

Agents and Developers Annual Meeting

Wednesday 29TH February 2012

Cattistock Room

6pm-8pm

Minutes

Cllr Eades opened the meeting and welcomed the guests. Each attendee then introduced themselves.

Attendees from the Borough of Poole were;

Cllr Eades	Chairman, Planning Committee
Stephen Thorne	Head of Planning & Regeneration Services including Building Consultancy
Nigel Jacobs	Planning Policy and Implementation Manager
Richard Genge	Planning and Regeneration Manager
Sue Ludwig	Business Manager
Darryl Howells	Senior Planning Officer
Caroline Palmer	Planning Officer
Bruce Carmichael	Principal Surveyor, Building Consultancy
Keith Pegram	Projects and Performance Manager
Susanne Christie	PA to Stephen Thorne

Building Control Fees 2012/13 – Bruce Carmichael

BC confirmed the good news, in that there are to be no Building Regulation charges increases for 2012.

Feedback was invited with reference to the Building Regulation charges legislation 2010. As a result some changes were subsequently applied during April 2011. Some charge categories would benefit from additional floor areas and increased bands

A question was raised with reference to applications being accepted electronically? – BC confirmed that there is shortly to be a review with our software supplier with a view to progressing this further.

Stephen confirmed that he is keen to expand the partnership working and is currently trying to grow the Building Control side of the business.

Supplementary Planning Guidance Refresh – Nigel Jacobs

Please refer to Appendix 1

Stephen explained that as the SPG refresh has evolved it has embraced the Town Centre North Area, with thoughts turning to Poole's retail area. David Nash asks what the Council could do in order to help the local industry in this process. Could a percentage be set aside for local rather than national developers? Nigel Jacobs explained that this system was already in place, for example with the building of the

Twin Sales Bridge a procurement day was organised with approximately 20 local suppliers coming on board. We could indeed take the same approach going forward.

Stephen explained that the Barclays Bank building on the roundabout was no longer fit for purpose and he could envisage a regeneration area emerging around the Barclays site. Any work undertaken there would be outside the SPG but aligned with it.

Localism. The Planning Context – Nigel Jacobs

Please refer to Appendix 2

Fees Update – Sue Ludwig

Sue explains that no further detail has been forthcoming from the Department for Communities and Local Government in relation to any proposed fee increase. The business had put together a schedule and if asked, would be able to begin using this from 1st April 2012. It has been suggested that there may be a national fee increase but to date nothing has been confirmed.

Review of the Year – David Nash

David explains that the Agents and Developers Working Group (AD) meet quarterly. During 2011 the group has refreshed its Terms of Reference. The group was personally asked for their response to the Parking Layout SPD and the Interim Affordable Housing Tariff, with Peter Traves being directly involved with Council Members. One question that still remains is whether or not the group could be involved with documents at draft level? David asks whether the group does act constructively or if it was simply a 'tick box exercise'? In response to this question, Stephen explains that this is certainly not the case.

Pre- application advice had been a regular topic of discussion at all the group meetings. This is seen as a good service in principle but there have been concerns with both the consistency and quality of this service. It was felt that a 'grey' response is often received. A further meeting is however scheduled with the Development Management Officers in order to resolve some of the outstanding issues with the process.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the group is concerned with the impact of the levy in these times of recession. They need to be assured of clarity when it is eventually introduced and they still have concerns over phasing on larger schemes. Going forward the group would like regular updates in relation to the Design Forum, in conjunction with Bournemouth Borough Council. Stephen confirmed that the Design Guide is being reviewed and this may help move the Design Forum forward. Another possible item for discussion could be planning application decisions. Richard Genge confirms that he is reviewing the consistency of the DM team approach. Powers of delegation had been reviewed and this should now aid the process.

Stephen had decided not to remain as chair of the AD working group, which the group asked him to review. In response, Stephen explained that he was more than

happy to attend going forward, but as Planning and Regeneration Manager, Richard Genge should chair the meeting.

Membership refresh – Sue Ludwig

Sue discussed a possible refresh of the working group. David Nash stated that he would like to stand for another year if there was no one to replace him. John Souter, John Yeoman and Simon Greenwood all asked to join the group. Susanne Christie will contact the remaining group members who were not in attendance in order to establish the final names and distribute accordingly.

Questions/Answers

Neil Bichard provided this question prior to the meeting.

Q. *If a Councillor has red carded an application should they be obliged to attend the planning committee meeting to justify their decision particularly if they haven't spoken direct to the case officer to explain their concerns."*

I had an application red carded and presented to committee last week and in the absence of the councillor who issued the red card there was no debate and all it did was to lengthen the agenda unnecessarily.

A. Councillor Eades explains that he shares Neil's disappointment, having raised the red card it would have been courteous to attend. Stephen confirms that the Constitution does not state that the Councillor raising the red card has to then attend the planning committee meeting. He will liaise with Councillor Eades in order to distribute a letter to all Councillors reminding them of their rights. If they subsequently have concerns these can be discussed with the case officer.

Q. Members reaction to the Localism Act/what weight do we place on it? (John Yeoman)

A. Councillor Eades confirmed that two training sessions had been provided for Members. Agents and Developers could make more use of the Member Engagement Forums. The details discussed at these meetings are in confidence and the public do not attend. Stephen explained that the Local Engagement Forum was established towards the end of 2011. The Localism Act has not changed much in terms of pre-determination but, there was nothing stopping people 'listing'. A cautionary approach is required.

Q. Will there be a review of policy in connection with BREAM and sustainable homes, on application?

A. Nigel Jacobs explains that there had been a move from consumers for more sustainable homes. Sustainability is embedded in our Core Strategy and therefore unavoidable. The Agents and Developers however, generally agreed that sustainability does not play a significant part in a home buyer's decision process.

There are certain parts of the Borough with high development pressures and the Neighbourhood Plan cannot promote a lower level of development. Councillor Eades confirmed that initially the NPPF stated as a result of a number of Councils without up to date plans. Stephen confirmed that we have an up to date policy framework and therefore the NPPF is not a concern. Nigel confirms that the Borough has maintained its commitment to the higher housing growth. Stephen's aspiration is that the local population will engage with us and use the SPG refresh as their Neighbourhood Plan.

John Yeoman – requests clarity with his understanding as to how all this will knit together? Does it all result in the pressure coming back to the developers?

Richard Genge highlights the point that the Borough is not afraid to push the boundaries where possible, but there is a fine balance, the Talbot Village application being one example.

Stephen explains that we are doing what the Government requires of us. S106 contributions are here until 2014. CIL is moving forward. The SEDTCS tariff has been reduced. We are working very hard within the rules that govern us. Unfortunately we have not been as successful as we would have liked with Affordable Housing but both political parties have this as their number one priority.

Q – John Yeoman asks, are we going to be more pro-active in simplifying applications?

A – Richard Genge explains that local list was reviewed approximately a year ago and several elements were removed. The Localism Act is yet to establish what a simplified planning process is.

The Working Group for 2012/13 is;

John Souter
John Yeoman
Simon Greenwood
Adrian Black
Graham Thorne
Carol Evans
May Palmer
Laurence Bowen
Paul Robinson
Martin Hanham