

Isle of Wight AONB Partnership - Development Control and Planning Work Group
Minutes of Meeting 05 August 2008
9.30 a.m. Boardroom, Innovation Centre, St Cross Business Park, Newport

In Attendance

Richard Grogan	IW AONB Steering Committee Nature Conservation Portfolio (Chair)
David Court	IW AONB Steering Committee Coastal Portfolio
Professor Dennis Russell	Chairman CPRE
Vicky Basford	IW AONB Steering Committee Historic Environment Portfolio
Denis Russell	IW AONB Steering Committee Vice-Chairman
David Groves	IW AONB Steering Committee Rural Business Portfolio
Daniel Child	IW Council
Lisa Scovell	IW Council
Fiona Hanna	AONB Lead Officer
Nicky Rogers	AONB Planning Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

Remote Member

Andy Gordon Natural England

1) Apologies for absence

Tony Tutton IW AONB Steering Committee Chairman

2) Minutes of previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings of the last meeting.

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Horse Management and Farm Guidance: the Regional Guidance for Horse Pasture Management funded by SEEDA, which was to have been produced by Francis Clayton from Kent Downs, did not receive enough contributions from other South East AONBs to be published. We offered funds from core budget, but were one of very few to do so. It is hoped funding will be secured to publish the document nationally in the near future.

Farm Guidance - NR advised that on reviewing this document she felt it was another hurdle for farmers to contend with. It is intended the document will be reviewed with this in mind.

Thorness: the applicants have addressed all the points we raised in our comment, and have now proposed a better quality of chalet with landscaping. The application has been approved.

West Island: the application was withdrawn.

Atherfield: following pre-application discussions to re-develop the site, during which we raised several concerns, no application has been forthcoming from the applicant. It is understood they will refurbish the existing facilities.

Motocross: this application has been outstanding since last November, due to problems with the quality of the Environmental Impact Assessment. It is now at the determination stage, and NR advised the AONB has objected to the application.

3) Council Enforcement - Daniel Child

Daniel attended the meeting to introduce himself as the new Interim Enforcement Team Leader for the IW Council, who has extensive experience in the field of designated landscapes. The Council are aware of the concern which has been expressed at the backlog of enforcement cases. In addition to the new team leader, there are three permanent staff in Enforcement and two additional interim staff to deal with the backlog.

The current enforcement policy, which is perceived to be inadequate, is being reviewed and a new policy is due for completion next week. Cases will be dealt with using a simple traffic light model, with those cases causing significant harm or damage designated as red and high priority. Performance monitoring will also be undertaken, to check how the team are responding to performance targets. Calls to the Enforcement Team will be routed through an administration support to ensure calls are directed to the right person, and provision of quarterly enforcement statistics will be resumed.

A request was made from D Russell that when the new Enforcement Policy is published, it could be communicated to Town and Parish Councils, and DC agreed this could be done.

A question was asked about whether it would be possible to have a system available online for Enforcement similar to that for Planning, with cases given numbers. It was advised that although there was a public register of enforcement notices held at Seaclose, access via the website would be difficult, as some cases could be subject to court proceedings and would be excluded under the Freedom of Information Act. However, it might be possible to provide a simple list of cases and their status.

4) Island Plan - Lisa Scovell

The Island Plan Core Strategy Issues and Options sent out earlier this year, provided details on the direction the Island could take over the next twenty years. Workshops were held on the various themes providing useful information, with responses received both written and online. All this information will now be shaped into more rounded policies, to provide a vision taking us forward over the next twenty years, in terms of strategic planning objectives and possibly strategic sites within the document.

The Core Strategy Options consultation will be launched from 08 August, with a deadline date of 22 September 2008. There will be drop-in surgeries for the public at Seaclose, to talk about the document and obtain explanations of the reasoning behind the policies. There will also be more formal themed discussions with the relevant stakeholders. These discussion groups will be more focussed to help firm up the policies, before submitting the document to the Planning Inspectorate later this year.

It was advised that it is vital the information provided in the final document illustrates the reasoning behind the policies, and that we have taken account of opinions expressed by key stakeholders and the general public. If there are areas where these have not been taken into account, there must be a justification statement as to why this is the case e.g. it does not comply with national or regional guidelines or there is not enough evidence to take the point on board. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is reliant on a solid evidence base to support the policies, and extensive work has been undertaken to ensure this evidence has been provided.

The document will be available on the Council website, and details of the surgeries will also be published in the County Press and IW Beacons. There will be a meeting of the Work

Group early in September, to discuss our comments prior to the end of the consultation period.

Action: CM to scope for suitable meeting dates

It was advised there have been changes to the South East Plan, regarding the number of dwellings to be provided, but there is no change to the proposed amount on the Island of 520 per annum. Although concern was expressed about meeting these targets, it was advised we are currently reaching this figure.

A question was asked about the Community Strategy, and it was advised this would be part of the Island Plan. Some policies under the old Unitary Development Plan (UDP) will not necessarily be carried forward, although the Secretary of State has agreed those that will be saved. The revision of PPS12 has meant it is essential to cut down on the number of consultation events. The Island Plan will consist of a folder of documents which will ensure greater flexibility, as any changes will only need to be made to one section rather than the whole document.

5) Development Control

5.2 Applications

a) Haven Sands

This relates to an eco-build in Castlehaven Lane, with the existing chalet bungalow being replaced by a new dwelling. Although the Work Group would be generally supportive of eco-build dwellings, each application must be considered on its merits. Following discussion it was felt this application was unsuitable for the following reasons:-

- the 50% increase in the footprint of the building was excessive
- large amount of glazing would contribute to light pollution in an area of 'dark skies'
- the increased size would create a greater visual impact
- is the building sustainable
- possible problems of demolition and re-build in an area prone to stability problems

Update: NR has objected to the application

b) Plaish Farm

This has been circulated to the Work Group by e-mail, and replies received.

c) Brambles

This is an application for two dwellings in a rear garden on the approach to Godshill village. NR has been involved in pre-application discussions, together with IW Council Planning Archaeologist, Owen Cambridge and Tree Officer, Jerry Willis.

Although the Work Group considered the design acceptable, and the Tree Officer has advised some of the trees may have to be removed due to possible damage to the stone wall which is an historic feature, concern was expressed as follows:-

- this area is an important green space within the village
- the site lies within an historic area surrounding the church
- the dwellings will be built in a very elevated position
- approval of this application could lead to further development of the site

Update **NR has objected to the application**

5.2 Development Control Issues

a) Cheverton Wind Farm

This proposal follows a previous approval for three 52m turbines, and a current proposed scheme is for three turbines at a height of 125m from ground to tip. The applicant will have to produce an Environmental Impact Statement to include views from both inside and outside the AONB, and prominent positions across the Island. A scoping consultation has been undertaken, and we have made representations that they need to address the issue of noise from public rights of way, as well as the usual visual impact assessments.

At this point, the Chairman reiterated the policy regarding wind farms as set out in the current AONB Management Plan, "that small scale wind energy schemes (one to three turbines ranging up to 500kW, in the region of 60m height to blade tip, and with clusters no less than 10km apart) could be accommodated, where they do not compromise the objectives of the designation and respect the local countryside character"

The meeting agreed that each application for wind turbines should be considered on its merits.

b) Sand Schools

Regardless of the materials proposed for sand schools, the opinion of the Work Group was that visual impact was an important consideration in such applications.

c) Hardstandings

NR is often asked about the best materials to use for hard surfacing, especially in rural areas. VB suggested English Heritage has guidance on this, and it was probably natural stone, NR to investigate.

The Environment Agency has also produced new regulations with regard to hardstandings.

d) Council Members

Concern has recently been expressed by an individual Councillor and a Parish Council, that they wish to view the comment by the AONB Planning Officer prior to preparing their comment, and it should be available before each Parish Council meeting.

The established procedure with regard to planning applications affecting the AONB, is that they are all subject to a minimum statutory 21 day consultation period. However, in some cases agreement will be reached with the relevant Case Officer for an extension to this. If we are providing a full comment, the AONB Planning Officer will log on the Council website that a comment is pending.

The AONB Planning Officer has provided information to both the individual Councillor and the Parish Council regarding the correct planning protocol with regard to applications, but is still being pressured to provide her comment prior to the deadline date. The Work Group felt this pressure was not acceptable.

Following further discussion, the Work Group agreed the matter should be discussed between W Murphy, Head of Planning Service and T Tutton, IW AONB Partnership Steering Committee Chairman.

6) Any Other Business

A point was raised about policy LW4 in the Draft Management Plan Review, which covers sustainable approaches to development where they conserve the AONB, as being too prescriptive. It is intended this will be addressed when our Farm Guidance Policy is reviewed. Also the IW Council Supplementary Planning Document regarding Conversion of Rural Buildings, does not appear to be on the Council website. NR agreed to check the current situation with regard to this document.

Update: SPDs are listed under Planning Services, Planning Policy, SPDs, Development Briefs on the website

The issue of the refused application at Couthy Butts and any further comments from the Work Group was raised, but it was felt this should only be discussed further if a new application was received.

The Work Group would like to put on record congratulations to Fiona Hanna, on her recent appointment as AONB Lead Officer.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.12 p.m.