

MINUTES

COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP THURSDAY, 27 JANUARY 2011



COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman)

Councillor Jeff Thompson (Vice-
Chairman)
Councillor Raymond Wootten

OFFICERS

Head of Assets - Paul Stokes (35-39)
Service Manager, Planning Policy and
Partnerships - Karen Sinclair(40-41)
Principal Democracy Officer - Jo
Toomey

OTHER MEMBERS

Councillor John Smith (Portfolio Holder:
Healthy Environment)

35. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss Channell, Martin-Mayhew and Stephens.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wootten declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, 'Update on Museum Facilities', because he is a County Councillor and has had involvement in meetings when museum arrangements have been discussed.

37. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2010

The action notes from the meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2010 were noted.

38. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Street Naming

The group's recommendation about the delegation of straightforward street-naming decisions to an officer had been considered by the Constitution Committee at their meeting on 17 January 2011. The Committee had supported the recommendation and endorsed their adoption to full Council. The Council will consider the report at its meeting on 3 March 2011.

At the last meeting, Members suggested that parish and town councillors should become involved with development at an early stage to optimise their influence. Group members asked that this recommendation be communicated to parish and town councils.

Recommendation

That steps are taken to notify parish councils of the recommendation that they work with developers at the earliest possible opportunity, to optimise their influence in the naming of streets.

Improvement of Rural Broadband

Work was undertaken to promote the BT 'Race to Infinity' scheme. As per the recommendation it was raised at the Parish Councils Conference and on SKDC's website. This generated a front page report in the Grantham Journal.

The Group recommended that as part of future planning applications broadband connectivity should be given the same consideration as that of other infrastructures. There was no legislation within the current planning process that allowed for this.

39. UPDATE ON MUSEUM FACILITIES

The Chairman welcomed Courtney Finn (secretary) and Alastair Hawken (chairman) from Grantham Community Heritage Association (GCHA).

As part of a series of cuts to heritage provision across Lincolnshire, the County Council announced in the summer of 2010, the closure of Grantham and Stamford museums. Both towns experienced a strong local push for the museums to remain open. In Grantham this work was led by GCHA, whose aim was creating a heritage point highlighting the town's past.

GCHA prepared a business plan for taking over the museum from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). The next step for the group was

identifying grant funding for the project. Applications were being made using the experience of project volunteers and the South Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Service (CVS). With support from South Lincs CVS, GCHA were also seeking charitable trust status.

With a viable business plan in place, GCHA were planning to take over the museum. Ideas for developing Grantham Museum included:

- A new shop and web shop
- A cinema room
- Displaying articles on loan from local organisations (schools, churches, etc.
- Box schemes of clothes for rental to schools
- Involvement in heritage studies courses

GCHA were awaiting a meeting with SKDC to look at taking over the building's lease and discussing its terms.

The project had attracted approximately 200 volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds. Orientation days were planned for February, so volunteers could see how exhibitions are taken down and put up, and training days were planned for April with a focus on building management. GCHA anticipated a full launch in September.

As part of plans to assist sustainability, GCHA were developing corporate sponsorship packages and opportunities for individuals to become friends of the museum. Visitors on the day would be asked to make a contribution.

Members complimented GCHA on their passion, professionalism, hard work and drive and said the project was an excellent example of the 'Big Society'. While Stamford Museum had been in a similar position, campaigns for a local take-over had not enjoyed the same success. Members felt supporters of Stamford Museum could benefit by using Grantham as a model. The Clerk to Stamford Town Council had a copy of GCHA's business plan.

15:34-15:41 The meeting was adjourned

40. GRANTHAM AREA ACTION PLAN

South Kesteven District Council's Service Manager, Planning Policy and Partnerships provided Members with a summary of the work on the Grantham Area Action Plan.

The purpose of the plan was to drive the regeneration and growth of the town and deliver growth point status. Overall context for the plan can be found within the Core Strategy, while the area action plan provides refinement through a policy framework and proposals to guide development.

The plan builds on consultation carried out over the last five years in relation to planning policy, housing and economic development documents.

Within the plan, boundaries have been drawn tightly around the town, with the exception of the north-west and south, where urban extension areas have been identified.

Themes covered by the policy were:

- Housing
- Employment
- Town centres
- Open space
- Regeneration sites
- Movement and accessibility
- Historic environment and townscape

There was a requirement to provide 7,680 houses in Grantham. A proportion of this had already been achieved, with over 1,000 completions since 2006, and another 1,050 that have received planning permission or are under construction. The sustainable urban extension areas should deliver 5,080 dwellings. However, that still leaves a requirement of approximately 500. These could be on brown field sites within the town or green field sites at the edge of town.

The development of sustainable urban extension areas, based on the projected number of dwellings, (3,000 in the north-west and 4,000 in the south), would also include local amenities including shops, playing fields and primary schools. Members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on the area action plans. Consultation will also take place on detailed master plans for the urban extension areas. This will provide people living in the direct vicinity of the sites the opportunity to influence the development.

The core strategy stipulated the need to provide approximately 90 hectares of employment land in Grantham. The strategy focused on both the development of new sites and the protection of existing sites.

Town centre and regeneration sites focused on reinforcing the role of the town centre established within the core strategy. This included the provision of increased retail floor space and focusing development in primary and secondary shop frontages. Also included were policies for each of the regeneration sites: Wharf Place, station approach and Greyfriars.

Members asked whether the change in government had impacted on the work. The Service Manager, Planning Policy and Partnerships explained that in terms of planning policy it was business as usual, however, one future development proposal within the Localism Bill was the production of neighbourhood action plans. The Bill also proposed financial incentives for the completion of new homes.

A six-week consultation period on the document would begin in early March. All responses would be considered and the document revised as necessary. The document would then be published for formal consultation. The final stages were independent examination, receipt of the inspector's report and adoption, which was projected for the first quarter of 2010.

41. PETERBOROUGH MARKET AREA INVESTMENT PLAN

The Service Manager, Planning Policy and Partnerships provided an explanation of local investment plans. They were the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) current model for determining investment based on local priorities. The level of resources available to support development projects was still unknown.

Investment plans were based on housing market areas, so SKDC was working in partnership with South Holland and Rutland. LCC had also been involved. The plan concentrated on the years 2011-2015, but included longer term aspirations.

Three thematic priorities were agreed across partners:

- Rural housing
- Rural housing need for specialist groups or vulnerable people
- Supporting the economy and infrastructure

The priority themes were broad to provide the greatest possible flexibility. Projects would be defined based on the level of funding available but could involve improving the communications infrastructure, developing town centres or provision of affordable rural housing.

There had been a delay signing-off the document, because boundaries had changed, removing Rutland from the partnership area. This was resolved and Rutland had been able to remain in the partnership.

Plans would be reviewed on an annual basis by the partners, to ensure the priorities were still relevant. The document was to set the guiding principles for investment but was only one means of identifying where the investment should be directed.

42. REPORT ON RURAL BROADBAND SEMINAR

Councillor Nicholson reported on the rural broadband forum he had attended in Leicester on 10 January 2011.

The forum highlighted good practice from other areas, where fibre optic cabling laid by public authorities was also used as a hub to service village communities. For example, it is likely cables were laid in villages to provide broadband for the local school. Many houses could be served from this base.

Group members agreed they would like to see the authority providing village communities with advice and support about working with public bodies to access broadband.

The Health Environment Portfolio Holder stated this was something

Lincolnshire Enterprise had also looked into.

It was proposed that there would be benefit from SKDC examining best practice in the development of rural broadband. The district council could then provide information to communities wishing to explore options to access improved broadband in their area.

Recommendation:

To designate officer time to investigate rural broadband possibilities and providing advice and information for parishes/communities wishing to develop a local hub.

16:45 Cllr Thompson and Councillor Smith left the meeting.

43. WORK PROGRAMME

Several Members had been involved with the Housing Allocations Policy working group and requested an update at the next meeting (24 March 2011).

44. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 16:48.