

**West Dorset Partnership
22 January 2018**

Notes of the West Dorset Partnership meeting held on 22 January 2018 at South Walks House, Dorchester.

Present:

Organisation	Name
Chairman (Vice Chair in the Chair)	David Aldwinckle
Beaminster & Villages LAP	Joanna Keats
Bridport Local Area Partnership	Maureen Jackson
Bridport Town Council	Bob Gillis
Dorchester Community Forum	Emma Scott
LymeForward	Wendy Davies and Cllr C Reynolds
Dorset Agenda 21	Mike Jones
BAVLAP and Marshwood and BW Group CLTs.	Cllr Jacqui Sewell
Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils	Cllr Alan Thacker
South West Dorset Multi Cultural Network	Rachelle Smith
Churches Together in Dorset	Tom Murphy
West Dorset District Council/Dorset Councils Partnership	Cllr A Alford (WDDC), Cllr M Hall (WDDC), Jane Nicklen (Community Planning & Development Manager), Stephen Hill (Strategic Director, DCP), Susan Ward-Rice (Community Development Team Leader), P Derrien (Housing Enabling Team Leader), Clyde Lambert (Commercial Housing Enabler) Linda Quinton (Democratic Services Officer) .

Apologies:

Organisation	Name
Chairman	Paul Overall
Dorset Councils Partnership	Hilary Jordan & Cllr I Gardner
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	Jason Rogers
Dorset Community Action	Alex Picot
Magna Housing	Christine Bolland
Natural England	John Stobart
Age UK	Lisal Holmes
Dorset Police	Ian Roe
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Maria Clarke

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all parties present to the meeting, the theme for which was Housing Developments in West Dorset. Each attendee introduced themselves.

2 Community Led Housing Fund & Community Land Trusts – DCP.

Paul Derrien, Housing Enabling Team Leader for the DCP gave a presentation on community led housing projects that were taking place in the West Dorset district. During 2017, 45 affordable rented units had been built plus 10 shared ownership homes and 6 discount market homes. He explained that with discount market homes, the purchaser would pay 75% of the market value of the home but own 100% of it. When the property was sold, it would be at 75% of the market value and remain as such in perpetuity.

A Community Land Trust (CLT) scheme in Lyme Regis had seen three bedroomed homes built for which each unit had received 15 bids. In Powerstock a CLT scheme had seen 8 houses built. A further scheme had been built in Tolpuddle on a rural exception site and included a fully adapted home for a disabled occupant.

In Poundbury, 63 extra care affordable flats had been built to include support for older persons who wished to live independently and 20 – 30 potential occupants had been identified.

Members heard of the benefits of creating community-led schemes, such as Community Housing funding and obtaining planning permission.

Cllr Sewell reported on a CLT project that was coming on line in Broadwindsor and that there were currently 23 local people on the housing register in need of such housing.

P Derrien added that the discount market schemes were aimed at young, working people to get on the housing ladder. If members were able to identify local sites, he would be happy to come and discuss potential projects. A site for 13 affordable homes in Winterborne Abbas had been given planning approval the previous week.

A new Housing Minister and a white paper aimed at changing the definition of affordable housing were all new issues for housing authorities. The Government continued to have a target to build 300,000 new homes per year and there were many challenges ahead.

With regard to larger developments, it was P Derrien's experience that 35% affordable housing was provided by the developer, particularly on greenfield sites. The large development at Vearse Farm, Bridport was a perfectly viable site to provide 35% affordable housing, however, disappointingly, there were other sites that were not viable, particularly brownfield sites such as the Dorchester Prison.

Clyde Lambert, Commercial Housing Enabler talked to members about the opportunities to develop brownfield sites for housing and a new website "Opening Doors".

Members discussed land banks held by developers and other bodies, which either had consent for development which had not occurred or had no planning permission and remained untouched. On occasion, land had consent for development but no buyer. Members were aware that obtaining consent for developments could be a lengthy and slow process. With good design, large developments could accommodate open market housing alongside affordable housing, such as Poundbury. Communities generally welcomed mixed developments but the issue was identifying available land.

West Dorset had limitations due to the AONB covering such a significant part of the district. Large developers tended to develop in urban areas in the south such as Bristol, Exeter and Southampton. With regard to empty properties, there was little that authorities could do in terms of enforcement and compulsory purchase.

A further element of the housing market was people wishing to downsize from large, family accommodation into smaller 2 bedrooomed units; most 2 bed units were starter homes. With the right developer, schemes for downsizers could work.

In response to points made, D Aldwinckle, from the Chair, acknowledged that some Magna housing stock was deficient in terms of energy efficiency. In addition, Magna currently held 2 development sites in Sherborne with lapsed planning permissions.

The WDDC Leader stressed that work on the review of the local plan was on-going and this included the identification of new development sites. The Housing Portfolio Holder was also looking at the “accelerated homes building programme” and associated initiatives.

The Chairman thanked P Derrien and C Lambert for their informative presentations.

3. Notes of the last meeting.

The notes of the previous meeting on 30 October 2017 were agreed.

4. LGR update

The Leader provided an update on the Local Government reorganisation as a “minded to” approve decision had been received from the DCLG since the last meeting of the Partnership. Christchurch Borough Council had undertaken a local Poll which had endorsed the Borough’s view that it remains as a borough council. Six Dorset Councils were in favour of the Unitary proposals.

Task and Finish Groups had been established for a number of areas in the lead up to a final decision and reorganisation. These included Community Partnership Engagement; represented by A Thacker and Area Based Decision Making. A Programme Director had been appointed and a Programme Manager would be recruited in due course together with work stream coordinators.

If the Secretary of State agrees to the reorganisation, a Structural Change Order would need to pass through Parliament and this would have the effect of creating “Dorset Council” with a new authority in place by April 2019. It was not possible to appoint a Chief Executive until a firm decision was received, following which a structure would be established. The new council would have 82 elected members.

Bob Gillis, the Bridport Town Clerk said that the WDDC had been working with Towns and Parishes to identify services that could be taken on locally, but with that should come assets and resources. The District had taken the lead on this particular issue and he was hopeful of the process if services could be provided with the right back-up.

7. LAP matters and partner updates – reports previously circulated.

Dorset Multi-Cultural Network – Holocaust Memorial Day was taking place at Dorchester Corn Exchange on 26 January at 12.30pm. Exhibitions were in place at the Dorchester, Bridport and Weymouth libraries. The guest speaker had arrived on one of the “kinder” trains in the 1930’s.

Agenda 21 – Mike Jones advised that Agenda 21 AGM was taking place on the following Saturday. He was likely to stand down as the representative on this Partnership and would focus on the climate change sub group.

Bridport – with LGR on the horizon, Bridport LAP wanted to know how they could evolve together with the neighbouring parishes and with input from the CAB, food banks and volunteers, etc so no community input was lost.

Dorchester – working with the Thomas Hardy school to support young people with their mental health and an access group to encourage better access to shops and buildings..

Lyme Regis – agreed that training was needed on the new general data protection regulation. 2 DCA events had been arranged locally, one of which was in Wimborne and anyone was welcome to attend. LymeForward had done a lot of work on the clinical services Review. A Health and Wellbeing group had leading medics on it and met last week to look at contracts and contracting in West Dorset.

Beaminster – A seminar had been organised on the General Data Protection Regulation in Sherborne on 7 February. This was an issue that would have wide implications for many authorities and organisations.

LAPs and staffing Jane Nicklen advised that Adrian Ragbourne was moving on from Lyme Forward. Susan Ward-Rice was also moving to the County Council and the Partnership thanked Susan for her valuable contribution to the group.

A Thacker added that the DAPTC had been involved and was playing a big role in the devolution discussions and were keen to be involved. Towns need parish support.

8. Date and theme of next meeting.

Monday 23 April 2018, 10am at South Walks House. Theme – Community Engagement and Involvement.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.

Chairman

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