Town Forum meeting 4th November

Item 10 Planning matters.

1. Community Local Plan Workshop 10th November

When commenting upon planning applications affecting the town we have been heavily dependent on our Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan which attempts to guide future development for the period to 2030. The Cornwall Local Plan policies and proposals need to be reviewed from time to time to also guide developers and it is a requirement that such revisions are done mindful of community involvement. A potential Community Local Plan Workshop is to take place on the 10th November when views can be expressed that, perhaps, should be mindful of past concerns of the Forum on planning issues:

- the lack of maintenance and management of some prominent vacant street front properties that have remained vacant for many years despite having the benefit of planning permissions. Over the past 5 years the Town Forum have expressed concerns about the dilapidated appearance of several prominent building premises in the Historic centre of the town, lying vacant and undermining its special character.
- A range of house types are needed for local people, but the poor standard of some proposed **new** developments seems to have been promoted by property speculators purely in the interests of maximising profit. Unfortunately, when built, this can have a 'Town cramming' effect. The importance of adhering to floorspace standards, and the provision of gardens, balconies and open space in new builds was recognised during the pandemic and 'lock down' and a predominance of rooms built to minimum standards only adds to health and wellbeing issues across a local community.
- Viability issues are becoming more common with some volume housebuilders wanting to 'water down' S106 Agreements to maintain or maximise profit once the development is underway. This is despite their full agreement at the outset to contribute to community benefits. **The Forum have also discussed the need for employment workshops, education and health facilities and infrastructure to accompany and keep pace with new housing developments with a proportion of affordable houses in accordance with agreed policies.**
- Out of town retailing that could affect town centre vitality and viability.

The Forum are asked to consider whether this list still reflects past concerns.

2. Modifying agreed Section 106 Agreement

Tencreek Farm development now underway for 202 dwellings and associated infrastructure by Wainhomes South West Ltd.

A section 106 was agreed and the Town Forum considered the application to modify it (**PA25/07432**) with the affordable housing provision reduced, tenure mix revised and a number of financial contributions worth £492,007 removed together with the indexation requirement. Following consideration of the planning issues the application has been approved (September 2026).

The conclusion was that "The reduction in contributions and affordable housing provision does weigh against the scheme, however the LPA has discussed the potential changes with both local Councils to ascertain their priorities and ensure these are provided for having assessed the viability report. Following the agreed changes to AH and contributions the developer is confident that the scheme is viable and will be completed. The LPA is aware of the intention to provide more AH through alternative means such that in total the amount of housing provided to those with a local connection will meet the policy requirements under policy 8 of the CLP. Taken as a whole, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme in terms of providing a significant housing scheme for Liskeard and the surrounding areas with the resultant social benefits to the area and residents weighs heavily in favour of the scheme to outweigh the harm identified above. It is considered that the S106 can still serve its function equally well by being modified as set out in the submission."

Bodmin development

Meanwhile it is perhaps interesting to note that an application in Bodmin by Wainhomes to modify a section 106 Agreement on viability grounds, to avoid paying nearly £350.000 to infrastructure contributions (education and healthcare), **was withdrawn by the developer following an outcry** from both the Town Council, the campaign to protect rural England (CPRE) and the local MP. The CPRE were concerned that approval would set an undesirable precedent and undermine the plan-led system. That proposal related to an approval for 58 dwellings.

3. Need for improvements to the appearance of a local heritage asset in the Conservation Area

The Fountain Hotel is fronts the historic heart of the town on the Parade. It has been boarded up for years having obtained planning permission to convert it for 3 residential apartments **8 years ago** - in August 2018. **The recent approval for a development scheme at the rear will hopefully now result in a viable scheme for the required improvements to the appearance of this building in the Conservation area**.

It has taken 18 months to get conditional approval and listed building consent (submitted 4 March 2025). Approval is for the provision of 13 dwellings (reduced from a previous proposal for 20 and then 16 dwellings) on Land Between Greenbank Road and Barras Place has been discussed at previous Town Forum meetings. (PA25/01739). The proposed development will have access onto Greenbank Road. **It is possibly one of the largest (apart from the cattle market development) in recent times, within the historic core of the town.**

There would be no affordable dwellings, no on-site open space and several dwellings would have internal floor areas below the minimum standard. Concerns were expressed by the highway engineers about the parking arrangements **The County Council conclusion is that although t**he development "will have some limited harm in terms of impact on existing amenity for neighbouring occupiers and some smaller properties within the development having reduced floorspace compared to the NDSS (National Space Standards), these harms are limited and will not lead to any significant adverse harms that outweigh the benefits of the scheme providing 13 dwellings to the local housing stock".

An agreed S106 agreement requires the provision of a financial contribution to Education and Health.

4. Out of town retailing – Burger King pod

The Town Centre accommodates a diverse range of uses as well as predominantly small-scale retail units, alongside some larger retailers (including Poundland, Superdrug, Co-Op and Boots).
One of the Aims of the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan is to sustain and enhance Liskeard's modern market town centre as a vibrant, lively and friendly community service centre and shopping facility for its residents and the surrounding communities. Recent retail proposals relating to food sales on the eastern edge of the town include Aldi (588sqm), Tencreek (584sqm), B&M (uplift **of 1,580 sq. m** food and drink sales); Costa Coffee and Morrisons Petrol Filling Station (92sqm).

Morrisons Petrol Filling Station has permission for the demolition of the car wash and increase of **171 sqm** food sales (proposed Greggs) approved in August 2025 (Ref. PA25/01287) The Town council had objected on several grounds including adversely impacts on the vitality and viability of the town centre. However, the planning case officer considered that the Retail impact assessment and scale of the development demonstrated that it was would not seriously harm the vitality and viability of Liskeard town centre, and would not conflict with Policies.
A proposal for a building to provide a further 92sqm Burger King single storey pod (**PA25/08473**) **with a row of 8 parking spaces**. It would be sited in the area currently used for jet washing at the Petrol Filling Station complex (PFS) would provide a further 92 sqm, taking the total such floorspace at the PFS up to 351 sqm. This application has still to be determined. The applicants state that it would serve the needs of motorists using the PFS, and customers shopping at Morrisons. Local residents have expressed concerns about additional noise disturbance during early hours, highway safety with the Burger King attracting additional traffic, and town centre impact. The Town Council object under Policy TC1B of the Liskeard Neighbourhood Development Plan as it would impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre and the likely increase in the number of vacant properties in the primary retail area. The development may give rise to an increase in car journeys and is not easily accessible for pedestrians. Furthermore, it may cause conflict with traffic accessing the filing station and create back-ups.
The applicants have provided a retail assessment and point out that the impact on the town centre will be minimal with any trade diversion more likely to be from the Morrisons food store.

The Councils Highways Development Manager has no objections and, following receipt of further detailed information about noise impact, the Councils Public Protection Officer has no objections.
As the Town Council officers seem minded to approve the scheme the Town Council has asked for the application to be determined by the Planning Committee rather than officers.