that a full survey be conducted and that the problems be addressed.
- N3. WD/D/20/001885 UNIT B, ST MARTINS PLACE, BRIDPORT ROAD, DORCHESTER, DT1 2FB**

Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for a part two and part three storey building comprising shops (Class A1) at ground floor and 24 residential apartments at first and second floor, along with separate vehicular access and parking for the commercial and residential uses, and related hard and soft landscaping - **Variation of condition 6 of planning approval 1/E/07/000896 - create 3.no units.**

No objection.

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

W1 WD/D/20/001799 79 CAMBRIDGE ROAD, DORCHESTER, DT1 2JG

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Erect two storey side extension.

No objection.

W2 WD/D/20/002112 49 QUEENS AVENUE, DORCHESTER, DT1 2EP

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Convert existing garden room into annexe.

No objection. The Committee requested that a planning condition be added that the annexe be an ancillary to 49 Queens Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2EP.

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

No applications received.

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

P1. WD/D/20/000596 POUNDBURY PHASES 3 AND 4, PEVERELL AVENUE EAST, POUNDBURY

Application for approval of reserved matters for access, appearance, landscaping & layout in relation to outline approval 1/D/09/001363.

No objection.