

Cllr David Walsh

Dorset Council Councillor's Report 9th July 2019

Portfolio Holder – Planning

I have been attending the three new area Planning Committees ensuring that there is consistency of process so that members of the public and also developers know what to expect. There will be regular Wash Up meetings with all Chairmen whilst everything settles.

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I have now been given powers of delegation to speed up the Neighbourhood Plan process so that the only time it will come to Cabinet is when it is officially Made/Adopted.

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Last week I was in London giving evidence to the “Building Better” commission

The commission is an independent body that will advise government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.

It will be responsible for developing practical measures that will help ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted, by existing communities.

Established by the Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, the commission has 3 primary aims:

1. To promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area.
2. To explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent.
3. To make the planning system work in support of better design and style, not against it.

Commissioners will aim to prepare and submit a report to the Ministry of Housing by the end of 2019.

I was invited as the representative of the Town and Country Planning Association's "New Communities Group" which I represent Dorset on. The evidence being gathered Nationally reads the same as the same problems are being experienced regardless of being in rural or urban locations.

What is becoming very obvious is that after initial land charges, build costs and section 106 agreements re Affordable Housing, Infrastructure, Education, Health etc there is very little left to invest in actual building design, consequently developers refer to basic templates not sympathetic to a specific location but more generalised.

I will be giving further evidence and an interim report will be written very soon. The final report will be submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of the year for consideration. I will also be lobbying government with the support of North Dorset's MP Simon Hoare to push for the raising of standards in Planning especially with regards to Climate Change and sustainable development, why is not more done to enforce the use of renewables at the build stage and also rainwater harvesting.

Cabinet 25th June

1. A single Local Plan.

The Consequential Orders establish that all policies adopted by the predecessor councils are carried forward as the policy of the new council. This means that all the current adopted local plans still apply as the statutory development plan for the various parts of the Dorset Council area, though policies carry less weight where the plans are more than five years old and where the council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Recommendation:

1. That Dorset Council progresses with a Dorset Council Local Plan in line with the high level project plan set out in the draft Local Development Scheme with the aim of adopting the plan by April 2023;
2. That the separate local plan reviews currently under way in the Dorset Council area, with the exception of the Purbeck plan which has reached examination, do not continue, but that all existing work carried out on these reviews be used where possible to shape the new Dorset Council Local Plan;

3. That the draft Local Development Scheme be approved as Dorset Council's current programme for plan preparation;

That Dorset Council retains its commitment to cooperation with neighbouring councils on strategic planning matters, as expressed in the Statement of Common Ground approved by the predecessor councils.

2. Adoption of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan

The adoption of the Waste Plan will provide Dorset Council and BCP with an up-to-date policy framework that will replace the 'saved' policies from the 2006 plan. Under the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework development should be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Having a plan that accords with the latest national policies will provide both Authorities with greater certainty in securing acceptable development that provides for Dorset's waste needs in a manner that is consistent with the Waste Plan. For these reasons I had no hesitation in commending the Waste Plan to Cabinet who agreed unanimously.

Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Review 11th July

As member Champion for the Armed Forces and Chairman of the Armed Forces Covenant Programme Board I will on Thursday be hosting the Programmes First year review where Government Ministers, Local Authorities and the Military will be signing the Covenant.

"The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly."

I have the Honour to sign for Dorset.