

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Planning Meeting held 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

**Present:** Cllrs Davis (Chairman), Hames, Mrs Hodson, Laws, Miss Manley (part), Newman-McKie, Sargent and Tisdale.

**In attendance:** Guy Langton – Deputy Town Clerk  
Cllr Mrs McCarthy (non-committee member)  
One member of the public.  
Mr I Rowland, Planning Policy Officer at Torridge District Council

**2303/1061 Apologies**

No apologies were received.

**2303/1062 Chairmans Announcements:**

The Vice Chairman reported that at the recent Torridge District Plans Committee, permission was granted for the sites at Pitt Hill (27 homes) and to demolish and replace 'Still Waters' on Torridge Rd, Appledore.

**2303/1063 To agree the agenda as published**

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.  
Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded Cllr Laws (all in favour).

**2303/1064 Declarations of interest:**

Members were reminded that all interests should be declared prior to the item being discussed.

**2303/1065 To confirm and sign previous planning committee meeting minutes.**

It was **resolved** to confirm and sign the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.  
Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Manley (majority in favour, 1 abstention – not present at meeting).

**2303/1066 To confirm and sign the special planning committee meeting minutes.**

It was **resolved** to confirm and sign the minutes of the Special Planning Committee Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.  
Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Laws (majority in favour, 1 abstention – not present at meeting).

**2303/1067 Public Participation**

*Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.*

The member of the public did not wish to address the committee.

**2303/1068 To receive an update from Mr I Rowland of Torridge District Council on the HELAA process and constitution.**

Mr Rowland introduced himself as the co-manager of the Planning Policy team at Torridge District Council. He was attending the meeting at the request of the committee, which had written to him in December 2022 and requested his attendance upon receiving his reply.

He started by defining HELAA as Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which had replaced the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) in the new Local Plan development process. Its purpose was to identify and assess land for housing or economic development, thus forming part of the evidence base for the revised Local Plan.

Referring to the concerns raised by the Town Council in its December 2022 letter, he assured the meeting that the District Council understood those concerns. His view was that the Parish and Town Councils had been consulted, given the level of response in the spring of 2022.

He noted the Council's main concern was regarding the make-up of the HELAA stakeholder panel, being based towards the development industry. This was the aim, as the HELAA was a technical process, designed to identify land that could be delivered. Community representation was drawn from each District Council, with the Leader of TDC and Deputy Leader of NDDC. All Parishes and Town could not be represented as it would make the panel too cumbersome. There would be further community consultation on the land brought forward as part of the Local Plan.

At a recent meeting of the HELAA panel, 360 sites from 69 parishes across North Devon and Torridge. Some sites warranted very little time, so to include a Parish representative for each location would have extended the meeting considerably.

Questions were then asked by the members of the committee:

Cllr Hames noted that central government guidance was that local communities should be involved in the process, so why only two community representatives (when the SHLAA had had four), and with 360 sites to consider, could representatives not be drawn from a wider group? He felt that to rely on the latter stages of the Local Plan consultation process was not inclusive or broad enough. Why had the HELAA panel not included stakeholder representatives, such as Natural England?

Mr Rowland replied saying that the HELAA process was not to gather opinion but to assess the technical merits of each site. He confirmed the HELAA process did not grant planning consent, nor did inclusion of a site in the Local Plan, which would be considered by community representatives at TDC Full Council before inclusion in the Local Plan. Also, at the latter stages the community could modify the detail of any development through the planning consultation process.

Cllr Laws noted that local people were concerned about the number of houses planned for the area and the subsequent effects on the infrastructure and that the system nationally was biased in favour of the developers. His view was that if the members at Torridge District Council had been fully clear on the possible outcomes of the SHLAA process, the Local Plan would have included fewer sites.

Mr Rowland confirmed that TDC would choose the sites in the next iteration of the Local Plan, the number of homes to be provided would be derived from a central government formula, which equated to approx. 750 a year in North Devon and Torridge.

Cllr Tisdale asked if the HELAA and before that the SHLAA meetings were public or private and if they were minuted? The public perception of the process was key, there was an understanding that the community needed affordable housing for local people and that development should be supported by infrastructure.

Mr Rowland confirmed that the HELAA panel was constituted as a working group, so not publicly accessible. Its recommendations would need to be put to committees and then the Full Councils of ND and Torridge and those meetings were open to the public.

The HELAA and SHLAA panel meetings were held in private as commercially (and possibly politically) sensitive information was discussed. Lanning offices took the information gathered at these meetings and prepared a list of suitable sites for consideration by members.

*Cllr Miss Manley left at this juncture.*

The Local Plan contained policies for infrastructure, but the District Council could not physically deliver all aspects of that infrastructure, such as schools, roads or medical facilities.

Cllr Mrs Hodson asked how the initial list of 360 sites had been arrived at, and were they land holdings that developers had already acquired? She was concerned that developers had put land forward for inclusion which later proved to be undeliverable, or difficult to deliver. She also noted a concern over the breadth of any consultation on the current Local Plan given the current objections to the development.

Mr Rowland reported that the HELAA process had started by considering sites that currently had planning consent or had been allocated as part of the SHLAA process included in the current Local Plan to ensure that the panel had got the process right and that new sites would be considered at subsequent meetings of the panel. The impact of a defined five-year land supply was notable, though overall the region had higher numbers currently identified than required to meet the quota.

Cllr Neman-McKie asked if Mr Rowland considered that TDC would be able to put learnt experience into practice, so the next phases of local development could be better managed? She asked if a new town may have offered some level of protection to the settlements across wider district?

Mr Rowland responded by saying he hoped that would be the case. Elected members at TDC should have been aware of the levels of local objection to developments during the development of the previous local plan, though he understood that site allocations would often be contrary to local people's views and that a 'green wedge' had been defined in the policies of the current Plan. He confirmed that all stages of the previous iteration of the Local Plan would have been considered by the appropriate committee or Full Council meeting of TDC.

Cllr Mrs McCarthy noted that the HELAA panel was small for reason of efficiency but was concerned that this excluded the local knowledge that communities had and that this was a mistake.

Mr Rowland explained that HELAA was not intended to exclude local views but to identify sites that would be technically suitable for delivery.

Cllr Sargent asked if 'Localism' had any purpose if central government could put pressure on local authorities to meet national targets for house building?

Mr Rowland agreed that there were problems in marrying-up local planning activities with top-down national expectations.

**2303/1070 Torridge District Council Planning Applications:**

Torridge District Council, the determining Authority, has asked for comments from the Town Council on the following Parish planning applications:

i) **1/0202/2023/FUL**

Applicant: Platt

Location: Holmleigh, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!

**Response date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Proposal: Erection of replacement dwelling with associated works.

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Laws (majority in favour).

ii) **1/0010/2023/NMAT**

Applicant: Vistry Housebuilding SW

Location: Daddon Hill Farm, Daddon Hill, Northam

**Response date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Proposal: Non material amendment to Planning Application 1/0004/2021/REMM - Alterations to site layout.

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be noted only.

Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Davis (majority in favour).

iii) **1/0246/2023/FUL**

Applicant: Hutter

Location: Anchorage, 37 Windmill Lane, Northam

**Response date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Proposal: Erection of single storey extensions, internal and external alterations and landscaping works

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Sargent (all in favour).

iv) **1/0252/2023/FUL**

Applicant: Morris

Location: 11 Polywell, Appledore

**Response date: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Proposal: Off road parking area

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Davis, Seconded: Cllr Tisdale (all in favour).

v) **1/0248/2023/FUL**

Applicant: Williamson

Location: Land At Grid Reference 244396 129269, Tadworthy Road, Northam

**Response date: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Proposal: Erection of 1no. dwelling to include access and drainage arrangements.

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be deferred to the next meeting of this committee.

Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Sargent (all in favour).

Action point: Extension to response deadline to be requested.

vi) **1/0126/2023/FUL**

Applicant: Braddicks Leisure

Location: The Fairway Buoy, Golf Links Road, Westward Ho!

**Response date: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Proposal: Proposed ground floor extension to existing property and first floor balcony extension and part retrospective permission for external ground floor decking

It was **resolved** to recommend the proposal be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Tisdale, Seconded: Cllr Newman-McKie (all in favour).

**2303/1071 Torridge District Council Planning Decisions**

It was noted that Torridge District Council, the determining Authority, had **granted permission** for the following applications.

- i) **1/1249/2023/FUL**  
Proposal: Reserved matters application for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Access and Scale pursuant to planning approval 1/0123/2023/OUT (Re-submission of 1/0798/2022/REM)  
Location: Land At Grid Reference 243202 129005, Kingsley Road, Westward Ho!  
(Northam recommended this proposal be refused permission)
- ii) **1/0031/2023/FUL**  
Proposal: Replacement garage  
Location: Grandmas, Chircombe Lane, Northam  
(Northam recommended this proposal be granted permission)
- iii) **1/0058/2023/FUL**  
Proposal: Erection of 1no. dwelling  
Location: 32 Fordlands Crescent, Bideford  
(Northam recommended this proposal be granted permission)
- iv) **1/1256/2022/FUL**  
Proposal: Two storey extension to rear of property to replace existing glazed conservatory, together with internal alterations.  
Location: 37 Hanson Park, Northam  
(Northam recommended this proposal be granted permission)
- v) **1/0123/2023/OUT**  
Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved for 1 no. dwelling (Variation of condition 4 of Planning Application 1/1142/2021/OUT) - Amendment to wording  
Location: Land At Rowena, Kingsley Road, Westward Ho!  
(Northam noted this proposal)
- vi) **1/0065/2023/FUH**  
Proposal: Erection of a separate garden room, extension to patio and replace part of garden fence  
Location: 10 Francis Drive, Westward Ho!  
(Northam recommended this proposal be granted permission)
- vii) **1/1278/2022/FUL**  
Proposal: Demolition of domestic stable block, construction of 1 no. dwelling with associated landscaping and parking  
Location: Stables At Grid Reference 246073 129761, Wooda Road, Northam  
(Northam recommended this proposal be granted permission)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:00pm

Signed.....Dated.....