



RURAL WORKING GROUP

READING ROOMS, BAINTON – 29TH APRIL 2009

Present

Henry Clark, Chair, Peakirk & Rural Working Group
Richard Astle, Director, GPP
Nick Goodman, Environmental Capital Officer, GPP
Matthew Hogan, Housing Strategy, Peterborough City Council
David Harrington, Newborough ward councillor
Harj Kumar, Principal Planning Officer, Peterborough City Council
Graeme Law, Peterborough City Council
Zena Coles, Bainton and Ashton Parish Council
David Over, Barnack ward councillor
Bob Johnson, Glinton Parish Council
Judith Morrice, Bainton and Ashton Parish Council

Apologies

June Woollard, Barnack Parish Council
John Holdich, Glinton and Wittering ward
Gerry Kirt, Glinton Parish Council
Mark Davis, RAF Wittering
Sally Jackson, Peakirk Parish Council
Kirsten Bennett, Cambridgeshire ACRE
David Buddle, Thorney Parish Council
Sharif Al Rousi, Children's Services, Peterborough City Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Henry Clark welcomed members to the meeting of the Rural Working Group (RWG), individuals introduced themselves. NG reported that actions from last meeting had been followed up and Cambridgeshire Acre would be joining the group.

2. Core Strategy and Development Planning Documents

Graeme Law (GL) and Harj Kumar (HK) from Peterborough City Council were introduced. Following the last RWG meeting it was agreed that the group needed a more in depth look at the Core Strategy and

associated Planning documents. GL noted the 4 questions (in red) that the Chair had posed via email earlier in the week (not circulated).

1. **What are the implications of the Local Development Framework for the RWG**

- a. Effectively the LDF is made up of a number of different documents including Regional Spatial Strategy, Core Strategy, Land Allocations Development Planning Documents (DPDs) and Planning Policy DPD. The LDF is a collection of documents and identifies how much housing, employment and facilities etc will be needed in the future.
- b. If the RWG disagrees with the wording in the documents then it must tell Harj Kumar and his team what it is it does want included.

2. **What the authors of the LDF want from community groups.**

- a. Essentially the authors need to know if you agree. If you don't agree then they need to know the alternatives, with evidence.

There followed a discussion around getting villages to agree on the allocation of new housing across the rural communities. GL pointed out that at the very least villages could work together to provide evidence. HK encouraged parishes and the RWG to comment on the criteria used to assess site allocations (page 23, Chapter 6, Site Allocations).

Cllr Over pointed out the difficulties in commenting on-line (although not all members agreed on this) and that the phraseology used in the documents was confusing and potentially misleading. There is particular confusion over whether the figures for new housing (in the large, medium and smaller villages) was a minimum, maximum or best guess. GL confirmed that the Regional Spatial Strategy sets a minimum of 25,000 new houses for Peterborough and that the city's Draft Core Strategy, as an interpretation of that figure, contains loose wording at this stage.

Discussion then turned to how site allocations were identified. HK confirmed that sites were put forward by developers, parish councillors and landowners, Cllr Harrington reminded the group that not all agricultural land should be developed because we would need it in the future for agriculture.

3. **What community groups can do to influence the LDF, bearing in mind that they do not have professional advocates and lobbyists**

- a. GL recognised that some villages had professionals and some do not. There are opportunities for support through planning aid (<http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk/>) or through University Students on placements. Local people do have a vast degree of local knowledge and evidence and need to think in those terms when commenting on planning processes.

It was noted that whilst Ward Councillors can represent the views of the rural communities and "fire the bullets" they need the gun to be loaded by the parishes. There is a need for lobbying.

4. **Can we have some detail about numbers of dwellings needed in each parish, how to get affordable/social housing, and how to get s106 agreements for parish projects**

- a. Figures for new housing are an approximation for each settlement (rather than each parish).

It was requested that a list of housing allocation figures be circulated to the parishes and members of the RWG

In the case of partially completed developments, the City Council have the expensive options of revoking planning consent or ordering a completion notice. Cllr Harrington reported that a member of the cabinet had expressed the need to build executive homes in villages to attract people on higher salaries, this goes against the Rural Vision and Strategy.

- b. GL pointed out that unless the rural communities influence and provide evidence then it will simply be left to Harj and his team to decide!

Cllr Over suggested we build two new villages and put all new development in those, RA built upon this and suggested that rather than building new villages, existing communities could work together to identify where new development could go.

A letter from the Rural Working Group to be drafted and sent to Planning and PCC outlining the thoughts, views and ideas of the group with regards to planning issues.

Zena Coles pointed out the importance of the village envelope and that if that goes then the whole process is like a house of cards

- c. GL explained the concept of S106 funding, the obligation placed on developers to fund projects identified as planning problems. S106 therefore becomes a benefit of development following a process of *Identify problem, Identify solution and Creating a planning obligation*. The presumption is that the money will be spent near where the development takes place, although sometimes the planning problem is felt elsewhere, such as school provision or healthcare.

It was recognized that S106 and consultation for parishes to suggest planning problems could be seen as putting the cart before the horse. How can parishes identify, evidence and find a solution to planning problems at this stage, before development (and indeed sites) have been finalised. RA suggested that we invite parish councils to input suggestions recognising planning problems using the Rural Vision and Strategy as a framework. HC also suggested that we need to educate parishes on the process for inputting ideas.

RWG to write to community groups and parish councils explaining S106 obligations and opportunities for planning obligations.

RA suggested that we have to accept the numbers already allocated and work together with all rural communities. Communities taking power.

NG to circulate the LDF newsletter and ensure that the distribution list is to the right people.

3. Rural Housing Strategy

Matthew Hogan presented the latest update of the Rural Housing Strategy and invited comments. Comments included;

- Where does transport sit within this strategy, particularly the provision of car parking and an increased transport network. GL responded that the Long Term Transport Strategy should pick up this area and highlighted DPD 8.1 – parking standards and HK mentioned PPG 30 on national guidance.
- RA noted that it is not yet a strategy, not to worry about action point 1 (this would happen anyway) and the importance of Biodiversity within the strategy.
- HC cited off gas grid properties, size of land patch for housing, the lack of small dwellings in villages (many have been extended and improved) and listed buildings.

MH agreed that at present the strategy was more of an essay and that the document needed to be driven forward in partnership. There followed a discussion on the scope and positioning of the strategy recognising the importance of understanding who and what the strategy is trying to change, is it?....

- A lobbying document – such a document would need a strong evidence base through which to inform and change emerging policy.
- Supplementary planning document – which supports emerging policy rather than contradicting it.
- A partnership document – presenting the views of the rural communities under a common message, but holding no material planning consideration.

HC recognized that the strategy, whatever its scope needed an action plan with owners and clear timeframes. MH requested that rural communities provided input into this document.

4. Future agenda setting and Action plan

The next RWG meeting would pick up the important theme of transport. In the meantime RA and NG would meet with HC to move forward some of the work we have started on influencing the planning process.

NG to draft a letter to all parishes updating them on the discussions we have had and strongly urging them to give their support for future action.

5. Date of next meeting 24th June, 7-9pm, Newborough

RESPONSIBLE	ACTION	DEADLINE
NG	It was requested that a list of housing allocation figures be circulated to the parishes and members of the RWG	ASAP
NG	A letter from the Rural Working Group to be drafted and sent to Planning and PCC outlining the thoughts, views and ideas of the group with regards to planning issues.	ASAP
NG	RWG to write to community groups and parish councils explaining S106 obligations and opportunities for planning obligations.	ASAP
NG	Circulate the LDF newsletter and ensure that the distribution list is to the right	ASAP

	people.	
NG	Draft a letter to all parishes updating them on the discussions we have had and urging their support for future action.	ASAP