

WEST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN TO 2032

MATTER 3 AGENDA

15 MARCH 14:00

The Plan Strategy and the Delivery of Affordable Housing

Please read the Inspector's Note that accompanies this Agenda

Issue 1: The points raised in my initial letter to the Council (ED3) at paragraphs 18 to 35, including the questions in that final paragraph, have not been fully answered by the Council in its subsequent correspondence (ED4, ED8 and the papers to the Local Development Panel on 25 November 2015). Having regard to those questions is the strategy on which the Plan is based the most appropriate of those considered to deliver the required market and affordable housing?

I have set out my understanding and concerns in the attached note and earlier correspondence with the Council.

1. Is the strategy being followed in the plan the most sustainable of those considered and, if so, what is the evidence to support that view?
2. If it is not, what alternative strategy would be more sustainable?
3. Will the chosen strategy deliver housing in the numbers and types said by the Council to be required?
4. If not, how should affordable (in both senses of the word) housing be delivered?
5. What are participants' views about my understanding set out in paragraphs 7-9 of the attached Inspector's Note?
6. Following on from Q5, in its statement, the Council indicates that the definitions of 'limited' and 'small scale' are to be applied flexibly (ED34/3, paragraph 3.1.7). What are the implications for the plan particularly in the light of the comments of Stogumber Parish Council (ED22)?

Issue 2: The Housing and Planning Bill will be enacted during the life of the Plan and, perhaps, prior to its adoption. Assuming that the provisions of the Bill and particularly Part 1 remain largely as set out are the policies of the Plan sufficiently flexible to allow the required starter homes and self-build and custom house building to come forward? If not, what changes are required?

1. Among those who have responded to this issue, there appears to be a consensus that this will be challenging for the Council. It may well not lead to any additional affordable housing and could even prejudice the provision that could come forward. Nevertheless, as currently drafted a duty will be imposed upon the Council. If that requires a policy

response at some point, what might that be and how should it be managed through the adoption of this plan?

Issue 3: Having regard to the Sustainability Appraisal (SD11 to SD15) and the November 2015 Addendum and Appendix is the selection of strategic and, especially, early release sites justified by the evidence base and, if not, what should be done by way of correction?

The discussion under this Agenda item is intended to focus on the way the Council selected the sites put forward, not whether they will be deliverable; that is for Matter 5. The purpose of this discussion is to understand the methodology used so that any further sites that may be required can be selected in a similar manner.

1. How did the Council use the SHLAA and Sustainability Appraisal processes and the table in Appendix B of the report to the Local Development Panel on 25 November 2015 (this does not appear to have a document number) to select the sites identified in policies MD2, WA2, WI2 and LT1 and then the early release sites? The sites do not appear to be ranked in any way. What therefore were the criteria for their selection?
2. If, using the selection criteria to be explained in answer to Q1, 9 sites were identified for early release, on what basis did only 6 come forward? What evidence is there to indicate that the other 3 should not also be included as early release sites?
3. While it will become clearer after the discussion under Issue 1, it currently seems to me that a not insignificant proportion of the windfall assumption will come forward on sites over 10 dwellings in capacity. Why should they not be identified from the SHLAA sites and allocated now?
4. As some representors have observed, there is no policy mechanism for these sites to be brought forward. What does the Council propose?

Confirmed Participants: Exmoor National Park Planning Authority; Stogumber Parish Council; Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd; House Builders' Federation; The Wyndham Estate; South West Strategic Developments ; Mr C Shapland; Crown Estate; West Somerset Council