

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

5 JANUARY 2012 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay - Chairman
Mr PAS Hall and Mr C Ladkin – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mr Bessant, Mrs L Hodgkins, Mr MS Hulbert (In place of Mrs WA Hall), Mr DW Inman, Mr K Morrell, Mr K Nichols, Mrs S Sprason and Miss DM Taylor

Also in attendance: Councillor JG Bannister, Councillor DC Bill MBE, Councillor DM Gould, Councillor JS Moore, Councillor Mrs J Richards, Councillor Mrs H Smith, Councillor BE Sutton and Councillor Ms BM Witherford

The following representatives were in attendance on behalf of the Developers: Mr J Alwyn (Taylor Wimpey); Mr B Bailey (Barton Wilmore); Mr J Brookes (Ainscough Strategic Land); Mr J Gibbins (Barwood); Mr G Hulman (Hal Planning); Mr P Martin (Ainscough Strategic Land) and Ms J Nally (Lexington Communications).

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Cathy Horton, Louisa Horton, Steven Merry, Aaron Vogel and Simon Wood

309 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Hall with the substitution of Mr Hulbert for Mrs Hall authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1.

310 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

311 PRESENTATION ON EMERGENCY PLANNING

Members received a presentation on the Local Resilience Forum, the role of the Emergency Planning Officer and the Emergency Plan. The role of Members in relation to emergency planning was also outlined: including identifying risks, being aware of the Emergency Planning Framework, presenting the public face of the authority and supporting communities following an emergency.

Following the presentation, discussion ensued during which the following points were raised:

- Parish councils did not have a statutory responsibility with regard to emergency planning. Advice and guidance about reporting mechanisms for parish councils was requested.
- The emergency plans were exercised regularly with both senior officers and also in multi-agency exercises.
- There were communications plans in place and communication during an emergency would be managed by the borough council.
- Specific plans were in place for high risk areas, for example calor gas. The County Council had its own specific plans and companies with high risk products also had their own emergency plans.

312 BARWELL SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION (SUE)

Members received a presentation from all developers for the land west of Barwell, being informed that Ainscough Strategic Land, Barwood Development Securities and Taylor Wimpey had formed a consortium of three developers who were fully committed to the development and could deliver 95% of the Area Action Plan.

It was stated that the Area Action Plan, which went to Council in April 2011 and had been consulted upon, had developed plans for Barwell and Earl Shilton, and that the policy was to encourage sustainable growth to benefit existing and new development in order to enhance the settlement. Joint planning was encouraged and as such comprehensive applications would come forward.

The following benefits of the arrangements were highlighted:

- Delivery of affordable housing either on-site or via commuted sums;
- Delivery of 105 acres of open space;
- Recognition of natural features to maximise ecological benefits including green infrastructure links and wetlands;
- A community hub including a new primary school and community facility (to be informed by consultation and audit exercises);
- Extension of public transport and connections for walking and cycling;
- Creation of new jobs (an estimated 220 in construction, the employment zone and spending power and 800 anticipated once developed).

It was reported that a Barwell Centre fund would be established through Section 106 contributions, which would bring benefits to the existing village centre, including improving the external appearance of businesses, new car parking provision and new spending power, and that the Primary Care Trust was aspiring to improving healthcare facilities in the locality. Other improvements reported included landscaping, lighting and environmental improvements.

The masterplan was outlined and the importance of ensuring close links to the current community, sticking to the AAP as much as possible and challenging the plans to check they were robust was highlighted.

The developers outlined the next steps, stating that there would be a public exhibition at the George Ward Centre on 13 & 14 January, and that Members had been invited to a preview on 12 January. A range of consultants would be available at the exhibition, for example specialists in ecology and drainage. The intention to establish a working group to help secure improvements to the centre was also stated by the developers.

In concluding the presentation it was stated that;

- the development would be high quality and sensitively designed and aimed to achieve new benchmarks for development;
- A third of the space would be new public open space accessible to all;
- Detailed consideration would be given to how to use the Barwell Centre Fund to provide tangible support to the village;
- 1000 new jobs would be created, many of which could be for local people.

Following the presentation Members had the opportunity to ask questions of the developers. The following points were made in response to Members' questions:

- A traffic assessment process had been commenced to identify the problem areas and create solutions including improvements to transport routes.

- Highways modelling was ongoing, funded by the development, and would be used in conjunction with the transport assessment. Officers hoped that this would be submitted with the planning application.
- It was unlikely that a dual carriageway would form part of the plans. However, both the Highways Agency and Leicestershire County Council as Highways Authority continued to be involved in developing the plans.
- With regard to affordable housing and the concern that increasing the number of flats was not viable, the housing service would be instrumental in providing information on housing needs in order that property developed was as required.
- Leicestershire County Council had submitted a housing needs survey which would inform the detailed requirements of the scheme to ensure the ageing population and resulting mixture of property types required would be met.
- New properties would meet the Code Level 3 for Sustainable Homes, but the cost/benefit ratio of anything higher would need to be taken into consideration.
- Commercial properties would meet the BREEAM requirements; however, the exact level would be the responsibility of the end users (occupiers).
- Work regarding electricity generation schemes was ongoing.
- Apprenticeship schemes would be used by the developers when recruiting for the construction project to ensure skills gaps were filled.
- It would be difficult to restrict jobs in the employment zone to local people, as it would be up to the employers occupying the units, and too many restrictions would detract from the attractiveness to businesses of relocating to the site.
- There was a need for a package of healthcare providers and discussions were being undertaken with the PCT, including the possibility of bringing services together into a 'one-stop shop'.
- Discussions were underway with Leicestershire County Council regarding primary school places; however, costs for this were not yet known (but would be the responsibility of the developer).
- No proposals were in place for the Conservative Club but, whilst not a main focus, the scheme in the AAP would work with the Club.
- Regeneration of the town centre would be phased, but some 'quick wins' could be delivered more quickly, such as physical improvements.
- The need for additional buses and/or bus routes was not yet known, but this would be discussed with bus operators and, should an increase be required due to the development, the developers may provide some initial financial assistance.
- There would be a transport strategy to encourage reduced car usage.
- There was a legal obligation on both the Council and the developer to be CIL compliant. If development was not compliant there would be a risk of judicial review.
- Development was unlikely to commence until at least 12 months after approval.
- Retail development on the site would meet local need and was not intended to compete with the town centre.

Members then considered the Terms of Reference for the Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group, using those agreed in 2008 as a basis. On the motion of Mr Ladkin, seconded by Mr Batty, it was

RESOLVED – the following amendments to the Terms of Reference agreed on 23 July 2008 be made:

- (i) parish and town council representatives not be included in the membership of the group;
- (ii) an independent Chairman be selected by the Group;

- (iii) the purpose of the working group includes scrutiny of the Area Action Plan, and not 'the impact of the Earl Shilton Bypass'.

It was reiterated that the group would not be a decision-making body, but would make recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission. Members were also reminded that, as a Scrutiny Group, it must remain non-political.

With regard to the agreement that representatives of the Parish and Town Councils would not be members of the Group, it was suggested that they could be called as 'witnesses'. In response to some concern about not including them in the membership, it was stated that Parish and Town Councils had other forums for expressing their views.

RESOLVED –

- (a) the Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group be set up with the following terms of reference:
 - (i) The Barwell and Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group will be a sub-group of the Scrutiny Commission and will present minutes of its meetings and appropriate reports on its work to the Scrutiny Commission.
 - (ii) The membership of the Barwell and Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group will comprise local ward councillors for Barwell and Earl Shilton. It will be supported by appropriate officers, as necessary.
 - (iii) At its first meeting, the Scrutiny Group will elect an independent Chairman and produce a programme of work.
 - (iv) The purpose of the Scrutiny Group will be to scrutinise the Area Action Plan, Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs), master planning exercises and the Barwell and Earl Shilton Neighbourhood Action Teams, and to make appropriate recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission.
 - (v) The Barwell and Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group will report the findings of its work and any recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission.
- (b) The nomination of Cllr K Nichols as independent Chairman of the Barwell & Earl Shilton Scrutiny Group be supported.

(The Meeting closed at 8.38 pm)

CHAIRMAN