

## **JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING FOR MORETON – NO. 1**

**Thursday 28 April 2016 at 10.30**

Location: Dorset County Council offices, Dorchester

### **Present:**

*Cllr Peter Wharf  
Cllr Laura Miller  
Cllr Cherry Brooks  
Cllr Andy Canning  
Cllr Nigel Bundy  
Trevor Warrick  
Anna Lee  
Matthew Piles  
Mike Garrity  
Trevor Badley  
Barbara Talbott*

*Dorset County Council – Purbeck District  
Purbeck District Council  
Purbeck District Council  
Dorset County Council – West Dorset District  
West Dorset District Council – Broadmayne & Crossways  
West Dorset District & Weymouth & Portland Borough Councils  
Purbeck District Council – Planning Policy Manager  
Dorset County Council – Head of Economy  
Dorset County Council – Team Leader County Planning  
Dorset County Council – Minerals & Waste Planning Policy  
Dorset County Council – Minerals & Waste Planning Policy*

### **1. Introductions**

M. Garrity (MG) welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Introductions were made around the table.

It was agreed that the notes of this meeting would be sent to Richard Drax MP as a follow-up to his suggested liaison between the three authorities (Purbeck, West Dorset, DCC). It was noted that this meeting would also usefully form part of the Duty to Co-operate responsibilities for the 3 councils.

MG explained the broad reason for the meeting was to allow discussion around cross-authority issues concerning proposed housing and mineral sites in the Crossways/Moreton area which have resulted in significant levels of concern from local residents. It is important for all the authorities involved to consider these issues in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

### **2. Minerals & Waste Consultations**

The minerals work undertaken by DCC involves preparation of the Mineral Sites Plan, and on 13 May 2016 the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) will be asked to agree that further consultation takes place on 4 additional sites, together with the Draft Waste Plan (additional sites and emerging preferred sites). Consultation is scheduled for late May-July 2016. The JAC meeting will also consider a revision to the timetable for Minerals and Waste Plan production.

M. Piles (MP) noted that during the previous consultation he had confirmed with objectors to the three Moreton sites that DCC would continue to consider 'late' objections after the informal closing date of 23 September 2015. Objectors were advised to respond by 23 October 2015.

P. Wharf (PW) commented that despite public perception that sites are coming forward late in the plan process, his understanding is that it is perfectly within the rights of developers to submit potential sites to the Mineral Planning Authority to consider and the MPA has a responsibility to assess these. Trevor Badley (TB) confirmed that this is the case.

Further, it is important to state that the MPA has a statutory duty to plan positively for mineral needs but this is not a financial matter; the MPA does not receive any remuneration for allocating a site and must consider these on material planning grounds only. Not to do so would risk the plan being found unsound at its examination.

### **3. Governance/Logistics**

All agreed that the Notes of this meeting should be circulated as appropriate, and placed on the Minerals Planning pages of the Dorset for You website.

It was felt that there would be merit in holding future meetings as this would provide a useful forum to consider cross-boundary planning issues affecting the Moreton area in accordance with the statutory duty to co-operate. It should be noted, however, that it would not have a decision-making role in relation to the emerging local plans as there are formal committees/process in place for dealing with these.

For reference it was agreed that an appropriate title for the forum would be “JOINT WORKING GROUP FOR MORETON”.

### **4. Presentation 1 – Trevor Badley (TB) – Minerals Planning Policy**

TB ran through the background to, and current stages of, the Mineral Sites Plan from 2008 to present day, explaining the late addition in 2014 of the two Moreton sites (AS25 Hurst Farm and AS26 Station Road).

The previous consultation of the Mineral Sites Plan was summer 2015, which took place shortly after a local plan options consultation from Purbeck District Council and consequently raised concern amongst local Moreton residents about ‘over-development’ and potential cumulative impacts.

PW sought clarification that a new site (Gallows Hill, Puddletown Road) and a site previously consulted on that has been re-introduced (Philliol’s Farm, NW of Wareham) will be consulted on this summer, but that none of the Moreton sites will be in this forthcoming consultation document, pending their continued consideration by the MPA. TB confirmed this was correct.

TB outlined the content of the consultation document, which will include the following: a review of the aggregate production figures; the inclusion of four sites for comment (Gallows Hill; Philliol’s Farm; Henbury Farm – Sturminster Marshall; Swanworth Quarry extension – Worth Matravers).

Future tasks to progress the Mineral Sites Plan will include refining the evidence base; one key element of which is a cross-authority transportation assessment to consider the combined impacts of all the proposed development in the area from a) mineral sites b) Purbeck DC housing c) West Dorset DC housing.

A.Canning (AC) queried how matters would be progressed should the transport study reveal issues with local transportation. MG commented that if the model showed detrimental impacts the MPA (and presumably the other authorities) would need to consider if such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated, which might include consideration of the amount and phasing of development. The assessment would take into account options being considered by both Purbeck DC and West Dorset DC as well as the mineral sites. It was agreed that the transport assessment should include a non-technical summary to ensure the findings and recommendations can be clearly understood. It was agreed to report the findings of the assessment to the Working Group, and that the final document

will be published on the website. It will have the status of technical evidence, not policy. It will be used to inform the emerging policies and plans of the three authorities.

AC noted that public perception was that both Government and councils are too 'pro-development'. It is important, therefore to give proper consideration to genuine local concerns. The transport assessment would help in this regard.

C.Brooks commented that there are genuine public fears about the cumulative effect of housing and mineral development coming forward in this area. It will be important to consider how development will come forward over time and to explain this clearly.

MG noted that it is the case that planning authorities have a statutory duty to plan positively to meet future needs. In Dorset this is challenging due to significant levels of environmental and landscape designations of national and international significance. This tends to place more onus on areas unconstrained by such designations, added to which minerals need to be worked where they are found. This raises a challenge for the local authorities concerned in considering the development needs against the concerns raised by local residents. This point was noted by all.

## **5. Presentation 2 – Anna Lee – Purbeck District Council housing proposals**

Anna Lee (AL) provided background and updated the situation in regard to local planning policy in Purbeck. The District Council adopted the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 in 2012, but this was only found sound subject to an early 'partial review' to explore options for further growth in the district.

The Eastern Dorset SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) was published in 2015 and identified a need for 238 homes each year up to 2033; meaning around 3000 additional new dwellings need to be provided across the Purbeck District up to 2033. These 3,000 homes would be in addition to the homes already planned for in the adopted Local Plan. The Council is seeking to find sites for these additional homes through the Local Plan Partial Review. Around 250 sites have been assessed, but not all are suitable for development for varying reasons.

The Council is aiming to consult on options for the Partial Review during the summer 2016. The current 'preferred option' prepared by officers includes provision of 350 dwellings at Redbridge Pit, together with a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) which will help to mitigate potential impacts emanating from residential development upon nearby heathland areas. Work on infrastructure needs associated with the site has commenced: the transport assessment will help to inform this work. No new school is currently required, but there is space available on this site if a need is identified. This proposal will be considered at a full Council meeting on 10 May 2016 as one of the preferred options for future housing in Purbeck.

In addition to the 'preferred option', officers were also proposing to consult on two alternative options: one would include provision of 600 homes at Redbridge Pit and Moreton Station, and the other would not include any development at Redbridge Pit or Moreton Station.

AC was keen to ensure that there is sufficient level of publicity around the Crossways area for the consultation.

N.Bundy (NB) commented that as local councillor for the Crossways and Broadmayne area he was in the centre of all the proposed mineral extraction and housing development. He expressed concern that the local infrastructure (roads, shops, schools) used by residents was not being upgraded, yet the

character of the area will change if the proposed additional houses, and quarries, are permitted and built; which would have a huge impact on the local people.

A key issue for residents is the condition of the local roads which are not A or B classified, and which appear to have a lower priority for highway maintenance. NB requested that this could be highlighted with the appropriate officers, and some enhancements made to the local infrastructure. MP noted this but was not in a position to make any commitments at this stage.

PW considered that infrastructure development is important and can demonstrate a tangible improvement to the current infrastructure situation and would be welcomed by residents.

## **6. A comprehensive approach**

Future development proposals around Moreton/Crossways will require co-ordination between the three authorities to ensure that there is a comprehensive approach to managing impacts and steering the delivery of development if and when it comes forward.

Attendees at the meeting felt that the role of this Working Group could be to co-ordinate and oversee this. PW felt it was also important to involve the Parish Councils at key stages.

NB commented that there was a public perception that individual local authorities worked individually, not as one and that this Working Group is welcomed.

There was general agreement that local communities do not always perceive the benefits of development but the impacts are usually more tangible and up-front. If development helps to deliver investment in schools, roads, etc. this can help to redress the negative perception.

NB considered it was essential to keep people informed about progress and PW expressed a shared view that transparency is important. This can help to keep people informed and involved and means future applications are better understood if and when they are submitted.

It was agreed that a comprehensive 'planned approach' was a positive measure to show how development on the ground would work. The statutory basis for this would remain the relevant local plans for the area to provide leverage when eventually dealing with planning applications. Otherwise it would have limited weight. It was considered that neighbourhood plans could play a positive role also.

It was decided that the Local Planning Authorities (West Dorset & Purbeck Districts) would be the lead organisations for steering the comprehensive approach, as they are responsible for planned housing and are also charging authorities for the Community Infrastructure Levy. AL suggested that Purbeck DC could lead given the authority's current stage of plan making. This was noted and agreed.

T. Warrick (TW) noted that the current West Dorset Local Plan contained two policies dealing with the Crossways area (CRS 1 & 2), both of which highlighted the importance of 'masterplanning'. Policy CRS 2 also highlighted the need for joint working with Purbeck DC, particularly on evidence gathering, which was also being undertaken for the local plan review. He explained that any decisions on future growth at Crossways would need to look more comprehensively at the implications for an area wider than just Crossways itself.

Key points to discuss when commencing this exercise are:

- Deliverability issues

- Terms of Reference for the working group (including how it engages with the parish councils)
- Ensuring that infrastructure issues such as education, health and transport are considered within the working group discussions

PW suggested the starting point for the working group should be the interrelationship between the housing/mineral sites and their respective/combined impacts.

LM noted that residents would want to see road improvements. The group discussed the housing at Crossways generally, and the current pro-housing stance of the Government which sets the national context.

The cross-authority transportation assessment will be a technical document and is not policy; its findings would need to be considered alongside all other evidence as part of the local plan preparation process. Officers clarified that this would not preclude representors from referring to such evidence at local plan consultations as it would be in the public domain alongside the proposed local plans.

Publication of the pre-submission Mineral Sites Plan will have a statutory 6 week consultation period on matters of soundness. Following this the intention is to submit the plan, along with all representations, to the Secretary of State for consideration at Examination by an independent inspector. Any subsequent modifications to the plan would then be consulted on while the Examination process was still open

It was agreed that engaging with the Local Enterprise Partnership could be beneficial due to links between housing, mineral development and the local economy and the LEP's role in funding infrastructure. This may assist communities seeking to promote future local projects.

## **7. CIL monies**

The group queried the level of CIL monies which would be forthcoming from the development, and how this could be redistributed to the communities.

TW confirmed that no CIL monies will be collected for the allocated site south of Crossways, as the local plan identifies the site as being 'CIL exempt'. Infrastructure would be delivered through a section 106 agreement for the site, and any financial contributions would be spent locally.

## **9. Presentation 3 – Trevor Warrick – West Dorset Local Plan review**

TW provided the background and current stage of the West Dorset Local Plan, explaining that the plan was formally adopted in October 2015, but on the proviso that an immediate review would be undertaken for the local area.

TW indicated that a consultation on Issues and Options would hopefully take place in February 2017. The Transport Assessment would be available in time for this.

TW explained that a planning application for housing development on the allocated site south of Crossways had been submitted and is now validated. The proposal on the site at Crossways is in two parts: a Full Application for the development of 99 dwellings; and an Outline Application for the development of 401 dwellings, employment land, and 22.4ha for a Site of Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) land. The projected timescale for delivery of the 99 houses is 2-3 years.

Part of these proposals involves the prior extraction of sand and gravel from the site. This is necessary as the site lies on an area included as Mineral Safeguarded land, identified in the Minerals Strategy

2014. Both Government and local authority policies require that mineral is not needlessly sterilised by built development, and that prior extraction should take place where practicable. An approximate depth of one metre sand and gravel will be extracted from this site, which will take a matter of months to achieve, not years.

TW explained that the on-going Local Plan Review is a requirement within the Inspector's report, requiring that the local authority must focus on a review of housing provision in the area: there is a requirement for an additional 4,500 Homes in the plan area, which will be planned for within the Review, which extends the plan period from 2031 to 2036. Additionally, local policies in the plan are to be reviewed to account for changes at national policy.

It is also necessary to consider future growth at Dorchester and Sherborne as part of the review. The Inspector's Report recommended that the review should identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne.

TW confirmed that the Sustainability Appraisal forming part of the plan will be consulted upon in due course.

Timescales for Plan production are:

- Call for sites – summer 2016 (to find land for an additional 4,500 dwellings through the SHLAA process. (AB was concerned that as there were only 3 landowners in total in the Crossways area, no change in land provision would be realised).
- Informal consultation – ongoing until publication – March 2018
- Examination hearings – March 2019
- Adoption – December 2019

Further consultations can be built into the timetable if required.

## **10. Changes to Local Government**

A short discussion took place regarding the implications of possible restructuring and/or a combined authority. This is unlikely to result in changes to development needs in the area, nor would its timing affect the progression of current work on the local plans of each authority.

## **12. General associated matters**

MP explained that matters relating to funding for roads / highway improvements needs to be considered in the context of other strategic priorities across Dorset. The Local Enterprise Partnership has a key involvement in this. Engagement with the LEP may be beneficial if seeking to secure LEP funding – this would need to demonstrate it is supporting economic and growth priorities (e.g. in the Western Growth Corridor).

MP explained briefly that CIL and section 106 contributions can be used for new infrastructure and under certain circumstances it may be possible to use this for maintenance work. However, this needs to comply with legislative requirements but also such funds rarely meet in full the cost of any work.

## **11. Next Steps / Outcomes**

The Group agreed that it would meet as and when relevant to discuss cross-boundary matters in the Moreton area arising from the three authorities' emerging local plans. Purbeck DC offered to

coordinate this. Known specific emerging tasks for the group would include terms of reference and discussion of future transport assessment work.

MG suggested that the meeting notes, presentations and links to other areas could be added to the Dorset for You website, and the Purbeck Local Plan, and West Dorset Local Plan web pages.

All Members agreed the meeting was very useful and helpful to progress matters in this area.

PW thanked all three authorities for preparing their presentations.

### **13. Next Meeting**

Date and venue to be advised.