

Isle of Wight AONB Partnership - Development Control & Planning Work Group
Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2006
2.30 p.m. Meeting Room, Innovation Centre

In Attendance

Richard Grogan	IW AONB Steering Committee Nature Conservation Portfolio (Chair)
Denis Russell	IW AONB Steering Committee Vice-Chairman/Community & Parish Portfolio
Tony Tutton	IW AONB Steering Committee Chairman
David Court	IW AONB Steering Committee Coastal Portfolio
Vicky Basford	IW AONB Steering Committee Historic Environment Portfolio
David Groves	IW AONB Steering Committee Rural Business Portfolio
Dennis Russell	Chairman CPRE
John Brownscombe	AONB Lead Officer
Nicky Rogers	AONB Planning Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

Remote Member

Nicola Davies Countryside Agency

1) Apologies

There were no apologies.

2) Minutes of previous meeting & Matters Arising

The point was raised about the closing time of the previous meeting, which should have read 2.00 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true copy of the proceedings.

Matters Arising

Arreton Motorcross - the recent appeal was dismissed by the Inspectorate, and the Enforcement Notice upheld. It has now come to our attention that a further application will be made on the basis of using the site for motorcross. This will include an Environmental Statement, which was a requirement of the previously refused application, which went to appeal. Reports in the local press have also indicated that an event is due to take place later this year. A Statement of Community Involvement has been provided, but this has been addressed to those likely to support the event, with neither the Parish Council nor the local community being involved.

3) Island Plan

3.1 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy of the new Island Plan is a strategic document that seeks to replace the first part of the UDP, and the deadline for comments is 24 March 2006. JB and NR have read through the document, and JB gave a brief overview of the list of relevant points, tabled for discussion together with a matrix comparing the UDP with the core strategy in the new Island Plan. The general thrust of the document is broadly acceptable, but JB/NR have concerns about its length and accessibility in terms of language and use of jargon. This is particularly so because the consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement clearly states that documents should be produced in plain English.

DC asked who was responsible for producing the document. The results of the consultation process were considered by the Local Authority and LSP Executive, following which consultants were briefed to produce the document.

DR asked if there were any references regarding flooding or the Heritage Coast, and was advised there is reference to the Shoreline Management Plan, which has not yet been completed. It was pointed out, however, that it would be difficult to make any strategic comments on plans not yet in existence.

RG pointed out that definitions of meanings e.g. urban areas require proper identification, because if this does not happen and they are accepted in principle, the final interpretation may be inaccurate. VB queried whether the final document would take account of comments received during the consultation period, and was advised that there will be an opportunity to comment again on the final submission prior to its ratification. It is hoped there will be some form of summary document to show the comments submitted, and how these were incorporated in any changes to the document between the first and second stages.

Bearing in mind the complexity of this document, DC suggested the Work Group should provide general support to the comments tabled by JB/NR.

There are some statements in the document with which we can agree, but there are areas that are ambiguous and open to misinterpretation. We need to ensure we put forward a strong message that development where appropriate is based on a broad spectrum of issues covering housing needs, growth and protection of the landscape. We should only be supporting growth within designated areas in relation to sympathetic rural land based industries and housing based on a locally identified need with an appropriate tenure, rather than second homes or executive type housing. This could be achieved by having specific wording for protected landscapes as a core policy. This is justified, as the AONB is a spatial designation rather than site specific, and as AONB is equivalent to National Park and they have their own LDF and Planning process, a separate core policy for the AONB is not unreasonable.

The meeting agreed that JB/NR would provide a written comment via the website together with a letter, a copy of which will be sent to all members of the Work Group covering the following:-

- the overall clarity of the document.
- the issue about consideration of development both inside and outside the AONB.
- the issue regarding definition of "countryside".
- look in detail how the document deals with landscape, natural and historic environment.
- specific issues in relation to housing within the AONB covering needs basis and appropriate tenure.
- greater emphasis on need to ensure the document is sufficiently flexible to deal with changes in rural land use industry on a strategic basis.
- stress lack of focus on rural economy.
- cannot link to other statutory documents not in preparation.
- lack of any mention of AONB Management Plan.
- separate Core Policy for landscape and AONB.

Update: A copy of the comment has been circulated to all Members of the Work Group

4) Planning Policy

4.1 PPS3 Housing

This document lacks any specific reference to protected landscapes and does not accord with PPS7. We need to draw attention to the fact that protection for AONBs in PPS7 is equivalent to that of National Parks, and also the statutory duty of regard. When we are given the opportunity to review policy changes, we should seek to have this equivalence and duty embedded as outlined in PPS7.

4.2 SPG Horse Management and Farm Diversification

This will be progressed in the near future.

5) Development Control

5.1 DC Monitoring

NR gave an overview of applications inside and outside the AONB, and advised that increased discussions with applicants at the early stages of an application, has possibly led to fewer objections. A strong and positive professional working relationship is being built with Planning, with an open exchange of views and information. It is hoped a similar technique will improve the relationship with Enforcement following the recent changes.

5.2 DC Update

With regard to Arreton Barns, we have objected to the current application based on the amount of engineering and landscaping that will be required to make the car park acceptable. We also have concerns over proposals regarding the development of redundant farm buildings, into an attraction and the impact of increased customer usage.

Update: Site meeting with agent, landscape architect, John Brownscombe/Nicky Rogers to discuss car park. Revised plans and information to be submitted. Meeting scheduled on 10 April 2006 with C Hougham and agent

Update: Objection withdrawn, subject to conditions

Regarding Gladices Barn a whole farm plan has been provided, and the issues raised by the Local Authority's consultant are being discussed. This will satisfy our comment requiring more information, and as the issue of the building itself is not being re-visited, the application is now likely to be in line with policy.

NR has recently identified applications included on the regular distribution list, not in the AONB, and will investigate to ensure applications which are in the AONB, are not being missed. The recent meeting with Andrew Pegram, the new Development Control Manager, was excellent, and he is very supportive of pre-application discussions to ensure a consistent approach between Planning and the AONB Unit. Initial discussions are usually by telephone, with an on-site meeting if this is appropriate.

Discussions also included our Horse Management and Landscape Guidance, and whether this could be used for the whole Island. This is not within our remit although we did seek to

do this, but were unable to include this guidance in the Isle of Wight Council's suite of documents recently adopted as SPG. This is not open to us, but there is no reason why the document could not be used to illustrate best practice.

6) Any Other Business

The Isle of Wight Council Development Control section has now been divided into East and West teams, and also includes the staff responsible for Enforcement, which was identified as part of the efficiency savings. Concern was expressed that Enforcement Officers were also dealing with applications which could have an impact on Enforcement issues.

RG advised that a meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership Environment Group, of which he is the Chairman and JB is a member of the committee, is due to be held during the first week in April. VB asked if Archaeology was involved, and obtained details of the meeting to see if it was possible to attend.

The AONB Planning Officer listed the salient points from the Audit Commission's report into planning for the benefit of the Work Group:-

- it assesses current expectations of planning to evaluate whether Councils have been successful in the communication of Government goals, and how they can increase capacity.
- should now be spatial planning, not land use planning.
- should deliver housing growth and supporting infrastructure in the South, and economic growth in the North and Midlands.
- developments should deliver environmental and social objectives, and focus on improving timescales.
- should support housing growth in identified areas, and regeneration in appropriate areas.
- ensure development is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.
- system is a core Council function, which should deliver change equally.
- planning and regeneration should not be separate (which is the proposal of the IW Council), but joined together as spatial planning.
- increases in the time taken to process applications could result in reduced services to both developers and the general public.
- consultees will now have less time to comment on applications, which may not always be possible. There are also major issues regarding shortage of planning staff, lack of skills in dealing with major applications and high staff turnover. This could be overcome by using the private sector, buying in consultants, partnership working, and sharing resources
- changes in focus of performance indicators.

The document can be found in full on the ODPM website.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.32 p.m.

cdm
21 March 2006