

PlanForum

Guernsey Agents Forum
Meeting 18th May 2011 @ Sir Charles Frossard House

MEETING NOTES

PlanForum members in attendance

Jill Bray	Courtillet Design
Tony Charles	Charles Planning Associates Limited
Nigel Duquemin	Nigel Duquemin & Co
Rachel Jones	Spicer and Partners Guernsey LLP
Carl Foulds	Direct Architectural Solutions
Robert Le Page	Robert W Le Page Architects & Chartered Surveyors
John Hibbs	PF+A Limited
Mitchell Sneddon	DFA(I) and Guernsey Society of Architects
Esther Male	Cresswell Cuttle & Dyke Ltd
Bob O'Brien	States of Guernsey (representing CIOB)
Drew Robertson	Dunnell Robertson Partnership
David Falla	Falla Associates International

Apologies:

Brian Martel	
James Barker	Create Ltd

From States of Guernsey

Claire Barrett	Principal Planning Officer
Nigel Chescoe	Senior Building Control Surveyor
Nicola Gough	Communications Officer
Elaine Hare	Principal Planning Officer
Jim Rowles	Director of Planning Control Services
Alun White	Principal Conservation and Design Officer

On the 18 May 2011 the following topics were discussed by members present:

Planning Update Information update from planning and building control.

Key points:

Planning E-mail box – Planning@gov.gg now in operation. Please use rather than env@gov.gg Ensures e-mails get to us more directly and quickly.

Copies of our **Meeting notes** are sent from the Planning box. Written confirmation of

discussion should avoid misunderstandings and add further value to the pre-application process.

Planning conditions site information sheet now sent with every Development Control Permit to ensure that the planning conditions are available to the builder or developer on site. Building Control to check that the sheets are present at the site when visiting and can use them to assist the condition checking process. Agents are asked to ensure that the sheet is supplied to client for the builder and is retained on site.

Increasing interest in opportunities to **view approved developments when complete**. Opportunity for critical review by officers and Members to learn from both positive and negative aspects. We may contact agents to ask for visits. If agents have interesting schemes also asked to contact us.

Performance figures – exceeded targets last year 72% and 90% in 8 and 13 weeks. Information on website. Targets are now 80% of decisions issued within 8 weeks and 90% within 13.

Material considerations advice note now on website – intended for those commenting on applications but also of interest to agents.

Dower units advice note has been on web for some time.

How to make planning application advice note has been improved to give model examples of site location and block plans. Please note and use.

Planning and design statements advice note is in preparation following workshop in November.

Request - Please include **floor area figures** on application forms as assists speedy fee confirmation and helps us process applications quickly.

Discussion Use Classes Ordinance

Key points:

Recent scrutiny Committee report into implementation of the Shepley recommendations – to be considered by the States in May.

One of scrutiny recommendations is a timescale for reporting to the states with amendments to the Law and ordinances. Recommendation is to report back to April 2012 States Meeting.

We will be looking at the law and ordinances generally, but specific areas of consideration will include:-

- General provisions relating to applications
- Exemptions
- Use classes
- EIA
- Fees.

We are at an early stage, but would welcome feedback from agents with any thoughts on how this review process should be undertaken (e.g. who consult, when and how) and regarding specific issues for review.

In view of the tight timetable for reporting to the States, responses will be required before September 2011.

We are aware of issues relating to fees, which have been discussed at the previous workshop in October, and touched on exemptions at the last forum meeting. Invite views on the use classes ordinance – does it work well or not, are there any issues for agents, could improvements be made and if so what? Etc.

Any other comments or issues that want considered in review?

E-mail us with further thoughts. To feed into the Law review.

Workshops and other activities

Key points:

Feedback from Statements of Significance workshop.

The group discussed the recent Statement of Significance workshop. Although the workshop was useful, there was concern about how they would be applied, including potential copyright issues. The group were told that the procedures were still being developed and issues were being ironed out and that they would be kept fully informed.

It was noted that if a Statement of Significance is not included with an application which should have one, the application will not be held as invalid . However, if the application is invalid for another reason, a Statement of Significance may be requested at that stage along with the further information required to validate the application.

It was reiterated that a Statement of Significance is not currently a requirement. Applicants/agents can request that their application be determined on the basis of the evidence submitted.

Suggestions for future workshops:

- Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statements.
- Submission check workshop on the application registration process and the information requirements for valid applications.

Agents' workshops for planners.

The Architectural Technologists and the Guernsey Society of Architects will include Planning staff in circulation of forthcoming events and workshops. Future topics include the Code for Sustainable Homes, timber cladding and sustainable refurbishment.

Agents' Accreditation Scheme.

Planning Control Services has recently been reviewed by the Financial Transformation Executive Value for Money consultants. One of their recommendations is for an agents' accreditation scheme.

E.g. of St Helen's scheme:- Agents commit to submission of applications which contain all necessary information and correct fee in accordance with a checklist. For this, they receive fast track registration, quicker processing and use of scheme logo.

Benefits for us are that it encourages agents to submit their applications right first time and avoid submitting poor quality applications. It also encourages both parties (us and agents) to work together to improve our respective performance.

Benefits for agents are that the scheme can improve speed and give some kudos and competitive advantage for practices which consistently perform well on completeness of their applications.

Also measure against other chosen indicators, which might include % applications valid on receipt, % approved, % cases benefiting from pre-application discussions etc

Seek agent's views on such a scheme and on what criteria might be included within it.

To be discussed further. Agents will be contacted.

Any other business Opportunity for agents to give general feedback and discuss any issues.

Questions and Answers:

1. Guernsey Tomorrow and how this is progressing and fitting in with Planning system for the future
Response: The feedback received from the Guernsey Tomorrow initiative, which engaged with over 600 islanders, is now being assimilated into the revised Strategic Land Use Plan, scheduled to be presented in a Billet to the States in September.
2. Strategic and Corporate Plan when is that due, and will that trigger reviews of the RAP & UAP and if so what sort of timetable?
Response: The Urban and Rural Area Plans are required to accord with the States Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP). The underlying spatial strategy of the current SLUP was established in the 1990s and has been to meet the majority of the island's development needs within the urban area in order to conserve the remaining countryside. The SLUP is currently undergoing a comprehensive review by the Policy Council and it is expected a new SLUP will be before the States for consideration this September, 2011. Note: Since the Forum meeting, it is understood that it is most likely that the SLUP will be going to the States in October, subject to an appropriate slot being available.

It is the intention of the Environment Department to commence the review

process for both Development Plans shortly after the adoption of a new SLUP. The Plan review process will have five separate stages:

- Stage 1: Pre-plan review preparation
- Stage 2: Plan Preparation (Review Commencement Notice)
- Stage 3: Draft Plan (Public Consultation on the draft Plan)
- Stage 4: Inquiry (hearing on written representatives to the Plan)
- Stage 5: States Debate (Plan Approval)

The Department is currently in Stage 1 and it is expected that the entire review process may take around 2 years. During the forthcoming stages, there will be opportunity for public consultation, when arguments for change in the current planning policy can be put forward for consideration by the Department. We will publish in the local media and on our website, the commencement of the Plan Review and alongside that details of how to engage with the process.

3. Concerns relating to delays in the RAP & UAP reviews.
Response: Delays in reviewing the UAP & RAP are principally due to the comprehensive review being undertaken by the Policy Council in drafting the Strategic Land Use Plan.
4. Approvals for new Housing units and how this is going in relation to Annual targets?
Response: The target for housing completions approvals is currently 300 per year and the plans seek to maintain a 2 year supply of permissions (i.e. 600). Recent assessments indicate that the current supply exceeds this requirement, but most of the approvals relate to small sites, predominantly 10 units or less. Completions are somewhat lower, perhaps reflecting the capacity of the construction industry on the Island.
5. Concerns of lack of housing in the RAP and up to date thoughts on how one may release some sites to help solve local problems.
Response: There is currently no identified shortfall in housing provision on the island, though the types of housing approved in terms of size and tenure could well produce a mismatch between demand and housing needs, particularly in the intermediate and social housing sectors of the market. These issues will be addressed in the emerging plan review, but is unlikely to trigger the release of sites in the rural area, with the exception of potential RH2 sites such as the site being advanced by Guernsey Housing Association at Rue Jehannet in St Martin.
6. Eastern Seaboard and the interesting proposals.....has it died a death or is this coming up with the Strategic Plan issues?
Response: The Eastern Seaboard Initiative formed part of the Guernsey Tomorrow consultations and received some public support in principle for potential land reclamation in the area of Belle Greve Bay. This will be addressed in the policy framework of the Strategic Land Use Plan.
7. Retail in St PP and concerns due the Leale's Yard development.
Response: The Leale's Yard scheme was granted outline planning consent earlier this year with a reduction of 20% on the comparison goods floorspace. Detailed proposals are now awaited, but it is envisaged that the two centres of St Peter Port and the Bridge will develop complimentary roles in meeting the retail needs of islanders.

8. Retail in St PP any incentives to consider getting units better utilized. Note circa 41 units empty now, and 39 empty in early 1970's so is there a problem?

Response: The Department intends to initiate further work, hopefully in conjunction with the Town Centre Partnership, to audit the retail offer in Town, together with a qualitative assessment of the public realm. This might form the basis of a Town Centre Strategy that will include the desirable mix of uses, the night time and evening economy and issues of public safety and security.

Date & time of next meeting:

Wednesday 16th Nov 2011

9:30am – 12pm @ Sir Charles Fossard House