



Gilston Area Steering Group Meeting

Thursday 1 February 2018 – 18.30
East Herts Council offices, Wallfields, Hertford

Minutes

Present:	Bob Toll (BT)	-	Neighbourhood Plan Group
	Mark Orson (MO)	-	Neighbourhood Plan Group
	Janine Bryant (JB)	-	Neighbourhood Plan Group
	Jill Buck (JBU)	-	Widford Parish Council
	Mary Parsons (MP)	-	Places for People
	Cllr Linda Haysey (LH)	-	EHC
	Liz Watts (LW)	-	EHC
	Kevin Steptoe (KS)	-	EHC
	Adam Halford (AH)	-	EHC
	David Sprunt (DS)	-	Essex County Council
Apologies:	Anthony Bickmore	-	Neighbourhood Plan Group

Welcome & Minutes

1. LH welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. AH provided apologies for not circulating minutes of the December Steering Group, these will be circulated at the next meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan Group Community Event – 20 January

3. BT updated that approximately 60 people attended the workshop on 20 January including MP Mark Prisk, Adam Halford from East Herts Council and Mary Parsons from Places for People accompanied by Philip Murphy from Quod.
4. The workshop was facilitated by the Neighbourhood Plan group assisted by the community planning support provided by the consultants from Urban Silence. Residents were provided with an update on the Concept Framework and asked to split into groups to comment on specific parts of the document.

5. BT introduced a summary of the comments received by the joint Neighbourhood Plan Group (Appendix 1). BT indicated that all of the views did not necessarily represent those of the Neighbourhood Plan Group members but reflected the feedback they received. Feedback was summarised across the following areas:
 - a. Green Belt;
 - b. Role and Activities of the NPG;
 - c. Status of Document and role of EHDC;
 - d. Vision and Objectives;
 - e. Landscape Buffers and Village separation;
 - f. Massing and Height Guidelines;
 - g. Density Guidelines;
 - h. Landscape / Green Belt;
 - i. Social Infrastructure Provision;
 - j. Transport Strategy;
 - k. Eastern Crossing and Impact on Terlings Park;
 - l. Phasing and Delivery of Infrastructure;
 - m. Governance Structure;
6. **Action:** BT agreed to make the detailed written comments available to Places for People for their record.
7. On the matter of the Green Belt AH clarified that the District Plan proposed that all land inside the outer limit of the allocation was proposed to be released from the Green Belt. Any land released from the Green Belt that did not form part of the allocation land, for example Gilston Park and other individual properties, would be covered instead by Policy GBR2 as 'Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt'. Policy GBR2 allows for certain types of development to take place provided they are compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area.
8. The NPG queried the density calculations within the Concept Framework in particular the Terlings Park development which is indicated as 33 dwellings per hectare. KS confirmed the approach to calculating density can vary based upon whether large areas of open space are included or excluded. It was agreed that for the community to be better able to visualise density it should be clarified which method has been used to calculate the Terlings Park density.
9. **Action:** MP/AH agreed that it should be clarified how the density of Terlings Park has been calculated.
10. The NPG prioritised their principal outstanding concerns with the Concept Framework related to understanding:

- a. the impact of the proposed route connecting to the proposed Second Stort Crossing passing between Gilston and the Terlings Park development;
 - b. Density & Height;
 - c. Buffers
 - d. Phasing and Infrastructure; and
 - e. Governance.
11. **Action:** BT and MP respectively agreed to update the Urban Silence and Quod schedules that summarise the community feedback, reconciling these and to table an updated schedule at a future Steering Group meeting.

Concept Framework

12. AH indicated that the Council are reviewing the Concept Framework and preparing a report that will summarise key points from the Framework and how this will be used as a benchmark against which to consider future applications. The Council report will also set out the further actions and work that are considered necessary in order to prepare a planning application.
13. AH indicated that the report and the Concept Framework will go to the District Planning Executive Panel with the recommendation that the Concept Framework and Report are endorsed.
14. BT questioned whether this meant that the Concept Framework will not be amended as the NPG and community still have outstanding concerns with the document.
15. AH indicated that if there are some factual corrections necessary to the document then there will be an opportunity for this however it is not the intention to introduce new matters or further detail to the document as it is already a very large and complex document.
16. The NPG expressed concern as to how the Concept Framework can be used as a benchmark if they still have concerns with matters contained within it.
17. AH explained that the Council report will identify the areas of further work that are necessary.
18. LW indicated that by following this process the Council will be able to set out clearly what the position is and what still needs to be done.
19. JB expressed concern that the position of the community on this document will be lost if not recorded somehow.
20. AH agreed with this and stated that with the benefit of the NPG's comprehensive notes the Council report will be able to identify these concerns and highlight the further work

that is therefore necessary. This is the same position for not just the NPG and community but for all stakeholders including public bodies such as the County Council and Historic England.

21. AH expressed that the purpose of the Concept Framework was to demonstrate that the concept of development of the Gilston Area was feasible but it is not possible for the document to capture all of the work necessary to address all of the concerns of all parties at this time as this needs to be worked through during the pre-application process.
22. MP agreed that it was important to the community to agree clearly defined standards for all future developers and some of these are captured through engagement with the community in the Concept Framework, however, at each stage of future applications there is the intention to define these more clearly and they will then be bound through the formal application process.
23. BT expressed the importance that the Community can see that their concerns have been listened to. There needs to be something measurable.
24. LH agreed that the Council will commence drafting this report. LH suggested that key concerns might also be captured in a working document that the Steering Group can use to maintain focus on these as proposals progress.
25. MP indicated that it is important to define the standards of the new development clearly as the project moves forwards so that developers have certainty over what is expected and so that if a developer did not share the same vision they can be held to account.
26. Discussion took place around the 'layering' of the planning process with greater detail being addressed at each stage of the application process and greater certainty being established at each stage. At Outline stage MP expressed the desire to create high-level design principles to support the parameter plans which themselves will simply define the potential envelope of development and its potential maximum extents. At Village Masterplan Stage there would be greater design control established with a master plan for that village and a Design Guide setting out the nature and quality of the development. At Reserved Matters stage the actual design and appearance of buildings will be shown and will have to be in accordance with the Master Plan and Design Guide.
27. LW referred to the example of Channels in Chelmsford where the landowner set out a Regulatory Plan and Design Code to control quality in response to concern over the quality of the earlier phase of development. The intention is to have these at the outset so that we avoid that scenario and ensure quality is high throughout.
28. JBU expressed concern that applications will change such as reducing design quality, affordable housing or infrastructure.

29. LH indicated that applications will be considered in the context of the whole District Plan therefore they will need to consider all the policies on design, affordable housing and infrastructure so there is control at both the Plan level as well as through the Masterplans and Design Guides that might be agreed in the applications.
30. BT requested that AH meet with the NPG to go through their concerns with the Concept Framework to ensure these are understood so that they are considered in the Council report. AH agreed.
31. **Action:** BT and AH to agree meeting date.

District Plan Modifications

32. AH announced that the proposed Main modifications to the District Plan will go to full Council on 6 February to approve the commencement of consultation between the 15 February and 29 March 2018. Comments will be sent directly to the Inspector and will be taken into consideration in the Inspector's final report.
33. AH confirmed that unless the Inspector specifically requests any further information their final report is expected by the end of April. Subject to the content of that report the Council will face the choice of adopting the Plan taking consideration of any recommendations of the Inspector or to withdraw the Plan in order to undertake further work.

Looking Forwards

34. AH stated that whilst the Council cannot prejudge the outcome of the District Plan it will still be necessary for the Council to work with the landowners of the Gilston Area to prepare for a potential future planning application. AH confirmed that officers met with Places for People and their consultants earlier in the day to start to scope out the pre-application work that is considered necessary. It is expected that this will cover a wide range of areas of work.

Support for the NPG & Community

35. The NPG raised the concern that the support they have received from the consultants Urban Silence is coming to an end and asked how they will be supported in the future.
36. AH suggested that with the District Plan process potentially coming to an end the nature of the work and the engagement was likely to be changing as all parties start to think about the work necessary to prepare a planning application. AH indicated that the Plan Policy for the Gilston Area includes the requirement to prepare an Engagement Strategy and through this there will be an opportunity to think about how best the community are engaged in the process both in the work to prepare the application as well as when applications are submitted.

37. AH considered that we should look to present and share information with the NPG and community in a manner that they do not feel that they need independent advice upon it in order to understand it and engage with officers and the landowners consultants. The way that officers consider the work and set out their guidance upon it should also be clear so that the NPG and community understand how their views have been taken into consideration in order that they can understand the officers' conclusions.
38. MP indicated that providing information to the NPG for them to go away and assess it with an external consultant is not very collaborative. Instead MP would like the NPG to feel that they are involved in the preparation of that work rather than just commenting upon it afterwards.
39. BT indicated that the NPG would welcome the opportunity of being more directly involved rather than reactive.
40. MP indicated that Places for People would ask their consultants to ensure work is presented in a way that anyone looking at the work should be able to understand it.
41. LH suggested that it may be useful to get presentations to the Steering Group in the future on key themes such as what Sustainable Drainage is and how it works, future-proofing design to consider how things may change in the next 10-20 years, creating places where people feel safe and secure and transport. This way, when the applications come forward there is a better understanding of the matters in principle and therefore an idea of how best to present and explain it to the community.

Any Other Business

Membership of the Gilston Area Steering Group

42. AH raised the question of the group as to whether there were any other representatives that should be invited to the Steering Group.
43. The NPG considered that the current membership was representative of the community and was sufficient particularly now that Janine Bryant had joined the NPG. It was agreed that the standing invitation list would remain.

Hertfordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan Consultation

44. LH confirmed that EHDC would be making representations to raise the importance that the Minerals Plan considers the impacts of the proposed Briggens Estate minerals extraction area on the local area in the context of the proposed adjacent District Plan allocation for the Gilston Area.
45. MP introduced the representation that Places for People have prepared to submit to the County Council in response to the Minerals Local Plan.

Community engagement on the proposed river Stort crossings

46. MP confirmed that a community engagement on the proposed works to the river Stort crossings would be taking place, however, no date for this has yet been agreed. This will be discussed further with the NPG in due course. MP provided a note setting out their thoughts for this engagement.

Communicating with the Community

47. JB indicated that the NPG felt that it was important to circulate an update to the community. JB requested that the Council draft this update.
48. **Action:** AH agreed to draft an update on the District Plan and Gilston Area.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Date of next meeting: 28 February at 8am at East Herts Council offices, Wallfields, Hertford

Appendices:

1. Comments on revised draft Gilston Area CDF – Summary of sentiments expressed in the community workshop – 23 January 2018
2. Hertfordshire County Council Minerals Local Plan response on behalf of Places for People (Dentons, 31 January 2018)
3. Draft targeted Public Consultation note for the Stort river crossings on behalf of Places for People (Quod, 31.1.18)