



West of England Partnership

Bath & North East
Somerset Council



North
Somerset
COUNCIL

South Gloucestershire
Council

Minutes of meeting of the

Planning, Housing and Communities Board

Thursday 12 November 2009, 1.30pm, Council House, Bristol

Present

Cllr Vic Pritchard	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Jon Rogers	Bristol City Council
Cllr Mark Wright	Bristol City Council
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees	North Somerset Council
Cllr Brian Allinson	South Gloucestershire Council

In Attendance

Steve Grainger	Social, Economic and Environmental Partner
Dave Jones	Government Office for the South West
Graham Sabourn	Bath and North East Somerset Council
David Trigwell	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Zoe Willcox	Bristol City Council
Mark Hughes	North Somerset Council
Karuna Tharmananthar	North Somerset Council
Jon Shaw	South Gloucestershire Council
Barbara Maksymiw	South Gloucestershire Council
Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Tim Lansley	West of England Partnership
Penny Bell	West of England Partnership

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Matthew Riddle of South Gloucestershire Council and Councillor Charles Gerrish of Bath and North East Somerset Council. Councillor Ap Rees gave apologies on behalf of Councillor Ashton of North Somerset Council and explained that Councillor Ashton was not the correct representative for this Board. Councillor Ap Rees would represent North Somerset Council on both planning and housing matters.

Apologies were also received from John Savage and David Crook.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Member and Public Forum

There were no public forum items.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 07 September 2009

Terry Wagstaff informed members that the recommendation on Item 8 of the minutes appeared to be incorrect and that, to his recollection, members had in fact agreed with Councillor Gerrish's proposal. Members were in agreement and the minutes were to be amended to reflect this.

Councillor Pritchard enquired as to the position of disabled facilities grants. Graham Sabourn informed members that a letter had been written to the Strategic Health Authority regarding this, and a response had been received that recommended making contact with local PCT representatives. Members were concerned that a lack of progress was being made on this issue and that it would not be productive to go back to the PCTs.

Graham Sabourn informed members that, if the PCTs were to be approached on this issue, it was best to do it now whilst the PCTs were setting their financial plans for next year.

Councillor Allinson informed members that the Leaders Board of South West Councils was due to hold a meeting and that it could be a useful forum for this issue. Members agreed that it would be helpful to receive feedback of this meeting at the next meeting of this Board.

Resolved:

That 'disabled facilities grants' should be an agenda item at the next meeting.

5. Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Jon Shaw presented a report on the nature and findings of the West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the actions to be considered, including through the Single Conversation with Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Regional Development Agency (RDA).

Member's attention was drawn to Table 1 in the report and in particular the column detailing 'annual average need' for affordable homes. The figures in this column also included the number of new homes required to catch up on deficits. Table 2 in the report divided the 'need' into social rented and intermediate housing.

The report informed the Single Conversation with HCA and RDA of key messages, which were need versus supply, keeping supply in balance with arising need and the tenure characteristics of need.

Councillor Wright acknowledged the shortfall in current numbers of affordable

homes being delivered and felt consideration should be given to the most appropriate course of action going forward. Councillor Wright was also concerned that Table 3 in the report was misleading in suggesting that there was a greater need for one-bedroom flats; larger numbers of persons requiring family housing.

Resolved:

That members noted the report, and that further reports to explore the issues in greater detail should be prepared.

6. Single Conversation: Progress Report

Terry Wagstaff presented a report on the progress and next steps to be taken with the Single Conversation. The appendices to the report contained information that was 'work in progress' and undergoing final negotiations within the respective authorities, and therefore the appendices were to be treated as exempt.

A meeting had been held with HCA at which presentations were made and negotiations furthered regarding ambitions of the sub-region and approaches to investment. Further meetings would be taking place over the coming months to agree priorities in relation to the Joint Investment Plan. The allocation of resources to HCA regions had not yet been confirmed, but this was believed to be imminent.

Jon Shaw reported that there were 11 sub-regions in the South West that were going through the Single Conversation process, and that the West of England sub-region was one of the furthest advanced.

Resolved:

That members endorsed the report and the progress that had been made to date.

7. Sub-Regional Infrastructure: Planning and Delivery – Summary of study outcomes

Tim Lansley presented a report on the key outcomes of a recent sub-regional study of infrastructure requirements and delivery issues undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Partnership.

A study had been received from consultants Roger Tym and Partners that identified and appraised the strategic infrastructure requirements of growth at the key development locations of the sub-region as identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). An Executive Summary of the consultant's report was appended to the report and available at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/meetings/planning-housing--communities-board/12-november-2009>

- Jon Shaw commented on paragraph 26 of the Executive Summary and the reference to 20% affordable housing on urban development sites; this was not a threshold that he was familiar with, and he questioned whether work had been done to check that the work on the ground reflected the high-level viability work that had been done by the consultants.

- Councillor Allinson and Barbara Maksymiw advised that some of the wording of the study did not acknowledge local sensitivities. Concern was expressed about assumptions made about phasing and viability and the need for 'sign-off' by leaders.
- Councillor Ap Rees and Karuna Tharmananthar advised that the study should be treated as evidence to be considered and reviewed in preparing policy.
- Councillor Wright highlighted inaccuracies in respect of the provision of telecommunication links for new development.
- Terry Wagstaff informed members that the report was a high-level strategic report, and that greater detail could not be secured without more money being spent, and there was no contingency in the budget to allow for this.

Resolved:

That members noted the report.

8. Multi-Area Agreement Draft Delivery Plan: Growth in Homes and Jobs

Terry Wagstaff presented a report on the draft Delivery Plan that accompanied the West of England Multi-Area Agreement.

The draft Delivery Plan was considered to be pivotal in resisting planning applications that went against sub-regional policies and aspirations, and provided a negotiating tool to use with the Planning Inspector where necessary. The draft Plan also sought to achieve alignment among public investors with the ambitions in the authorities' Core Strategies.

Councillor Ap Rees commented on paragraph 5 of Appendix 1, and the reference it made to the Plan being underpinned by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Councillor Ap Rees preferred that the Plan should take note of it, but not be 'underpinned' by it. Terry Wagstaff commented that this related to the authorities own Core Strategy preparations of land supply and availability.

Resolved:

That members noted the report.

9. Next meeting

Thursday 17 December 2009, 1.30pm, BAWA, Filton.