

Steering Group Policy Workshop – 13th Nov 2014

Meeting Detail: 13th Nov 2014 - 1.00pm Village Hall, Ashton Keynes, SN6 6NT

Attendees: Malcolm Carter (MC), Terry Klee (TK), Kevin Winstone (KW), David Moss (DM), David Carlisle (DC) URS

Apologies: Dave Wingrove (DW)

Other Refs: Draft Neighbourhood Plan (DNP), Steering Group (SG), Focus Group (FG), Wiltshire Council (WC), URS (URS planning aid consultant), website (the AKNP website)

Ref.	Introduction to URS
1	<p>DC introduced himself as the lead for the Planning Aid appointed consultant providing support for the AKNP and taking over from Cat Loveday. A powerpoint presentation was given which stated that URS are part of the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme (funded by DCLG - Department for Community and Local Government), in consortium with Locality/RTPI Planning Aid England.</p> <p>The workshop structure was introduced as establishing plan policies by following a process derived from; a vision, objectives, policies, delivery, and meeting the basic conditions for neighbourhood planning.</p>
Ref.	Creating Plan Vision and Objectives
2	<p>The importance of having a vision and clearly defined objectives to achieve it was discussed. The recommended basis for creating objectives was SMARTER (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, time-related, evidence driven, related to the vision).</p> <p>The initial AKNP theme topic objectives were discussed and assessed in comparison with the SMARTER method. It became clear that more work was required to better define the theme topic objectives.</p> <p>The importance of evidence and the source of information to justify objectives was discussed next. It was emphasised that all sources of evidence should be considered, from national level, to local studies and community data. The risk of policies being challenged because of inadequate supporting evidence was highlighted.</p>
Ref.	Site Appraisal
3	<p>The site appraisal process in the selection of sites for allocation was discussed. The importance of identifying a long list of potential development sites from SHLAA, land owner and developer expressions of interest, was stressed to show that the options considered were all inclusive. Records of the process followed and the comments received should be kept meticulously.</p> <p>A method of site assessment was proposed which took many factors into consideration, from compliance with national and local planning policies, to environmental and conservation issues. Whilst not being a requirement to have in a DNP it was considered that an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) would strengthen the evidence base and make the justification of site selection more robust.</p> <p>To assist in the site assessment process, URS offered a pro-forma site assessment document that covered all the typical factors and issues that should be considered for site testing. The use of this pro-forma was encouraged, and would enable URS to assist the SG by reviewing the pro-forma for all sites chosen and provide feedback and comments.</p>

Ref.	Creating Plan Policies
4	<p>The guidance information for preparing plan policies available from a variety of sources was discussed.</p> <p>At a government level, the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and the NPPG (National Planning Policy Guide) defined the top-level requirements that planning policies must comply with.</p> <p>Also at government level the DCLG was providing a funded programme for Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning with delivery of this support being co-ordinated by Locality. A guide available from Locality on writing planning policies was recommended as a road map to follow.</p> <p>The key elements of a policy structure was discussed which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context. The issue to be addressed. • Policy wording. How the aims and objectives will be achieved. • Policy diagram or map. To put the policy into spatial context. • Reasoned justification. The evidence to back up the policy. • Delivery. How a policy will be delivered. <p>Other important aspects of effective policies that need to be considered were given as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies should clearly express what local people want. • Spatial options considered – underpinned by an evidence base. • Policies should relate to strategic hooks in the Local Plan (WCS) and National policy (NPPF).
Ref.	Template for Policy Creation
5	<p>To assist in the writing of policies URS offered a document template with a layout structure covering; context, the policy, a policy map or diagram, reasoned justification , and delivery. Use of the template should ensure that policies were clearly stated, with the intent and justification, to assist in decision making by planning officers.</p> <p>It was also recommended that the Locality guide to writing planning policies, and the checklist for testing policies, should be used as an aid to self-checking when drafting policies.</p> <p>Great emphasis was placed on the Deliverability and practicality of policies. Wherever possible there should be some details on implementation – the who, what, when, where, how.</p>
Ref.	Objectives and Policy Review by URS
6	<p>DC offered to have URS review draft policies when the SG have had time to prepare them. The use of the URS policy template was recommended as the the most suitable format for review.</p>