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Welcome to the twelfth edition of the Sedgemoor Local Development Framework Newsletter. This edition contains headline news from the CIL, Meads and Puriton Energy Park consultations that have recently closed.

Puriton Energy Park

The second consultation on the Puriton Energy Park Supplementary Planning Document did not draw as many comments as the first one earlier this year. In total 22 people sent in written comments, and no significant new issues were raised. The public meeting organised by Puriton Parish Council was, however, very well attended, giving people a chance to have their say and get some answers from the Council. The next step will be to finalise the SPD, taking into account written and verbal comments from both stages of consultation, and present it to Full Council for adoption probably during the early part of 2012. Read comments via the webpage at

<http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7411>

In the meantime, BAE Systems are organising their own consultation on proposals for the site (which they are referring to as the Huntspill Energy Park), as follows:

17 – 19 November 2011 at

The 37 Sports & Social Club

1 West Approach Road

Woolavington Road

Puriton

TA7 8AD

Public drop-in sessions:

Thursday 17 November 4 – 7pm

Friday 18 November 3 – 5.30pm

Saturday 19 November 10am – 2pm

For further information email Avril Baker at info@abc-pr.co.uk or phone 0117 977 2002

Community Infrastructure Levy

Given the technical nature of the CIL Scoping Document, written comments have come largely from agents, developers and key infrastructure providers. These will be useful in preparing the draft Development Plan Document which we hope to be ready to consult on in the early part of 2012.

Further info at <http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7906>

NEWS

CORE STRATEGY ADOPTED. The Sedgemoor Core Strategy was formally adopted at a meeting of Full Council on the 12th October 2011 and now replaces the Local Plan as the development plan for the district. See the following page for more details.

HINKLEY SPD ADOPTED. The Hinkley Point C Supplementary Planning Document was also adopted at the Full Council meeting on the 12th October. This document is intended to guide decision making around the Hinkley project and to set out important local considerations. The final adopted version will shortly be available on our website.

HINKLEY DCO APPLICATION IN. EDF submitted its application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission on 31st October for a Development Consent Order to allow it to build two new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point. The IPC has 28 days to validate the application, after which it will be publically available. The Council has begun to prepare its Local Impact Report for consideration by the IPC.

CONSULTATION ENDS ON MEADS, ROF, CIL. The online consultations on the Meads and Puriton Energy Park SPDs, and on the Community Infrastructure Levy have now closed. See opposite and below for a summary of headline issues arising from the consultations.

The Meads

Comments on the Meads Supplementary Planning Document are still being processed, but it is clear that there is a good level of support for the project, despite concerns from some about the proposed new housing at Haygrove Farm and the financial link between this and the park project. Once comments are processed, they will be used to help prepare the Council's Preferred Option document which we hope will be available for consultation early next year. Read comments via the Meads webpage at <http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7905>

Neighbourhood Planning

The Government's new Localism agenda has already sparked interest in Sedgemoor, and the Council has begun to receive enquiries from communities who are interested in creating their own Neighbourhood Plan.

The Localism Bill currently going through Parliament allows Town and Parish Councils (or in unparished areas, a special Neighbourhood Forum) to write their own Neighbourhood Plans against which planning applications will be judged. In order to be approved at examination, plans will need to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and with national policy, and will need to be agreed by over 50% of voters in a local referendum.

The Core Strategy already provides for a high level of local input into planning, and in many cases there may be no significant advantage for a community in pursuing the potentially expensive and resource-intensive Neighbourhood Plan route. In other cases, however, a Neighbourhood Plan will be an appropriate way for a town or village to achieve local aspirations.

There are many uncertainties over exactly how the new system will work, and potentially changes to the Localism Bill before it becomes law. The Council has recently agreed to requests from Ashcott Parish Council and Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council to apply for grants to help initiate Neighbourhood Plans in these communities. If the bids are successful and the plans go ahead, useful experience will be gained in this new area of planning, and hopefully some of the uncertainties ironed out.

In the meantime, the Council is preparing guidance on Neighbourhood Planning for those who wish to find out more, and will make this available on the LDF website as soon as possible.

THE CORE STRATEGY

The Sedgemoor Core Strategy now replaces the Local Plan as the development plan for the district, against which all planning applications will be judged.

The adopted Core Strategy can be viewed at

www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/corestrategy

This version shows the Inspector's recommended changes as set out in his report following the examination. Most of the changes were agreed between the Council and those making representations during the examination and subsequently endorsed by the Inspector. The only exception was in the text of Chapter 4 (Major Infrastructure Projects), where the Inspector imposed one minor change.

A six week period during which legal challenges to the adopted Core Strategy may be made finishes on 29th November. After this, we will prepare a final version complete with proposals maps and including the text of policies saved from the Local Plan. In the meantime, the Local Plan is still available for reference in PDF form at

<http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5855>

Finding out more

Please use our website to keep in touch with what is happening.

www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/ldf

South West Planning Aid provides free, independent advice on planning matters to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. To find out more go to www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Or to find out more about planning generally, go to www.planningportal.gov.uk

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For any queries not answered on the website, or to put your name on our database for automatic updates, please contact us:

By phone: 01278 436436

By email: ldf@sedgemoor.gov.uk

By post: LDF Team
Strategy and Business Services
Sedgemoor District Council
Bridgwater House
King Square
Bridgwater
TA6 3AR

*For general planning enquiries please call
0845 408 2540*