

ADEPT Minutes

Date: 6th July 2023

Time: 9:30 – 11:30

Location: MS Teams

Present:	
Sophie Broadfield - Chair Banes	Anthony Payne - Plymouth
Nigel Riglar - South Glos	Miranda Housden -Ice.org
Emma Blackham - South Glo Council	Sophie Hosking - Cornwall Council
Alan Denby - Torbay Council	David Carter - Somerset
Emma Cockburn - SW Highway Alliance	Arianne Crampton - Wiltshire Council
Nigel Blackler - IoS / Peninsula Transport	Lisa Nash – minutes Banes

Guest Speakers	Mark Goldstone, Ben Rhodes & Nicky Williams
Guest Speakers	David Clarke
Guest Speaker	Tim Richens

Item No	
1	Apologies and minutes
Apologies: Julian McLaughlin, Meg Booth, David Glinos, Peter Marsh, Jess Gibbons (Kate Langdown, Director for Environment stand in for Jess G), Hannah Bartram (Anthony Payne stand in for Hannah B)	
2	Update from ADEPT Anthony Payne
See verbal update shared with minutes	
3	Presentation – CBI Briefing (Ben Rhodes, Regional Director for the South West & Mark Goldstone, Head of Regional Policy)
Ben and Mark presented some slides – see slides shared with minutes	
Questions:	
Alan Denby - asked if there is any potential join up of work re Costal Communities Alliance – Nicky W to pick up offline with Alan.	

David Carter - pointed out that there is currently a 36-month lead with National Grid – Nicky W said after conversations with NG they understand the fundamental reform that is required on how applications are assessed and allocated out. CBI are currently looking at ways the current legislation could be changed.

Ariane Crampton - agrees there is not quick fix and believes it will take years to turn around. Collaboratively Ariane believes local area energy plans can be mapped out to prioritise items that are the most likely to happen. There is also a need to be flexible about locations and constraints.

Nigel Blackler - believes the single biggest issue is grid connectivity, is there a programme of work that will see this completed, published, and promoted by September? Could just one of the numerous issues such as that be pulled out and launched taking it to a higher profile? Mark G started that this is a good point and will take this one to take away.

Ben Rhodes - stated that the regulatory reform has been a very hot topic within the CV over the last 6-12 months, colleagues have been working on it.

Sophie Broadfield thanked Ben & Mark and stated she is happy for Ben & Mark to comeback for a future session if they would like.

4	Homes for the South West: Housing Affordability in the South West of England (David Clarke)
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David Clarke presented some slides – see slides shared with the minutes

Questions:

Nigel Blackler - said David’s presentation emphasised the need for changes to be made, they start with government but then come down to a regional level in order for the cause to be addressed. The problem is big, and the longer it goes on the worse it is. David said this is one of the points H for the SW are trying to drive home and expressed it’s hard to know how much worse it’s going to be before it gets better. They are currently working on the number of new homes they are actually building, so from a H for the SW point of view they have made lots of contacts, particularly political stakeholders, MP’s and so on. With the general election coming up the political colours may change in 18 months’ time.

David Carter expressed that it’s bad throughout the whole region.

Another issue that needs to be managed effectively are second holiday homes and lets. A complete overhaul is required in the way H for the SW manage things.

David Carter expressed that it’s always difficult trying to create anything that’s a different policy on a regional basis for a particular issue. Any ideas on what could be done about it? Everyone recognises a particular issue at the mid / top end of the market with people from London affording to buy pretty houses in the SW. David C doesn’t think there is currently a solution, certainly at the moment. David C added that there are several schemes in Cornwall that try and restrict access to homes to people who have got local connections and work in the area but are relatively small scale; there is some evidence to suggest that they have worked up to a point.

A solution needs to be found for the future this is clear.

5	Building affordable homes. Case study from Aequus Group, wholly LA-owned housing company (Tim Richens, Managing Director)
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Tim Richens presented some slides – see slides shared with the minutes

Questions:

David Clarke said there are two things of particular interest to him.

- 1) The proposition that with the right case being made, you can come up with schemes that have much higher proportions of affordable housing on them because that is one of the issues we've got the payment and then if you need support for that case, the report that I was talking about helps to make that, I think and they came up with that 60% figure.
- 2) Behind that we use the term affordable to mean a whole raft of different things, and it's clear some of the affordable products you know, particularly in areas where they've got the affordability ratios we're talking about, you know knocking 20% off the market. Partly it doesn't really do an awful lot, so it's what type of affordable and how do you protect it as affordable that I think of as the key issues there. There's probably a case for a complete overhaul of how we define affordable housing but working with what we've got needs much more clarity.

Emma Blackham - I think you've articulated well to the benefits of going into this kind of arrangement and how you can test the different levels of provision. One of the things that you said that you were doing was modelling. 50% or higher of affordable housing in some sites in Banes and I just wondered where you were in that process in terms of how that stacks up and whether you had any views on whether in a 50% or higher would be a goer?

Tim Richens - I think that the modelling we're doing currently, clearly it does depress the land value. I think a lot what you can do, and I think it does require a lot of engagement between the developer and the Council. So, the way to get more benefit from the affordable product is to do it as additionality and one way is to reduce the section 106 requirement on the land but still deliver the affordable as additionality. But that does require an element of trust between the Council and the developer in that you will then deliver that social housing as additionality because it won't be a section 106 requirement. So, the more you can reduce the section 106 on viability grants and then deliver the affordable as additionality means you can leave in more grant.

It's a model that I know a lot of the RSL are looking at as well working with private developers so there is a way to make it more viable. It still has an impact on land value that you can't get away from that even with the maximum grant, you sort of do you sort of in the 80%. So, it's going have an impact on land value, but there are ways to try and minimise that impact on value. If you can have that trust between planning colleagues, the politicians, and the developer.

Sophie Broadfield - Overall, one of the things we're looking at in Banes more broadly or so is how we use the local plan and see the traditional model. Hopefully, I'm not going get this wrong. I describe it cause I've no planning experience, we need to deliver in Banes 15,000 new homes and one of the reasons it's a fifth of the figure is 15,000 is in order for those new homes to pay for the 4000 or so that need to be affordable housing. What we know from the analysis that you're saying David and more generally we kind of need 15,000 affordable homes and arguably none or the small number of expensive private rented market homes.

So how could we say that more explicitly in the local plan and effectively give planning permission only for affordable homes? Then that would clearly depress the market value. I don't think it's possible overall, but certainly for example for handing over green belt, how do we say that that's only going to be given planning permission? If it's at the affordable level?

David Carter - It's not. It's clearly not my current role, Sophie, but having been immersed in it with Emma and Co for several years, I think it's a difficult challenge you've just set but the premise that if you're going to release land, you'd want maximisation on it or that's always immensely difficult because of what price the land bought at, who owned it? Was it auctioneered you then bring all that through to viability. In theory if you know how the land lost has been transacted from rural agricultural value you do have an ability from my memory. Laura Ambler used to explain to me, you do have the ability to say that at inquiry to say that that's an unreasonable expropriation of land, but I don't think any of us have got the resources to track effectively what developers have optioned land for all the way through the system. Theoretically, it's possible, but we don't hold that information. We don't have the resources to do it, but that's how I remember that you could evidence it but to be policy compliant it and the law and the planning process isn't it's never been clear that if somebody's overpaid for land that shouldn't be taken into viability for consideration, but it always generally is and that's how they get away with it. From memory it isn't easy.

David Carter – Tim and you know to advocate it to everybody else in the call is that where you've got margin and you've got some ability to deliver a lower cost and more affordable housing within the system. We're breaking out where we can that value overall it's you'll still be condemned as you said but not condemned.

Land prices - what you have to pay for what you have to get in consideration etcetera is still the problem and again that's something I think that a national level in an incoming government wants to do is something about temporarily for the reasons that David Clarke suggested, because its supply of housing at particularly at that entry level, which is the problem, that's what creates unaffordability for quite a lot of the population, if that's a political objective, you can only hope that national politicians find some way equitably of sorting the problem out.

I've always seen the problem, but I've never seen quite what the solution is. Because it you're constrained in so many different directions to be able to do that comes back to land prices at the end of the day.