

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
NORTH WERRINGTON DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP
HELD AT WERRINGTON VILLAGE HALL, WERRINGTON
AT 1930 ON 15 NOVEMBER 2006**

Those in Attendance

Councillor John Holdich, Glinton Parish Council (JH)
Mr Andy Warn, Glinton Parish Council (AW)
Mr Bob Johnson, Glinton Parish Council (BJ)
Mr David Wragg, Glinton Parish Council (DW)
Mr Martin Greaves, Werrington Neighbourhood Council (MG)
Mr Paul Curtis, Werrington Neighbourhood Council (PC)
Mr Neil Osborn, Development Land & Planning Consultants Ltd (NO)
Mrs Clare Buddle, Development Land & Planning Consultants Ltd (CB)
Mrs Janet Goodacre, Werrington Neighbourhood Council (JG)

Guests

Mr Graeme Law, Peterborough City Council (GL)
Mrs Helen Barker, Peterborough City Council (HB)

Apologies for Absence

Mr Roy Beard, Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Mr Martin Chandler, AHE

Action

Minutes of 10 October

NO Minutes circulated, took as accepted.

The City Council's Perspective

GL Thanked group for their invitation. Apologised that Patrick Gear did not attend the previous meeting: it was considered that, as he would be the case officer for the proposed application, it would be inappropriate for him to attend. As GL would not be making the decision it would be acceptable for him to talk to both sides in order to assist with the proposals. HB was GL's secretary. The Council has a role as the Local Planning Authority. The role of development plan is outlined by Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compensation Act 2004 (*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*). Peterborough City Council is a unitary authority and must therefore determine all planning applications unless the Secretary of State considered otherwise. All applications are subject to consultees' consideration but ultimately the elected members determine them. It is rare for the Secretary of State to call-in an application. The Government Office can ask to see an application but it is very rare that it is called-in. Opportunity Peterborough is an urban regeneration company who aim is to encourage sustainable development. They will be interested in the urban extension and will offer their view but ultimately the decision lies with the elected Members. The decision will be taken on the basis of the development plan. The Structure Plan which was adopted in 2003, the Local Plan in 2005. Difficulties have arisen as Central Government have increased the number of houses that have to be built in Peterborough before 2021. The RSS is based on the advice of the Council with regards the level of housing that can be accommodated. The Examining Panel have recommended to Central Government a figure in excess of that suggested by PCC and incorporated in the Draft RSS. Central Government is considering whether it should accept the Panel's recommendations. It is expected that they will accept them and will increase the provision for the City. In the short-term, the Council must work towards the RSS figure and the provisions of the Local Plan are not the answer: work has commenced on the replacement of this document and new land allocations are being considered. In the run up to the RSS, the Council commissioned Llewellyn Davies to undertake a study of the area in order to ascertain potential development sites. By undertaking a sieve analysis (dismissing land in terms of flood potential, bad building conditions, nature sites) the report identified four areas (North Werrington, Norwood, Stanground and south of Hampton) which were relatively unconstrained and thus could accommodate more houses. These four sites can accommodate a greater amount of housing than is required. The identified sites should therefore be regarded as signposts, providing an indication of where housing might go and to enable people to be prepared. It is prudent to note that the Stanground site already has planning permission. Central Government has not decided the final housing figures, which is why we are here. The

Council have been advised to make their choices soon. These decisions will be based on input from local people who have local knowledge, information regarding development timing, energy requirements and information regarding the land that is on offer. Through public consultation, residents will be in a better position than if an application was simply submitted – if this was the case there would be less time to consider the proposals.

GL said he perceived these meetings as a positive and would do anything to try to help. Past consultations had been undertaken on an ad-hoc basis. In the light of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), there is a need to try to make consultation more inclusive. The SCI will help to structure a dialogue for local communities. Residents have the ability to influence the document to ensure that the right consultation is undertaken at the right time and in the right way.

MG Queried where the report could be viewed.

CB

JH The Llewellyn Davies study also set out the economic arguments for the increased development.

NO Following guidance from the Council, Allison's are now working towards a planning application and this is likely to be submitted in Spring 2007. Acknowledged that questions have arisen as to how the proposals tie into the present development plan.

GL Technically, there has been a change in policy.

AW Most of the objections received at the exhibition related to Policy LNE2 so this needed to be addressed.

JH Had tried to explain the status of Policy LNE2 to the public.

AW Should aim for a further web page so local residents would know what was going on.

BJ The policy would not be defunct until it was replaced.

GL The planning system is now changing from one system to another. The current Local Plan was approved in 2005. The development plan comprised the Local Plan and the Structure Plan. A detailed application would be determined on the basis of the development plan and other material considerations. As the Local Plan has just been published it should be afforded great weight whilst other considerations would not be as important.

The changes in regional strategy have started to carry more weight. The weight of the Local Plan will decline as the balance shifts towards emerging policy.

Could argue that the Local Plan allocation should remain but the rules are changing so need to stay ahead.

Need to consider what will replace the Local Plan. It will not be another Local Plan but rather a series of documents known as the Local Development Framework. This will include the SCI (which considers how the community will be consulted), a Core Strategy (setting out general proposals for the growth of the city) and a Site Allocations DPD.

AW The regional assembly is not elected.

GL There are two people who are accountable: Councillor Bartlett and Councillor Collins. They can exert their influence on the regional plan. The Inspector recommend the provision of 25,000 houses in the Peterborough area, albeit this will be subject to early review and it may be considered there is scope for more or less. There is a regional technical advice group comprising council officers who make representations to the regional assembly.

AW If the elected members get comments then they would need to answer these. Need to be upbeat with residents

GL The LDF will include land allocations. The City Centre documents will cover allocations in this area. The land use chapter will allocate relevant individual sites. When considering additional sites the Council will seek submissions from landowners to ensure that they can be delivered.

MG Wanted to know the timescales for this.

GL Regional plans cover a twenty-year period starting in 2001, even though it will not be agreed until 2007. The houses and jobs created between 2001 and 2007 will be taken into account and taken off the future requirements, as will all existing Local Plan allocations and commitments. As such, only need to consider the residue that will be built before 2021. There will be another review well before 2021, i.e. 2011 to 2031.

JH Not all four areas will accommodate the additional housing – also need to consider the city centre.

BJ Queried the amount of development undertaken from 2001.

- GL In part, a judgement must be made on the allocated sites. Can make an educated guess on how many homes have been constructed. Sites that come out of the woodwork (i.e. windfall sites) are hard to predict and thus allowances must be made. Historically 800 homes were built per year, but now this is set to rise to 1200. The Local Plan allocations are halfway there and the balance will be accommodated through brownfield and increasing development density. It is argued the only way to secure a step change in housing delivery is to bring forward large sites, i.e. urban extensions. This approach is open to debate.
- AW The more information that was available, the more it could help stop rumours spreading.
- NO Observed that the Local Plan will still be relevant when the application is submitted. There will be an argument that the development will contribute to the step change in housing delivery. The arguments will take time to be developed and will be dependent on the weight that can be afforded to the regional strategy.
- GL In the most part, the British development system is slow and the plan process has been slow to fit in. If a scheme is a departure from the development plan then there is fallback, i.e. the need to undertake increased publicity. The Local Planning Authority can argue that the circumstances are now different and the development plan combined with material considerations justify a departure from established planning policy.
- BJ Tony Blair has ordered a full examination of and alteration to the planning system.
- GL Had worked in planning since 1973 and this was the fourth review. There is recognition that the planning system does not work as well as it should so there needs to be change. Developers have a choice: they can wait for their site to be allocated (and therefore will benefit from having the whole weight of the system behind them) or they can take the risk and promote a departure from the development plan (this means they will have to work twice as hard to convince locals that there is a justification for the departure and therefore puts the power in locals' hands).
- NO Allison's had decided to take a chance with the promotion of this site. They decided to engage the public early on as part of the need to persuade the Local Planning Authority that they can commence the decision-making on this site. The new planning system effectively requires such an approach and is intended to enable engagement with local communities so that when put forward schemes are based on local understanding and thus are likely to be less controversial. The risk to Allison's is changes in the planning system and the call-in potential.
- The new planning system is being established but there is conflict within this. The aim is to speed up the planning process, however the public are becoming more involved. There are arguments for the new system over the reactive old system.
- The Council's Section 106 strategy will outline what can and cannot be achieved.
- GL The need for a Section 106 agreement will arise where the Council cannot get what they require by way of a condition, for example if necessary works lie outside the application area. A Section 106 is a separate legal agreement associated with an application: it could relate to the transfer of land, require an individual to undertake a task, but more commonly it could seek the provision works on land out of the applicant's control. The necessary monies are then transferred to the body who can undertake the work. The contribution must relate to a planning problem and offer a way of overcoming the issue.
- In the past, the system related at a simplistic level: contributions had to be tightly related to the site. The Council are now applying this policy more liberally and can seek contributions which would be of benefit to the wider community. As a result, the Council have drafted a Section 106 Strategy and this is subject to public consultation. The Council already have Local Plan policy which states if infrastructure is not in place they will not grant planning permission. Other considerations in this respect are:
- (i) growth agenda: so long as contributions are sought fairly then they are justified.
- (ii) large scale requirements: sometimes the Council want something, for example a new district hospital or a new bus route but no one development can justify its entire provision. It would be unfair to ask one developer to pay the whole amount. If all the contributions are to be pooled then a decision needs to be made as to the costs involved - need to be careful that parties are not aggrieved but better to have one big pot than lots of little ones.
- Within the city, there will be 4 to 5 areas for pooled contributions but this might not work in a village so several settlements may work together.
- When working out the amounts which are payable it has been decided that it is easier for the Council to say what they expect. This means that there is a clear starting point for negotiations and then if a departure is necessary it can be put on the public record.
- MG Had heard there was a proposal for a £11,000 to £16,000 roof tax on every new house.

- GL This was not true. It was a suggestion by the City Council to help fund/secure infrastructure provision. Question existed over how this would then be broken down into geographical/subject areas. If one works on the assumption that the developer provides benefits on site but money to the Council/relevant party to implement off site benefits. Smaller developers would put money into the pool so that bigger projects can be provided overall: small sites benefit from infrastructure too and are not exempt from planning policy. If a developer shows how they have met identified needs then the obligation can be negotiated. If the developer can demonstrate how their scheme meets identified needs then may be able to negotiate a different result.
- NO Big developers, like Allisons are able to build the required facilities so they will therefore not be expected to pay for them. Smaller developers may not be able to justify on site provision but are no different, they must still pay the costs.
- JH Not all developers provide sufficient affordable housing.
- GL Happy to discuss separately as this is not the forum.
- NO It would be useful to clarify what a Section 106 agreement can do.
- JH They should not contribute to needs in other areas.
- NO Through finance and scale they can contribute to needs. Consult Parish Councils on Section 106 agreements, as the money may come to them.
- JH The requirements are laid down to provide certainty.
- GL Section 106 agreements are there not remove planning problems. The Council need to be clear of the planning problems in order to secure maximum contributions.

Public Consultation

Overall

- NO The reactions to the exhibition and feedback from it will enable us to understand the communities' overall perception. The perceptions of Glinton and Werrington appear to be different.
- PC A lot of the attendees took the considerations of the scheme on board and they were satisfied with the intentions.
- MG Previous conception that Glinton would join with Werrington.
- JG Helpful for the people to see what was proposed.
- GL The exhibition provided a cameo of democracy in action – it helped to identify issues and would be used to influence the developers.
- JH The boards were too close together.
- AW Maybe have something flat so a larger number of people could see.
- NO Suggested creating a model for next time. This would be expensive, but could help to sell the story.
- MG Agreed. This had worked elsewhere.
- NO Thanked representatives for their time at the exhibition.

Perception

- JH Some of the respondents were against the underpass and the potential increase in traffic going through the village. There was a general acceptance that the land north of the A15 should be left as agricultural land.
- PC The Werrington residents are in agreement with the retention of this land for agriculture.
- JH A discussion needs to be held regarding access to the college.
- AW The college could not have access across the agricultural land. Understood that the 2005 Land Act meant that the land could be taken back by the Council
- MG What about flooding?
- PC The big concern in Werrington was traffic (around 40% respondents).
- NO The perception was that traffic was more of an issue for Glinton – Werrington residents were more concerned about education, shops and elderly persons.
The question often arose regarding the potential to dual the A15 - Allisons could have no influence or answer for this.
- BJ Concerns were also raised with regards the potential for traffic to back up in the village.
- NO It was difficult to convey the answer to this. The engineer has been present at the exhibition but it was difficult to get people to understand the technical information
- BJ A large percentage of the respondents did not want an underpass between the sites.
- JG AB had noted that underpasses in Peterborough were considered a dangerous idea.
- NO Do work better elsewhere.
- AW Need to look at detail at next stage.
- BJ People had thought the information was a little too sparse and related to an application.
- NO There are lessons to be learnt for next time.
- AW There was an anxiety that the parkland would be come filled with vandals and motorbikes. This is not the case - parkland in Werrington always looks good, tidy and clean. Werrington knew how to manage.
- MG There was a policing issue.
- NO This links back to the Section 106 issue. The area benefits from strong local representatives who keep an eye on their area. This could illustrate the need for a *community trust* to take over the ownership of the public areas.

JG Werrington was one of the better areas of the city and is why people chose to live there. Extra homes bring extra people in and this needs to be thought about. Need to create pride in an area - that is what creates a decent area.

Responses

AW Had had a fair response.

MG Reassuring to know that the issues raised brought up issues that the local representatives already know about.

NO Agreed

BJ Most people put their addresses on the forms.

Residents

PC Hurn Road residents were upset that they had not been contacted.

JH There were a few outburst regarding land ownership and from a landowner.

MG Queried the future for the railway cottage residents.

NO Confirmed Allison's were working their way through the household meetings. The residents of the railway cottages were not involved as their properties did not form part of the scheme.

The majority of private landowners had signed up. Surprisingly rapid decisions had been made about the sale of property.

Maintaining Interest

AW Would put an article in the Village Tribune magazine.

AW/

MG Agreed, would put article in magazine thanking Allison and make people aware of what going on.

MG

GL Good idea. Would show ahead of the game.

AW Need to provide example of local governance of parkland which have occurred elsewhere, for example Elsea Park. Could also write about sustainable development. Need to take the opportunity to seize minds rather than leaving an information vacuum.

NO The trust is managed by the community, i.e. elected representatives, the developer, parish councillor and councillors. It creates a formal sense of belonging for those who pay. Would be better that the article came from the community/representatives.

MG Need as much information as possible to stop rumours

NO Hoped the consultation had made residents aware what was proposed. Added to this, articles in the press would make people aware that something would be happening. It is also important that residents realise the proposals were not a fait accompli - it is in the hands of the local representatives and a decision would be made by the committee. Allison's would win favour by what was said and by listening. Was overall of the view that people would be persuaded to live with the development. Said that where public consultation took place at the beginning, people often took a more considered, rational view and thus were more likely to become involved.

Other Issues

Gerard Kirt was not meant to attend the meetings (he was a stand in), nor was Councillor Lane

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 16 January in Werrington Village Hall.