

**West Dorset Partnership
20 February 2017**

Notes of the West Dorset Partnership meeting held on 20 February 2017 at South Walks House, Dorchester.

Present:

Organisation	Name
Chairman	Paul Overall
Beaminster & Villages LAP	Rosemary Beeny and Joanna Keats
Bridport Local Area Partnership	Maureen Jackson and Katy Graham
Dorchester Community Forum	Emma Scott
Citizens Advice	Daniel Cadisch
Dorset LEADER	Sarah Harbidge
LymeForward	Wendy Davies
Magna Housing Association	David Aldwinckle and Paul Read
Sherborne Area Partnership	Tony Meehall and Simon Thompson
West Dorset District Council/Dorset Councils Partnership	Stephen Hill (Strategic Director) Paul Derrien (Housing Enabling Team Leader) Jane Nicklen (Community Planning & Development Manager), Tessa Greenaway (Partnership Development Officer), Linda Quinton (Democratic Services Officer) .

Apologies:

Organisation	Name
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC)	Cllr A Thacker
West Dorset District Council	Cllr I Gardner, Hilary Jordan
Steve Underhill and Jason Rogers	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Lyme Forward	A Ragbourne
DA 21	Mike Jones
Dorset Churches Together	Tom Murphy
Sherborne Area Partnership	Eleanor Wilson

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all parties present and each attendee introduced themselves.

2 Affordable Housing Update and White Paper Overview

P Derrien, the Housing Enabling Team Leader gave a power-point presentation providing an update on affordable housing and an overview of the Government's recent White Paper "Fixing our Broken Housing Market". The Government wished to see 1m new homes by 2020.

There were currently 1400 people listed on the housing waiting list in the West Dorset Area. Members noted that the current definition of affordable housing covered the following:

- Rented Home – Social Rent – Affordable Rent
- Shared Ownership
- Discounted Market Homes
- Rent to Buy
- Intermediate Housing

The White Paper was suggesting new proposals such as a standard mechanism for setting housing delivery targets; compulsory purchase of undeveloped land; new rent standards post 2020 and no specific targets for starter homes on developments. A revised definition of affordable housing was being proposed as follows:

- Starter Homes
- Discounted market sales housing
- Affordable private rent housing
- Intermediate housing to include rent to buy

The Housing Enabling Team work with numerous organisations and local authorities to deliver affordable housing. In West Dorset affordable housing completions had slowly declined from 110 in 14/15 to 66 in 16/17. A number of external funding schemes were open to bids, subject to meeting the relevant criteria. Community Land Trusts had been successful in West Dorset with 39 completions since 2014 and there were currently another 15 in the pipeline in Lyme Regis. There were a number of benefits to CLT schemes; developing otherwise undeveloped sites to benefit local people and with access to grant funds. Officers were looking to establish CLTs in other areas.

Another area receiving support was "extra care" where the elderly were housed in accommodation with warden assistance, if required and communal areas. The County Council was particularly keen to see these schemes developed to ease pressure on their social care budgets and bed blocking in hospitals. A significant scheme was nearing completion on Poundbury.

Other new projects included working on exceptions sites; working with the county council on land disposals and working with new housing providers.

D Aldwinkle and P Read gave a background to the work of Magna Housing. They currently hold 9,000 homes, 5,700 of which were in West Dorset and 1450 of which were sheltered for the over 55's; 3700 were general need; 300 leasehold and 150 shared ownership. £46m was received from rents and service charges per annum

and £16m spent on maintenance per annum. Magna currently had a debt of £110m paying £4.1m in interest per annum. They employed 360 staff. Tenants paid an average of £90 - £100 per week. From 2017 Magna would start a building programme to provide 200 new homes per year.

Magna operates in 7 local authority areas and West Dorset and West Somerset were their main areas. Of the people on the waiting list, 1 bed flats represented the highest demand. Social housing schemes were being or had been built in Sydling, Portesham and Sherborne, Dorchester and Bridport. Magna was also a keen advocate of extra care housing.

Members debated the lack of 35% affordable provision within a number of development sites where the development was shown to be not viable. Officers acknowledged the frustration at not being able to enforce that provision.

The White Paper was silent on the right to buy, although Magna indicated that any houses they sold in the future (if subject to right to buy) would be at market value, and the capital receipt received would be used to build a new one on a 1:1 basis. Rural exception sites had created opportunities for 100% affordable schemes. A recent appeal decision had allowed 15 affordable units at Holwell.

The Strategic Director set out the background to an accelerated home building scheme within the Dorset Councils Partnership. A working group of members was looking at the scheme which was aimed at people in need of affordable social rented housing and by putting pressure on developers and housing associations. He added that building extra housing wouldn't cure the housing crisis, however if Local Authorities entered in to a partnership with an "arms length" company, this would avoid the right to buy obligation. £300,000 had been put into the scheme so far with further funds anticipated in March.

Members discussed sites throughout the District that had planning consent but remained undeveloped. Land owners were coming forward with areas for development with in the Local Plan review which was currently underway.

D Cadisch of the CAB advised that the majority of clients at his office were affected by housing issues. Recruitment of key workers was also an issue in some areas due to the difficulty in finding affordable housing. Magna was looking at new ways to engage in the community and would happily speak to members regarding their area issues.

The Chairman thanked P Derrien, D Aldwinkle and P Read for their presentations.

3 Local Plan Review Update

T Greenway advised that the Local Plan Review was currently underway and Planning Policy Development staff were in Sherborne that day for public consultation and would be working around the District. When the Plan was adopted in 2015, the Inspector advised that a review would need to be undertaken as soon as possible as the Housing Land supply identified in the Plan was only just sufficient to make the Plan sound. Areas of land for potential development were being brought forward for consideration and the Plan review would potentially take up this housing land supply

to 2036. Members of the public could have their say on the review on-line and the appropriate links would be circulated to members.

4. Future Working of WDP and LAPs

The Partnership agreed that the discussion on the government's White Paper and the Affordable housing issue had been worthwhile. The meetings should continue to be more outcome focussed so members could have a useful debate on like minded issues and cross-cutting themes. The AGM was on 24 April at 10am and a theme needed to be identified. Officers requested that a group of members from the Partnership liaise with officers on-line on the theme and who to invite. Officers would try to get the Chief Executive or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to attend the AGM, depending on availability.

5. Notes of the last meeting.

The notes of the previous meeting on 21 October 2016 were agreed subject to the inclusion of R Beeney of BAVLAP being recorded as attending the meeting.

Matters arising :

The food banks meeting on 10 February was chaired by Revd Briggs and was well attended. The notes would be sent to Oliver Letwin MP who attended.

Members noted that a LAG spring forum was taking place in Beaminster on 7 March seeking bids for Leader grants in the forthcoming year. Tessa would circulate the details.

The Chairman advised that the Climate Change Group had a meeting in next month and would be discussing changes to Building Control regulations to make houses more flood resistant.

Officers would establish when the results of the CCG consultation would be available and circulate details if forthcoming.

6. LAP matters – reports previously circulated.

Bridport – nothing to add

Dorchester – the first draft of the Dorchester Community Plan would be available in March 2017.

Lyme Regis – a bid had been put in for the Dorset Community Fund, looking to do holistic research on people who seek assistance and advice from the CAB – there was a basket of “better together” issues to be examined. A bid would be put in for funding gaps in the system.

Beaminster – attempting to get local police to attend a dementia friendly meeting. (The NFU had approached BAVLAP as there are many elderly farmers with dementia). There had also been significant spates of agricultural theft, with no action by the police. Members noted that there had been a decline in the police attendance at meetings. (Jane has subsequently contacted the Police about these issues)

There was also disappointment that DCC had not appointed a Children's Centre officer.

T Greenaway explained that following communication from Superintendent Fiona Grant, police were happy to attend local meetings for specific topics if time and other commitments allowed.

7. Partner Updates

The CAB had Universal Credits training coming up and were taking on a new apprentice.

Community transport was a suggestion for a future meeting theme.

The Chairman pointed out that this was Tessa Greenaway's last meeting and wished her well for the future and thanked her for her hard work and contribution to the work of the Partnership.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.

Chairman

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