



WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 11th March 2020 at 2 pm at The Parish Office, Williton

Attendees:

Councillors	Payne (Chairman), Nye, Hooper, Stanford and Woods,
Public	None
Clerk	Michelle Francis

Apologies:

Councillors	Howes and Peeks
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19/300 The Chairman advised that the meeting would be recorded

19/301 Apologies were noted as above.

19/302 Declarations of Interest.

There were none

19/303 (Item 19/276) To discuss and agree comments for submission to Somerset West and Taunton Council regarding Districtwide Design Guide – public consultation

It was **resolved** to submit the following comments; proposed Cllr Nye, seconded Cllr Stanford

Section 1 - Introduction

Q1 *On p.8 of the draft Design Guide there is a key diagram (see below) which reflects the Local Planning Authority's (LPA's) commitment to a healthy, distinctive and sustainable built environment. Do you agree with this mix of broad aims?*

A: Yes

Do you have any additional suggestions? Please provide comments

How about 'Homes for Life' building houses that are suitable for adaption. For example, a four bedroom house that can be adapted from a 'Family Home' with two adults and two children to a older family home that can accommodate two adults and an elderly relative with either/or space for a chair lift on the stairs or a plate lift running from a down stairs large cupboard to an upstairs large cupboard located near the landing. Also outside / inside door to take wheelchairs. Ramp/level access. Small garden areas that can take raised beds. (this topic is shown in 5.2 smaller units)

New developments must have foot/cycleways that easily and directly link into existing communities to encourage integration. New homes should be built with "life time" homes in mind and be easily altered to meet occupier's changing needs.

Encourage integration by links to integrate existing communities

Q2 *Is the status of the Design Guide and its relationship to the Garden Town Vision, Charter and Checklist and Public Realm Design Guide clear?*

A: Yes

Q3 *Is it clear how the Design Guide should be used?*

A: Yes

Q4 Do you have any other comments on this section (200 words max)

A: The design guide should be used in conjunction with your point 1 – 5 in section 2

Section 2 - The Design Process

Q1 The Design Guide ask applicants to explain how their proposal follows the “design process” (see below). How important do you consider this process to be?

A: Strongly agree

Q2 Do you have any other comments on this section?

Consult with stake holders, means taking note of what is said, not just putting forward what the developer was going to do anyway.

It is hoped that the process is adhered too, whatever the size of the proposed build

A standard process must be used so all developers know what is expected from them during the planning process

Section 3 – Context and Distinctiveness

Q1 One of the main reasons why Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to produced Design Guides is to encourage new development to reflect the local distinctive character of the area. To what degree do you agree with this objective?

A: Agree

Please provide reasons for your answers

The detailed design should be available at the first stage of the planning, no submissions just for outline planning permission. In Williton, there are a number of thatched houses/cottages. It would be lovely if a builder could take note of this, even if they only have some thatched porches, this would be distinctive.

The character of every village is individual, and this should be taken into consideration when applications are considered.

New developments should blend in with the existing built and natural landscape

Q2 Do you think local distinctiveness is important?

A: Strongly Agree

Are there any other aspects of built form and placemaking which you consider should be included?

West Somerset has a variety of traditional hedges, this could be reflected in new build, where land has been very wet, drainage should be used with marsh type vegetation planted to keep the nature of the area.

2.5.2 entry points to minimise effects on existing hedges (this is a good point)

Local communities and new development must be distinctive to their own area and not appear to come from a national catalogue of ideas

Q3 The district is analysed in a series of character areas (see map above) to help inform applicants. Each character area has important features which a proposed development will need to address, in design and layout. To what extent do you agree with this approach?

A: Strongly agree

Williton Parish Council agree with the approach with character areas – Williton is a village and do not want to be aligned with a Town. Would Watchet be better grouped with Minehead as coastal areas? Could area 1 extend to Watchet as this would be a coastal strip? Watchet is a coastal town, Williton is an agricultural village – two different characters of communities.

Do you have any other comments on this section?

The Area 2 has both a coastal and inland character, this needs to be reflected in the approach to the build. The development at Lorna Doone, in Watchet, reflects the type of housing you would expect to find on a coastal site.

Each area of the SWAT planning area is unique and should be treated as such, distinctive design must be used to ensure that their individual characteristics is preserved

As Williton is an agricultural village it would be preferred to see in it in an area linked with other villages leading to the Quantock Hills as it is felt it is nearer to Quantock character rather than Watchet. Williton has long houses with cottages around the long houses and thatched cottages and should be reflected as such. The use of local stone should be used to keep in context with existing colours.

Variation within the 10 areas

Section 4 – Sustainable Placemaking

Q1 *The Design Guide looks to bring together the principles of placemaking and sustainability. Do you agree with this broad approach?*

A: Agree

Q2 *Example sketches illustrate how placemaking and sustainability would influence the design and layout of new neighbourhoods. Do you consider this approach is approach?*

A: Neither agree nor disagree

Q3 *The Design Guide wants to see buildings making good streetscapes. Do you agree with this approach?*

A: Agree

Q4 *Government guidance recommends that streets are designed for all users and are designed by looking at how vehicles use streets and junctions to determine their size. This is different to standardised road and footpath dimensions. This section looks at how these principles can be used to create attractive places. Do you agree?*

A: Agree

Q5 *The Design Guide sets out a mixed approach to parking. The emphasis is on purpose-designed on street (allocated) parking bays; with less use of parking in open parking courts; and some on-plot provision. Do you agree with this approach?*

A: Disagree

Q6 *Do you consider that this Design Guide should be more specific on parking standards in the district?*

A: Strongly agree

Q7 *All parking bays are shown to have access to kerbside electric charging points. Do you agree?*

A: Agree

Q8 *The design of neighbourhoods should be built around encouraging active travel (easy walking and cycling routes) and layouts which encourage the use of public transport wherever possible. Do you agree?*

A: Strongly agree

Q9 Do you have any other comments on this section?

These ideas are good for a development in an urban settlement but if applied to a small rural village will detract from the uniqueness of the village or hamlet. Many villages have narrow roads with properties having parking allocated within their boundary roadside parking will lead to either single way traffic movement with traffic congestion or one way or wider streets to accommodate two-way traffic movement and car parking which will not be appropriate in these communities. If electric cars are to be encouraged charging points must be made readily available.

Re Q5: What seems to be lacking is visitor parking. In a real world we all have visitors, whether this is friends/family or the 'white man van'. In some estates the roads are so narrow that you cannot find anywhere to park, even for 5 minutes. There should be more allocated parking per unit.

Re Q6: Should have more details – specific on parking standards

Section 5 – Design Topics

Q1 Do you have any comments on this section?

A proportion of new homes must either be designed or have the ability to be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of the occupiers. Adequate provision to store recycling bins must be made for every new home and provision for cycle storage should be considered for each property. Property should be built to be flood resilient but not built on any land within the three designated flood zones. Existing property should be maintained and repaired to ensure the historic integrity of the building is maintained. Any new build must not detract from the setting of its neighbours

Talks about lifetime homes, would welcome this approach to allowing wheelchair movement and space for creation of a downstairs bedroom. This approach should be taken in the whole of the SWAT area, not just the Garden Town.

5.3 – Taller buildings – not suitable for rural developments. It should be in keeping with the setting.

5.6 – Need visibility displays for road entrances. Suburban approach would be safer. Pavement are needed for safety. Not happy with back land infill developments in village areas – should be moving towards an environment where more space is given to properties, not less.

Section 6 – Supplementary Information

Q1 Do you have any comments on this section?

Broadly agree that this supporting information must be supplied by the developer

Developers need to look at sites properly and consideration given to topography of site. More transparent details are needed before any plans go out to consultation and outline planning.

A design review should be welcomed, however, too many applications are being made for outline planning permission without any details. The nice pictures that are given by the initial consultation does not seem to be reflected in the final build. Suddenly the amount of car parking goes down because the builder has not actually looked at the gradients of the site, or the possibility that the site is not viable without increasing the number of units – it all comes back to the details.

Section 7 - Glossary

Q1 Do you have any comments on this section?

Glossary covers most points that have not been expanded on earlier in the document

This document appears to be an urban document, not from a village point of view, and geared towards large developments. There is nothing about the occasional house or barn conversion. It should apply to all developments, from large estates to a single house. The builds need to be sympathetic to the local / historical environment.

Meeting closed at 2.47 pm

Signed as a true and correct record Cllr Peter Payne Dated 26th May 2020