

## Notes of the Working Group Meeting on the 'Planning for the Future' consultation document

**Monday 14 September, Held virtually via Zoom**

**Present:** Janice Henwood, Chair  
Roger Cartwright  
Peter Chapman  
Anne Eves  
Lee Gibbs  
Sylvia Neumann

**Q1:** Loaded (in favour of developer), diligent, disregard (for certain planning policies)

**Q2:** Yes

**Q3:** Digital methods or social media should be used, but also notices in the neighbourhood and by post are essential.

**Q4:** 1. Awareness of environmental concerns, biodiversity and action on climate change. 2. Increase the affordability of housing. 3. Supporting better local infrastructure, eg. Water, highways, active travel schemes, cycleways.

**Q5:** The proposals to group land into three categories is too prescriptive. Could land change categories? The Committee questioned whether there was any geographic data that shows this is a valid solution, and whether it could be shown that this new method improves provision of affordable housing. Automatic outline approval for growth land is not acceptable. This implies a one size fits all approach to development planning. Whilst Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans play a part they are subservient to the national policy framework.

**Q6:** No – The Committee do not agree that general development management policies are established nationally, this contradicts 2.14. This is a top-down approach and removed any local input.

**Q7a:** No, this is too narrow. A broader understanding of sustainable development and impact on the environment is needed. Delays are not due to the planning procedures, but to developers. Requirements showing how sustainability would be achieved are needed, eg. transport, biodiversity, cycling routes, green spaces. 'Sustainable development' has become meaningless, without a set of clear principles. This proposal should not be an excuse to lower standards.

**Q7B:** There must be communication and cooperation and the duty to co-operate should continue because it helps in the managed of development near local authority boundaries or where local authorities are in areas of housing growth but which have limitations on land supply.

**Q8a)** No, this is a top-down approach for housing allocation, and doesn't take into account local needs. Quantity of development depends on many factors – nearness of other urban areas, open spaces, national parks, employment opportunities categorising of growth areas. If circumstances are altered it would be very difficult to then move out of a category.

Extending the test from a 5 year land supply to 10 years adds to the risk of disjointed development.

**Q9a:** No. It is at the outline planning stage that important decisions are made, such as ensuring the development is linked to local facilities such as schools, shops and leisure centres. It also means that the local people get no say in the development that goes up near their homes.

**Q9b:** No. In growth and renewal areas open countryside would lose all protection.

**Q9c:** No, it must be justified, not just bought forward under this scheme.

**Q10:** No, Decision making is not delayed by planning authorities or procedures, it is delayed by developers. Time limits are needed on developers fulfilling their approved planning applications. It might be faster, but in the long term it could be inefficient and detrimental for the local community, who will have less opportunity for input.

**Q11:** Yes, in addition to paper plans. There should not be a complete reliance on technology, because big systems often go wrong, and this could exclude older people and anyone else without the necessary skills.

**Q12:** Yes, however it will also depend on the resources of the Local Authority so there should be flexibility. How has the 30 month timescale been decided on? Will there be a penalty if the deadline is missed? It is unlikely that Plan making would be reduced to 30 months under this system. If the plan making stage is the only time the ordinary citizen gets to engage in the planning process, it would be highly controversial

**Q13a:** Yes

**Q13b:** We need resources to communicate with our communities to enhance our neighbourhood plans. Financial support needs to be provided for Neighbourhood plans to be reviewed and enhanced and set for a referendum.

**Q14:** Yes. Developers should be penalised for not bringing forward development where planning permission is in place. Faster build out should not be at the sacrifice of providing all types of properties from the high end of the market to the affordable/social.

**Q15:** Development is often carried out by big companies, which want to make a profit, so their designs are often standardised and they do the minimum in terms of making buildings energy efficient, providing footpaths and cycle tracks that are useable. The Local Authority needs to be consistent in its application of its Design Policies and Design Codes. Developments should be attractive as well as functional. When good quality materials are used this tends to create a more attractive design. Attractiveness should never be prioritised over safety.

**Q16:** Energy efficiency of new buildings - developers should be obliged to use renewable energy in new homes. The government should accelerate the targets for net carbon neutrality and introduce the appropriate legislation to ensure buildings incorporate zero-carbon or net zero-carbon designs as standard

**Q17:** They must be adhered to. They need to be put into practice, for example protecting historic sites and biodiversity sites. Design guides and codes should not be centrally driven, they should be adaptable to each local area.

**Q18:** No, this would be too much bureaucracy, there is already a design officer. The larger level strategic picture should be looked at. What is needed is urban planners with local knowledge to oversee the achievement of best developments, not just one officer or one authority.

**Q19:** Homes England have yet to demonstrate these objectives.

**Q20:** No - beauty is subjective, and the beauty has to respond to the local environment. The Committee want design to be sympathetic with the local community. Beauty should not be the top priority, for example over safety. We need national legislation on progressing ensuring all new homes use renewable energy schemes. Local authorities cannot enforce this without national legislation.

**Q21:** Awareness of environmental concerns, biodiversity and action on climate change, renewable energy. New developments should be affordable to the local community while addressing environmental concerns – this could be met by more imaginative building, for example modular building.

**Q22a:** Yes, as long as it does not lead to the developers avoiding contributions. The money should be able to be spent within the development that is contributing towards it, or where the need is to be found within the local community. It should also fairly reflect the cost of delivering infrastructure in different areas rather than being a flat rate allocation. A proportion of any levy should be earmarked for use by Town, Parish and Community Councils.

**Q22b:** They should be set locally.

**Q22c:** More value

**Q22d:** Yes, if the Levy is a guaranteed future source of revenue.

**Q23:** Yes, as it would provide the facilities needed for these developments.

**Q24a:** Yes, there should be more affordable housing on site.

**Q24b:** Would this mean that providing affordable housing would mean that the developer would not have to pay any more towards the Infrastructure Levy? The committee were concerned that all of the contributions could go just towards the affordable housing. This could lead to more affordable flats, without a provision for facilities and infrastructure and no contribution to the community.

**Q24c:** Yes, however it should be ensured that local authorities can recognise any risk that may be taken.

**Q24d:** It needs to be up to design standards and codes.

**Q25:** Yes, although it should be ensured that it goes towards the good of the community. It should be possible for local authorities to make decisions and be responsive to local needs. A proportion of any levy should be earmarked for use by Town, Parish and Community Councils.

**Q25a:** Yes, for authentic, essential, affordable housing.