

## **Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan Public Meeting**

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 7.30pm  
Fieldgate Centre, Kingsclere**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Neighbourhood Plan Team Attendees**

SA Sue Adams (Chair - NP Team)  
JS John Sawyer  
DA David Ainsworth  
MF Mick Farey  
DP Deborah Power  
AB Anne Buckingham  
VF Vicky Fletcher  
NPe Nicki Peach  
SE Sue Elliott

#### **Planning Aid Attendee**

PT Phil Turner (Chair for Meeting)

A glossary of the acronyms used can be found as an appendix to these minutes

Phil Turner of Planning Aid introduced himself, explained that he was an independent participant and would be chairing the meeting. He welcomed the Kingsclere residents to the meeting, ran through housekeeping and safety, then outlined the proposed structure for the meeting.

Presentation by Mark Hirst on Draft Policies

Questions

Presentation by Sue Adams on the Neighbourhood Plan

Questions

Close of Meeting

**Members of the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Planning Team introduced themselves, stating how long they had been resident in the village.**

#### **Presentation on Draft Policies**

#### **Mark Hirst**

MH introduced himself as a resident of Kingsclere and Chairman of the Kingsclere Cricket Club and explained that his presentation was to outline the policies the team had drafted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. (Copy of the presentation slides are available on the website)

MH explained that the topics for the policies were based on the feedback the team had received from the residents, and that we had chosen those that had been expressed as important to the villagers. He pointed out that everything the team did had to be based on evidence.

He showed the layers of hierarchy with regard to the compliance that had to be adhered to by the team when producing policies for the Plan, then talked through the slide with some of the draft policies and took some examples to provide more detail on.

- Everything that is proposed in the Plan, developers should comply with
- 40% of the housing should be “affordable”, and that housing should be allocated only to those with a local connection
- Safe pedestrian access to the footpath network

Finally, he outlined how the residents could help the team with the Neighbourhood Plan, by providing feedback via Facebook, contacting us by email or phone, or contacting us via the website.

#### **Questions**

Len Potts of Garrett Close asked why it had been limited to only 40% affordable housing in policies, as he felt it would be desirable for all to be affordable.

MH explained that we have to comply with the rules governing Neighbourhood Plans and in addition that if the percentage was higher than 40%, it would be unlikely a developer would build, as it would not be economically viable.

PT explained the BDBC policies state 40% of new developments should be “affordable” and that they should be allocated to those with a local connection.

Michael Emmett of Fawconer Road expressed concern over the access to the Fawconer Road area, pointing out that there were 3 – 4 coaches at the bus stop in the morning rush hour which caused a major issue with traffic. He suggested some of the team visit the area to evaluate the difficulties.

MH explained that any access must comply with BDBC policies, which should take account of such issues.

Nadine Eads of Wellmans Meadow asked for clarification of what qualifies as affordable housing.

PT explained that the definition for “affordable property” was 20% below market value, and that the Government was proposing to introduce a right to buy scheme for housing scheme properties.

There was some lively discussion about the subject throughout the hall at this point regarding what the definition of affordable should be, reminders about what had happened to King Alfred Terrace which had been built to be affordable housing but had been sold on, etc.

MH suggested that the team would take note that, if possible, the NP would contain policies to ensure that people were not able to “profiteer” from being allocated affordable housing.

Fiona Sawyer of Swan Street asked for clarification of the point that MH made that it was 40% of the affordable housing that should be allocated to people with a local connection.

MH confirmed that was how the policy was written, which Mrs. Sawyer said was not acceptable.

(NOTE: This needs to be checked, as the rest of the team does not think it is correct that it is 40% of the 40%, but it should be the whole of the affordable housing, ie 100% of the 40%)

Peter Woodman of The Dell stated we need to be clear on what the difference is between affordable and social housing, as developers are very good at finding plausible reasons not to build the affordable housing.

PT explained the affordable housing policy was contained in the BDBC emerging plan, which can be viewed on the BDBC website.

Peter Woodman asked if the team could tell the audience how many people are on the list for affordable housing and was told it was 33.

MH pointed out that the team was doing what it could to address the issue by making it a policy in the NP that goes a step further than the BDBC emerging local plan and ensuring that the allocation for affordable housing is only for those with a local connection

David McDonald-Milner of Swan Street asked what the actual money amount is that quantifies affordable housing.

MH reiterated that it was 80% of market value, and pointed out that it was not possible to give an actual amount, since the NP was a document of 15 years’ longevity so the value would change within that time, and it would also be dependent on what size and type of property.

Nigel Cook of Wellmans Meadow asked if there was a cost per acre figure that could be established as part of the NP process.

PT replied that this would not be relevant to the process.

Lynne Baker of Basingstoke Road asked if it was Policy based that it was 40% of the 40% affordable housing that would be allocated to those with a local connection.

PT replied that residents concerns regarding this would be taken into consideration.

Danielle Auld of Garrett Close asked if the houses comprising the 60% of standard housing would be mixed types, and asked if consideration could be given to having some bigger houses, for example 4 bedroom houses, so that Kingsclere residents could stay in the village as their families grew.

MH replied that we have a policy in the Plan that states developments will be supported where they are a mix of housing across any one site that is developed, even if a single developer were developing more than one site.

## **Presentation on Draft Neighbourhood Plan sites      Sue Adams**

SA introduced herself as a Kingsclere resident of 25 years, living on the corner of Garrett Close and Newbury Road, and a Parish Councillor.

She introduced her presentation, explaining it would cover what we can and cannot do, the criteria which were used to whittle down the original sites and the evidence the team used. She then explained she would go through the sites individually and the issues which each raised because no one site was ideal.

She explained that 2 years ago the team began looking to identify potential sites for development, initially using three documents, BDBC SHLAA – a document that looks at sites that could be developed, and the BDBC Local Plan and Kingsclere Parish Council Affordable Housing list.

By using those documents, the team identified approximately 20 potential sites. These were whittled down to 8 sites owing to being too small (only developments of 10 dwellings or more qualify as development towards our allocation in the Local Plan), not available because the landowner was not willing to consider selling or there were covenants preventing development, such as the Holding Field and Priors Mill.

The team then engaged specialist consultants, URS, to provide technical expertise at identifying which of these sites were the best. They recommended the sites at Gaily Mill, Poveys Mead and a site between the A339 and Fawconer Road.

SA showed the audience the map, pointing out the current settlement boundary indicated by the black line. All the sites except Gaily Mill are outside the current boundary.

SA then explained the further processes the team used by liaising with various bodies like BDBC to further whittle down the number of potential sites:

- After the previous public meeting, the team had feedback the sites at Gaily Mill and Poveys Mead were not popular.
- The land at A339/Basingstoke Road was a BDBC Designated Amenity and the Council wrote to the team to inform them that they would be very unlikely to give up the space. On further discussions with BDBC, the team decided it would be fruitless to pursue this option further.
- The sites at Coppice Road and Stokins Road were re-introduced as potential sites, because the developers had worked very hard at mitigating the team's original concerns and come back to the team with amended proposals.
- The Aggregate Dump at the corner of Newbury Road was not going to be reviewed by HCC until 2017. This site was discounted as a result.
- Subsequent to the last meeting, the landowner of Porch Farm had approached the team with the suggestion that he would be willing to make some land available for a development.
- A developer engaged by the owner of Yew Tree Farm approached the team out of the blue proposing a possible site, but have now (as of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015) withdrawn the offer of availability.

This left the team with a possible 6 sites for evaluation. SA explained that policies in any NP have to be in accordance with the Local Plan, the BDBC emerging plan is out for inspection at the moment. It is hoped this will be signed off by the Secretary of State in Spring 2016.

Kingsclere and other local NP's are working to the current Local Plan, as advised by BDBC. The strategic policies contained in this that apply to Kingsclere are:

- 50 houses must be built within the 15 year period of the NP
- 40% of these must be "affordable"
- The NP must comply with EU and UK Law
- All policies must be supported by evidence
- An SEA must be carried out

The evidence used by the team to evaluate the sites included

- Meetings with Planning and Landscape Officers
- Meetings and other liaison with developers
- Input from our technical consultants, URS
- Kingsclere Design Statement
- Kingsclere Village Plan
- Census information (which identified that Kingsclere has a generally ageing population)
- MAGIC (a website containing data from Natural England and Environmental bodies)
- Social housing figures
- North Wessex AONB planning
- Tree Warden
- OS maps showing RoWs
- Land Registry for covenants
- BDBC Local Plan
- Evidence from developers (not publicly available as we have not paid for it)
- Maps
- Heritage Association
- Conservation Area appraisals
- Various publicly available documentation on individual sites
- Consultation with residents via questionnaires and public meetings with residents and businesses

The baseline criteria which the team used to evaluate the sites were:

- Availability of the land – ie whether the landowner was willing to sell
- If the site was large enough to support a minimum of 10 dwellings
- Whether the site was in or adjacent to the SPB
- That there were no covenants preventing building on the land
- If development on the site would be viable – ie whether utilities could be connected and the development would be economically possible for a developer
- Criteria from Planning Aid (the Royal town planning institute)

The team also consulted Overton's NP, as they are further in the process than Kingsclere, and had many of the same issues as Kingsclere with their potential sites, and those criteria that were relevant to Kingsclere were used by the team. A weighting system was used, so those items that had been expressed and important to the residents of Kingsclere were weighted higher (for example the AONB was high, and proximity to a bus stop, low)

The total possible score for each site was 202, and the team evaluated each item for each site, giving each its weighted score.

SA explained a few of the issues that were considered to be relevant to all the sites:

- that access was a contentious issue for each of the sites, and that safety was the primary concern for the team

- The term “visible from RoWs” referred to distant RoWs, because each of the sites was visible from RoWs within the village
- The historic environment was considered very important as there are many buildings of architectural importance in the village
- Parking is a very big issue for all sites as it is a major problem within the village as a whole

SA then outlined where each site placed after our evaluation and the basic reasons they placed where they did. (Figures in brackets the number of dwellings for the site proposed by the Developer and proposed by the Consultants):

6<sup>th</sup> (last) place      Gaily Mill                      (Dev 30/Con 40)

- The site is partly in Flood Zones 2&3
- The developer’s own survey confirmed that habitat for rare species would be disturbed/lost
- Gaily Mill is a Listed Building and the site is within the conservation area.
- The access from Winchester Road was perceived to be a problem (similar to other sites)

In summary, unless other information comes to light that would materially and substantially change the situation, Gaily Mill will not be put forward as a proposed site for development. (General applause, and Marie Gundry expressed great pleasure at this decision)

5<sup>th</sup> Place              Povey’s Mead                      (Dev 38/Con 40)

There is no map available, as there is no proposed plan from a developer. (Part of the land has been sold to a local resident, so that part is no longer available for development)

- The AONB Planner and BDBC Planner have said planning would be unlikely to be permitted on this site, as the land rises at the back, and is consequently visible from the AONB. Priority has to be given to sites which are not visible from the AONB.
- Access would be extremely likely to be highly detrimental to other properties because of the way the road twists round the site.

In summary, unless other information comes to light that would materially and substantially change the situation, Povey’s Mead will not be proposed as a development site.

4<sup>th</sup> Place              Strokens Road                      (Dev 16/Con 14)

- There is an issue with the site being used as open space, although it is not officially designated as such
- There is a SINC on part of the site – although not on the part being proposed for development
- Access is proposed to be provided by demolishing the garage block, and providing replacement parking at the other end of the block. Sentinel has agreed to demolition so the road could cut through. There is a great deal of on road parking in this area.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place              Porch Farm                      (Dev 50/No figures from consultant)

- It has been difficult to identify precisely which piece of land was available, as the landowner had not been totally clear on the point. A few sites, including a large field, had been offered but the team rejected this as it was far bigger than our requirement for 50 homes. The final proposal was received a few weeks ago.
- There is an issue that it is visible from the AONB in the distance.
- Access will have to be provided via the A339
- The existing footpaths will remain (it should be noted the edge of the field is not the designated footpath, instead the footpath forms a diagonal route across the field)
- The developer is proposing a new footpath on the boundary of the Marsh Playing Field
- The buffer strip next to Wellmans Meadow, Keeps Mead and Garrett Close is BDBC-owned land and will remain intact. The developer will provide screening to the south and west of the site..

- The properties on Newbury Road will see the development, but not Keeps Mead, Wellmans Meadow and Garrett Close.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place                  Coppice Road                  (Dev 26/Con 36)

- Access would have to be provided via Ashford Hill Road. A feasibility exercise had been undertaken to provide via Oak Close, but this was identified as unsuitable.
- Access would go across the SINC – although it is highly debatable whether the rare flora and fauna are still there, as the SINC has fallen into disrepair over many years.
- The narrow end of the site shown on the map would be landscaped to make it into an open space

1<sup>st</sup> Place                  Fawconer Road                  (Dev 19/Con 12)

- Access is a considerable issue and would have to be provided via Ashford Hill Road. The last transport survey to be carried out for the area dates back to 2004, so the developer will very likely have to commission a new one.
- Part of the site will be landscaped to provide Public Open Space

The results of the evaluation process makes it clear that the two options available to the village are either to use Porch Farm to provide all 50 dwellings, or a combination of the three smaller sites at Coppice Road, Fawconer Road and Strokins Road to provide approximately 50 (The combination of those three sites do not add up to 50, thus it may be necessary to allow a very few more than exactly 50 to make it economically feasible for the developer/s)

SA explained the next step will be for our consultants to complete the SEA. It is a legal requirement as part of the NP process, and it is expected that it will be finished in the New Year. The team is not in a position to make any further decisions until that is done.

SA requested that the residents provide the team with their feedback and views on the possible two choices, so that once the SEA has been completed, we can use those as part of the decision-making process as well.

Once the NP is written, it is submitted to an independent examiner for them to check its compliance against EU and UK Law.

After this, there is a six week consultation period with the residents and the final plan is presented in referendum to all those eligible in the village for their vote. There is no option to choose sites after this point; the plan must contain the final decision on the potential site(s) and the referendum will be worded simply “Do you support the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan” as laid down in the Regulations.

SA reinforced the risk the village faces, that if Kingsclere does not have a NP, we will forfeit any right to a say over where development takes place; developers will decide what makes economic sense to them, submit plans to the Council, and the Planners will have very little argument to turn even large developments down without a NP.

## Questions

Fiona Sawyer made a very kind public thanks to Sue and the team for the huge amount of work that they had done. There was general enthusiastic applause and expressions of thanks from the audience.

Roger Jones of Newbury Road asked why there was such a difference between some of the figures for the number of dwellings proposed by developers and the consultants’ figures.

PT replied that the consultants were likely to consider only what could physically fit the plot size, whereas developers’ figures were also predicated on their ROI, and they were likely to have a higher number of larger properties in their proposal to increase their profit.

SA pointed out that these were only proposals, and not set in stone. The team has an opportunity to ask the developer(s) to reconsider, based on evidence and feedback from the residents.

Nadine Eads (address as previous) asked what guarantees the team could give that the other sites identified as potentials would not be developed.

JS replied that NPs were being written were for a fifteen year period, so the Kingsclere NP should last until 2029, notwithstanding that, none of us has a crystal ball, and we cannot legislate for future Governments passing new laws which might supersede NPs.

PT pointed out that planners have to follow the rules, and where a locality has a NP passed by referendum, developments must follow that plan unless **material** reasons can be provided.

Peter Newport of Fawconer Road asked if there were going to be any account taken of the many accidents that have taken place around that area, given the access that would be required via Ashford Hill Road.

AB reiterated an earlier point made by both MH and SA that the NP must have evidence to back up any decisions, policies or projects, and asked if they could provide any evidence for the accidents mentioned, as the team had tried to find empirical evidence of accidents and would value any help from the audience. Jayne Verney kindly agreed that she would be able to provide some information and would leave her email address.

Lynne Baker of Basingstoke Road asked if the Doctors' surgery and primary school had been consulted to ensure that they would be able to cope with additional residents.

MH mentioned that with developments there would be CIL payments from the developers, from which a contribution to community amenities of this kind, if necessary.

Lucy Wells of Fawconer Road asked how accurate the drawings were, saying the Fawconer Road proposal looked as if some of the dwellings looked like flats and others like houses, and wondering if this was correct.

MH replied that these were indicative plans from the developer, and thus not necessarily what would be the final proposed plan. In any event all proposals would be subject to usual planning regulations, and with the opportunity for locals to object.

Pam Kitch of Wellmans Meadow told the meeting that when the A339 bypass had been put in, the residents of Kingsclere were told that the strip between the A339 and the housing would be a public amenity.

MH replied that it had not been designated as a public open space.

VF said that the area was designated as a green strip, and that developers had proposed to put alternative open space in, as part of their proposals. The A339 land is privately owned in the Green Infrastructure, along with RoWs

James Cruickshank of Basingstoke Road asked how the team will make the final decision, as the decision cannot be made in the referendum.

SA replied that the SEA will provide some of the evidence for us. She read out some of the document which explained the process.

Paul Watson of Hook Road asked who makes the final decision on the mix of housing, and whether it would be based on demand from the Housing List.

MH replied that the mix will be decided by the developers. BDBC will decide whether plans would be approved, guided by our plan.

JS reminded the audience about the planning process and the possibility for objection.

Michael Emmett Fawconer Road asked if maps and plans would be available for public viewing, as well as precise proposals for the referendum.

PT replied that indicative plans should be available, but more than that could not be guaranteed as it was dependent on the developers. He reminded the audience that the NP would only be passed if more than 50% of those eligible to vote, voted yes.

DP reiterated the point that the village would need a yes at referendum with the policies we have agreed. This would mean that developers could not have a free for all, and submit plans for much higher numbers of development properties. It was vital that we had an NP, otherwise our views will not be taken into account.

Amanda Wilson of Newbury Road asked if it would be possible to split the development between Porch Farm and the three sites along the A339.

MH replied that although the team understood the desire to keep development to a number of very small sites, the reality was that it was highly unlikely that developers would be interested in such a prospect, because it would be an unattractive business proposition for them.

Len Potts asked if the number of 50 properties at Porch Farm would actually turn into 230, because from a strategic point of view, that looked more likely to him.

MH replied that as it stood, it would not, within the life of the plan (ie to 2029) but that his personal opinion was that once the physical boundary had been breached, that his view was that it would increase at some point in the future.

NPe pointed out that within the next 20, 30, 50 years that would be inevitable anyway, given the ever-increasing requirement for more housing in the village, and that the younger residents currently living with their parents would need their own housing in the future.

Jamie Mills said that it made more sense to choose the Porch Farm development, with the requirement for affordable housing.

MH replied that the 40% requirement for affordable housing was a legal requirement.

Mr Mills replied that from the developers' point of view, economies of scale could be made on a larger development which might benefit the village.

Fiona Sawyer asked if provision of access road would come out of the CIL payment, or if it would be considered to be part of the building costs attributable to the development.

PT replied that the cost of access roads would be included by the developer as part of the overall development costs when considering viability. The 40% affordable housing is also included by the developer in their costs.

Pam Kitchen asked if there was any possibility of writing a policy in the NP to ensure that affordable housing would be protected from being sold for profit, given the experience of King Alfred Terrace.

MH read out the Affordable Housing rules from the You.Gov website.

Fiona Sawyer mentioned that this was a Government policy matter, so the NP team had no power over this.

Mrs. Kitchen asked we could put in a covenant to prevent the housing from being used for open market purposes.

SA reminded that the NP has to be in conformity with the regulations, so we may not be able to put in such a covenant.

MH said the team would be happy to take the issue away and see what might be possible.

Ken James of Knowl Hill asserted that the proposed figures showed that there would be only one new affordable house per year.

MH explained that although the total number of houses was 50, and that 40% of that would be affordable, the figures cannot be extrapolated in this way. The economics of the situation actually



meant it was much more likely that development would take place in one large project in the case of Porch Farm, or two large projects, if the other three sites is chosen.

Andrea Morley of Frogs Hole mentioned that the old oak trees provided a natural boundary, and felt that the Porch Farm development would be the thin end of the wedge. She felt the combination of the other three sites was a better option, as they are more contained.

Nadine Eads said there was no mention of demographics with respect to age.

AB mentioned that documentation was available on the website.

Gary Shergold (Fawconer Road) mentioned that the proposed access for Fawconer was a very bad idea.

PT asked him and the audience generally to please make any points, observations or opinions to the team via the methods outlined earlier; that is email, Facebook or contact via the website.

PT brought the meeting to a close, thanking the audience for their attention and a very good, intelligent range of questions. He thanked the NP team for their attendance and the presentations.

## **Appendix - Glossary of Acronyms**

BDBC	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
HCC	Hampshire County Council
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
OS	Ordnance Survey
SPB	Settlement Planning Boundary
RoW	Right(s) of Way
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
ROI	Return on Investment
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy