

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON FRIDAY, 6 JULY 2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J D Hawkins – Chairman

* Cllr R C Steer – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr J Brazil

* Cllr M J Howarth

* Cllr B F Cane

∅ Cllr C W Jones

* Cllr S Cooper

* Cllr L P Jones

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:
Cllrs J T Pennington and M F Saltern

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Community); Planning and
Affordable Housing Officer;
Item 6 and 7: Head of Community Regeneration;
Item 8: Head of Landscape and Leisure.

CPDG.01/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Policy Development Group held on 12 April 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A non-group Member asked for a response to a question at the meeting on 12 April 2007 (minute reference CPDG.39/06) relating to buildings from which South Hams District Council provided a service and whether the standards set by the Disability Discrimination Act needed to be met. Officers would clarify the situation and advise the Member and the Chairman accordingly.

CPDG.02/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting. These were recorded as follows:-

Cllr B F Cane declared a prejudicial interest in item 6, Options for the Early Advancement of Housing Sites to Achieve Delivery Against Council Priority 1 CP1 (Affordable Homes), by virtue of being a relation to the landowner of one of the identified sites, and left the room when the item was discussed.

CPDG.03/07 PRESENTATION ON THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Members received a presentation from the Strategic Director (Community) which summarised the purpose and role of the Community Policy Development Group (PDG).

Reference was made to the PDGs being divided in to three themes - Community, Environment and Prosperity. At the beginning, the responsibility of the Community PDG was to secure safe, clean and healthy communities but the PDG had been very busy mainly dealing with housing matters and 'clean' issues such as waste and air quality were subsequently transferred to the Environment PDG.

The PDGs were created to provide the opportunity for Members to discuss and review policies resulting in recommendations to Executive and Council.

The Community PDG had recently undertaken work in relation to the Community Strategy, the development of the CP1 initiative, housing services and social inclusion.

Areas of future work were highlighted as being the review of the Housing Strategy, to develop the Public Space Strategy, affordable housing and budget proposals.

CPDG.04/07 OPTIONS FOR THE EARLY ADVANCEMENT OF HOUSING SITES TO ACHIEVE DELIVERY AGAINST COUNCIL PRIORITY 1 (AFFORDABLE HOMES)

A report was considered which sought to build on the agreed approach to advancing sites ahead of the Local Development Framework (LDF) in order to deliver affordable housing in areas of need. The sites were assessed through a matrix and the results were categorised to identify those which officers felt could be taken forward.

Members requested that extra columns be added to the list of sites detailing whether the Parish Councils had been consulted and whether the landowner had been identified and contacted. Members also wished for the information on progress to be displayed symbolically for quick reference. Members wished to discuss each site identified, it was then:

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

Officers and Members proceeded to discuss the options for the early advancement of specific potential housing sites.

RESOLVED

That the public and press be re-admitted.

Members expressed the view that once a potential site had been identified they would try and encourage communities and Parish Councils to engage in discussions with the Affordable Housing Team.

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED**:-

To approve the advancement of the sites set out in the report to better deliver against the Council priority CP1 in advance of the Local Development Framework Programme.

CPDG.05/07 INTERMEDIATE SUB MARKET RENTED SCHEME

A report was considered that advised Members of a proposed initiative to deliver additional intermediate affordable housing within the district in accordance with CP1 objectives.

The ability to address the scale of housing need in the district was dependent not only on the delivery of new supply from new builds, but also on innovative new initiatives such as the Sub Market Rented Scheme, which sought to increase the availability of affordable rented properties.

The proposed initiative was a direct response to an identified housing need and applied existing ring-fenced resources for affordable housing in an efficient and sustainable way.

A pilot scheme was being operated with Dartington Housing Association and would start with five existing properties, with proposed tenants being nominated from the South Hams District Council housing register. The proposed capital contribution from the Council was a target amount of £10,000 per unit. However, a degree of flexibility was required. There was a proposal that the Council's contribution would be funded through the use of section 106 negotiations.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- (i) Members considered the initiative to be an excellent way of moving from the traditional methods of providing affordable housing;
- (ii) Members considered the equity loan proposal was an excellent way of ensuring that the investment would not be lost;

- (iii) A Member questioned whether the Council was being over cautious in only purchasing five properties. Officers informed Members that the rental price of the properties, although below market price, was relatively high and as public money was being used, the Council wished to make sure the initiative was viable and met housing need. However, if successful the initiative could be expanded.

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** that the Council pursue the Intermediate Sub Market Rented Scheme in partnership with an appropriate Housing Provider.

CPDG.06/07 NOTES OF PUBLIC SPACES WORKING GROUP HELD ON 12 APRIL 2007

Members considered the notes of the Public Spaces Working Group meeting held on 12 April 2007 and the draft Strategy Action Plan for 2007 to 2012.

The Public Space Strategy tried to balance the quality, quantity and accessibility of the District's open spaces and, where appropriate, promote local ownership or management.

The Strategy included all types of open spaces. A strategic view was required when examining the role of the public space and the cost of the maintenance. A comprehensive approach was taken to the compilation of the Strategy and officers had tried to incorporate a range of previous policies resulting in a rationalisation of the current approach.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) Members commented upon the poor level of response received during the consultation process. Members were advised that the consultation process had been modified, which had created a slightly better response;
- (ii) A non group Member expressed the view that the open spaces in his ward were maintained more efficiently and effectively by the Parish Council and gave his support to the idea of the parishes taking a lead in the management of their open spaces.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted that the Working Group had considered the consultation feedback and was satisfied with the strategy document.

CPDG.07/07 HOUSING STRATEGY – PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Members received an update on performance in delivery of the Housing Strategy. Appendix A refers.

With regard to the Beacon update, Members were advised that a number of initial ideas for one of the projects had not been progressed. As an alternative officers suggested the commissioning of work that reviewed the potential for land leasing arrangements to encourage the provision of affordable housing by local land owners. The output would be a report and explanatory leaflets for landowners, Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords. Members considered the proposal an excellent idea.

(Meeting started at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.05 pm)

Chairman