

ISLE OF MAN CONSTRUCTION FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING

HELD AT THE ISLE OF MAN CONSTRUCTION FEDERATION OFFICES, ONCHAN

Friday 20th July 2018

Present

Gary Crittenden, SCS Limited	Chairman
Brian Butler, Bell Burton Associates	Secretary
Clive Callister, Colas/Auldyn	Contractors
John Cryer, Marshall Cryer Architects/HLA	Architects
Rob Collister, Cornerstone Architects	Architects
Jeff Magee, Magee and Co	Quantity Surveyors
Stan Yellop, SMS Limited	Planning Supervisors
Andrew Coleman, Camada Limited	Contractors
Stephen Smyth, Island Aggregates	Chamber of Commerce
Julie Edge MHK	
Matt Bond, DOI	Project Management
Tim Crookall MLC	DFE
Les Nicol, NK Construction Limited	Contractors
Tim Cowsill	DFE
Stephen Bradley	Business Agency DFE
Alan Clague, SCS	M&E Contractors
John Sullivan, JBA	Engineers
Michael Hodgson, March Consultants	M&E Consultants
Tony Lloyd-Davis, Cornerstone	Architects
Ashley Pettit, APA	Architects
Seymour Corkill, Colas	Materials
Kris Killip, Tooms/IDG	Contractors
Andrew Traynor, Horncastle Thomas	Architects
Chris Thomas MHK	Minister for Policy and Reform
Dean Balkin, Principal Planner	Cabinet Office
Gary Joughin, Swagelok	Chamber of Commerce

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed Forum Members.

2.0 **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded as follows; Jeff Robinson, Neill Callin, Shirley O'Neill, Corelli Bentham, Peter Tyreman, Steve Woodward, Nick Black, Jeremy Reece, Paul Slinger, Geoff Boot MHK, Andy Bostock, Lawrie Hooper MHK, Hugh Logan, Mark Lewin, David Chapman

3.0 **Minutes of meeting, 29th June 2018**

The minutes were recorded as true and accurate representation of the meeting.

4.0 **Planning Reform – Chris Thomas MHK and Dean Balkin**

Chris Thomas MHK introduced the Reform of the Planning System which is part of the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021. Link below

<https://www.gov.im/media/1361383/action-plan-reform-of-the-planning-system.pdf>

There is a 6 point plan of amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act which were discussed in detail

The six points are:

1. New powers for the subsequent introduction of National Policy Directives which, with Tynwald approval, could override the Development Plan to better meet our needs.
2. A new Community Infrastructure Levy taking effect in early 2020.
3. The powers to introduce a method for faster minor amendments to existing planning approvals by the end of 2019.
4. Introduce a definition of 'General Importance to the Island' as set out in Section 11(1)(a) of the Act.
5. Discretionary powers for the Cabinet Office to appoint a planning advisory body under Section 40 of the Act.
6. Explicitly define the statutory basis for Planning Committee(s) and their decisions
There may be a consultation period from October 2018

The Community Infrastructure Levy is due to be introduced from 2020 onwards but there is no legal capacity to this levy now and a change to the law is required.

Concern was raised with the connection between current Section 13 and the new levy. The levy is to provide inward investment into the Community but nothing has been set yet, the levy needs proper consideration and definition and could be an extension of the Section 13 Agreements.

It was noted that Section 13 is one reason why Brownfield sites are less attractive than Greenfield sites.

Demand and the economy are the biggest inhibitors to development.

Bill Shimmins MHK's report on brownfield sites was discussed – link below

<http://www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard/20002020/duusc180611.pdf>

The structure of the Planning Committee was discussed with concern being raised that, due to when the Planning Committee meets, the structure may contain people with little better to do and not forward thinkers. It was recently proposed that the Planning Committee should contain only Local Authority representatives but this was rejected.

National requirements and Policy Directives and Planning need to be more aligned as there are instances when a national requirement is rejected by Planning or planning is not quick enough to change policy. Government as a single entity would assist this matter.

Consultation with Local Authorities could be better, there are no trained planning officers in Local Authorities but as Statutory Consultees they have significant influence. A more professional approach and more engagement with Local Authorities is required.

Other items discussed were as follows:

Following Jersey's lead where there is population and economic growth and a stronger economy

The concern that financial decisions that affect the Island are being made in London and Jersey

Should there be a "betterment/development" tax once land is re-zoned

There is currently no political will to alter 3rd Party Status

Special Planning Approvals needed to improve Telecoms

Frustration at questions at Planning Committees where correction of errors of fact are not allowed – this will be changed

Minimum Design Standards; a Design Council was suggested but not appropriate on the Island, but something akin to Liverpool's "Places Matter" might be appropriate

Carparking on brownfield sites – lack of car parking a real problem now – COMIN's decision will create bigger problems.

Powers to enforce action on derelict properties is a political decision. Compulsory purchase orders not used much on the Island.

There is an economic benefit to reviewing planning, it is happening “fast” but it does take time.

Area plans should be reviewed every 5 years.

Recent Business Confidence Survey noted that the Construction Sector had confidence in Planning.

Trust in Planning required but Planning also needs to be flexible, adaptive and supportive of development.

Permitted Development Orders to be reviewed and increased.

5.0 Business Agency

Stephen Bradley, Chairman of the Business Agency provided a brief update on the Agency. The Agency is complex with different Sectors represented, SB has met with each Sector to review their requirements. Main requirement is Economic Development improvement and the removal of barriers to economic development (such as problems with planning). The Agency Board has a gender and age balance and recognises the need to be diverse and invest in the future. SB Chairs meetings and has direct access to Senior Politicians.

The Agency is looking for priorities and Sectors have similar concerns/common ground which will be addressed. There are some horror stories as to why some businesses decided not to locate on the Island.

6.0 Reports from the Employers Federation

There are still problems with the Procurement Portal, SS advised that Nick Black has agreed to meet representatives for feedback or to host a workshop to discuss these problems and find solutions.

There are significant problems with resource availability and this could have an adverse effect on costs going forward. Industry training incentives should be considered.

7.0 Think Construction IOM

MB continues to seek assistance. Assistance may be available from DFE, MB to discuss.

It is hoped to have the Bridge completed by Christmas however, sponsorship and assistance is required. Anybody who can provide either please contact Matt Bond.

The Think Construction IOM Logo is being reviewed, anybody with ideas please contact Matt Bond.

8.0 Chamber of Commerce

SS advised that a survey on the minimum wage was being undertaken. The Construction Industry usually pays in excess of the minimum wage. There is Political will to increase the minimum wage but it was noted that Personal Allowance levels are higher in the UK and thus minimum wage earners there are better off.

Engagement is required on the Future of the Steam-Packet should it be run on the existing model or changed. Stimulating visitor numbers and decreased/increased freight costs.

There is a networking event with Wirral Chamber of Commerce on 19 September 2018 – all invited.

There is a Wellbeing Workshop for Chamber members only on 15 November 2018

9.0 Any other Business

None

10.0 Next meeting

The meeting closed at 10:10.

The next meeting of the Construction Forum is on Friday 28 September 2018 at the Isle of Man Construction Federation Offices, Onchan starting at 8.00am.