

Stogumber Parish Council.

Draft Minutes of public meeting held in Stogumber Village Hall on 27th November 2014

The meeting started at 19:30

Present

Councillors: J Spicer (Chair) M Symes G Tuckfield
C Bramall C Matravers V Sellick
J Leeming, Clerk
J Shorten, Planning Consultant
A Trollope-Bellew (District Councillor) C Lawrence (County Councillor)
7 members of the public.

The purpose of the meeting was for residents of Stogumber Parish to comment and debate the contents of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, produced by Stogumber Parish Council. The consultation period for comments on the Plan runs until Saturday 29/11/14.

J Spicer opened the meeting by explaining how Stogumber Parish Council had got to this point and introduced James Shorten, a planning consultant, engaged by SPC to convert the Statement of Needs and Wishes into a planning document, the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultant is being paid for by a central government grant. This draft plan will be amended after considering feedback from the consultation and will then be submitted to WSC for them to consult on its contents. It will then be sent for independent examination before being put to a referendum in the parish.

If accepted at a referendum, it will become the first document to be considered when a planning application is submitted in the parish. It will have more weight to it than the WSC Local Plan.

It was agreed that the meeting would consider the NP sequentially and comments on each section noted.

The first question was why part of the parish had not been included. It was explained that the part not included was in Exmoor National Park and if included SPC would have had to consult with 2 planning departments. It was felt it would be easier to keep to the area covered by WSC with a view to possibly including the rest at a later date.

Each policy was explained in turn and the following is the feedback on specific policies.

Policy EN2 Setting of Stogumber and EN3 Location of Development and Stogumber Features Map.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Setting of Stogumber policy. Some felt that it was restrictive to identify areas where development could have a detrimental impact on the approaches to Stogumber and that this policy closed down potential large sites for development. It was felt by some that all possible sites should be taken on merit. A question was asked as to why potential sites had not been identified for development and where there were sites within the village which could accommodate 3 new properties. JS explained that SPC was looking for incremental development but it would be up to each landowner to decide if they wished to develop in their gardens etc. JS explained that in the original village survey, 80% of respondents did not wish to see development on green field sites. There was a vote on whether any potential sites should be ruled out for development with 16 voting against this policy and 12 for.

Policy EN4 Larger Development Sites.

It was explained that policy EN4 was not in the original Statement of Needs and Wishes but was included for completeness. Larger sites would have to provide greater benefits to the community to be allowed. If allowed then the overall threshold for development could increase.

Policy EN6 Flood Risk.

The Environment Agency has not identified any flood risks in the parish but was happy for SPC to include this policy to cover locally specific flood risks.

Policy EN7 Renewable Energy.

Wind turbines had not been considered in the Statement of Needs and Wishes but has been included in the NP for completeness.

EN8 Transport and Development.

Planning authorities have limited powers regarding transport. A developer can be asked to cover the costs of any highway works required for that development but not general road improvements.

A question was asked about who would be responsible for replacing stiles with kissing gates as the landowner only has to provide stiles.

Policy C2 Housing Delivery.

Questions were asked about why there was a need for more affordable houses. The Rural Housing Project at Exmoor National Park undertook a housing needs survey in the parish and the results of that identified a need for 4 additional affordable rented properties. There was a discussion regarding the size limit on new development with some feeling it was too restrictive and could houses be extended under permitted development. It was explained that the village has a higher than average number of larger properties and a shortage of smaller properties, this size limit was an attempt to redress the balance. The NP could be amended to remove permitted development rights on new development to prevent large extensions being built at a later date.

Policy C9 Existing Community Open Spaces.

It was suggested the copse on the Beacon Field be added to this list.

A member of the public asked that the Cricket Club not be marked as a community open space as the cricket club field is privately owned and is available for use by members of the club.

Policy C12 Beacon Field

This policy identifies the potential uses of the Beacon Field. Some commented that they thought the Beacon field had been bought specifically for a permanent car park and this is not shown in the NP. One person felt it was inappropriate to offer part of the Beacon Field as a possible site for a new school, a new village hall being more appropriate and the school extending on its current site.

Policy C13 Car Parking

No site has been identified as suitable for a car park. JS explained that SPC was looking to improve the access to the Beacon Field and make a small car park there.

Policy C14 Essential Services.

The village shop has no control over the Post Office contract, the NP plan will be amended to remove the Post Office from this policy. The NP will be amended to include support for additional uses at the shop or pub to make the businesses more viable.

Policy C15 Church.

This policy may be removed as the church is protected by national legislation as a Grade 1 Listed Building.

Policy EC9 Low Impact Holdings.

This policy was not in the Statement of Needs and Wishes but is an innovative one to encourage new entrants to agriculture. There was a discussion regarding how this would work and whether it was fair to expect someone to live in temporary accommodation long term. It was explained that once a business was established then the owner could apply for full planning permission.

Policy EC10 Quarrying.

WSC would like this policy removed as quarrying is dealt with at County level.

Next steps.

Feedback from this consultation period will be considered by SPC and amendments made to the draft NP. This will then be submitted to WSC for their formal consultation after which it will be put forward for independent examination.

SPC will amend the plan in light of any feedback from the independent report and then the NP will be put to a referendum in the Parish. If passed WSC will adopt it and look at these policies first when considering any planning application in the NP area.

There was a vote of thank to Stogumber Parish Council for the work undertaken to reach this point.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 4th December 2014 at 7:30pm at Deane Close Common Room.