

Great Bedwyn Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group

Record of Meeting 8

Monday 27th March 2017, 6.30 pm at GB Cricket Club

Present:

Martin Bailey (MB), Anna Ditchburn (AD), Andrew Hutchison (AH), Nick Gibbins (NG), Ali Burch (AB), Emma Glenister (EG), Jenny Bowley (JBo), Helen Sheehan (HS) (Secretary), Charles Howell (CH) (PC link & Chair for this meeting)

Present from Place Studio (PS): Jeff Bishop (JB), Cleo Newcombe-Jones (CN-J)

Away:

Viv Fox (VF), Claire Tarbox (CT), Paul Evanson (PE), Sue Mason (SM), Chitra Bharucha (CB), Nick Wilkinson (NW), Joanna Pike (JP)

Vicky Burvill (VB) from WC – *please note VB kindly sent written comments relating to the agenda ahead of the meeting, which are quoted in the minutes.*

Minutes - GBNDP Meeting 8

Item 1 – Opening Remarks

- CH welcomed JB and CN-J from Place Studio. There was concern, as pointed out by NW in his email, that WC had not received the Housing Needs Assessment application. JP confirmed to HS after the meeting that it will be sent to WC today (28/3/17). CH also informed the meeting that the latest Parish News had updated the village of NDP's latest thinking and progress.

Item 2 – Approval of Minutes of Meeting 7

- Approved by WG

Item 3 – Matters Arising not on the Agenda

- Please refer to AOB

Item 4 – Update on NDP Outline and evidence gathering

- HS reiterated to the NDP the importance of sharing any meetings/conversations for evidence-gathering with her, for inclusion in the GB Central Register of Consultation.
- JB further commented that a consultation report will need to be compiled and submitted alongside the NDP.
- CN-J also commented that the GBNDP Outline had plenty of maps and pictures, not too text heavy. The Outline document is key for VB to initiate all necessary assessments - **specifically a SEA/HRA screening report**. From the Outline NDP it looks as if three sites have been selected for potential allocation and a change in the settlement boundary **is proposed** too. All these elements will trigger WC to consider an SEA.

Action: HS to check with VB that a request has been made to commence the SEA/HRA screening based on v1 draft of the NDP

- MB was concerned that his map is drawn free-hand, however PS can organise digitised maps. JB suggested the NDP consider short-term access to Parish-on-Line for detailed information house by house. It costs about £80p/m. This could be of use at a later stage. **VB should be asked for advice on this as Wilts PC may already have free access.**

Action: NDP to check with VB

- With regards to the Bedwyn map CH pointed out that the boundary line around Ben Lloyd's garden is incorrect and needs to be amended.
- The VDS map is out of date; Rosemary Close and Bolland Close are not included in the map.
- Written comments from VB from WC:

“A note on evidence – in relation to the further evidence gathering listed at the end of the outline GBNDP – there are a few other areas that will need to be explored both for the neighbourhood plan in general and for the site selection. If you supply a draft of the **Appendix 2** I can comment on it in terms of gap analysis of the evidence. Equally this may be something Place Studio will do.

In terms of evidence for the site selection process, I would recommend that WC is included as a consultee. I would welcome the opportunity to comment on the site selection criteria. I will then be able to advise which evidence WC can supply that will help to address the responses to the criteria. Then if we are consulted at the stage of site selection, I can coordinate a response involving experts within the Council – for example we can advise on any potential drainage issues, ecology, landscape, school capacity. (If an SEA is being done, then I would suggest that these consultations be linked with the necessary consultation stages in the SEA where possible.) As you know Wiltshire Council are currently preparing the Wiltshire Housing Sites DPD and a draft will be published for consultation in May/June. At that stage any evidence put in the public domain will then also be available for use by neighbourhood planning groups, so that may also be helpful. In the meantime I can signpost to existing sources of evidence.

Site selection pro forma – I'm afraid I haven't had time yet to comment on the pro forma that Jeff sent to Nick, but I am happy to make comments on the draft site selection criteria / pro forma, as mentioned above. I propose that you draft a site selection methodology and criteria/pro forma with Place Studio, and I can comment on it. The general approach seems fine. I would re-iterate my previous advise that the first step is the call for sites (which you have done), followed by an assessment of availability (check with the landowner), suitability (use a detailed set of criteria of planning issues) and deliverability (check viability with landowner/developer) of these sites, using an objective set of criteria with evidence to support the responses. Then a second stage would be to go through the sites that have been identified as suitable in planning terms, and then use the neighbourhood plan objectives and community consultation to see which of those sites should be allocated.

Site selection pro forma – on first glance it looks good as an approach. I really like the idea of each site being appraised by a small group – including people who can add an objective perspective. The level of detail is good. Please be aware that it is not just the presence of proximity to any particular constraint – such as a listed building, but there needs to be some assessment of the impact on it. This is going to be difficult for the lay person in some cases, but just add whatever possible – probably best to indicate the evidence used to come to this conclusion, - note whether is from someone's opinion or perception – this is also important, but obviously needs to be corroborated with data if possible. – This is where it may be helpful for the Council to comment on the sites at this stage. – I think with the right questions being asked in the 'constraints' section, there may not be a need for an additional 'environment' section. Again – with a bit more time I would be interested on giving more input to this.

Settlement Boundary Review (limits to development) – the neighbourhood plan can review the settlement boundary, and propose changes. Usually the settlement boundary is a line tightly following the existing built development. If the neighbourhood plan process does review the settlement boundary the methodology / principles should be set out clearly, and the outcome should include a map and a very specific schedule of changes, explaining how the changes relate to the principles the review was based on, and how a decision was reached as to what was a suitable boundary. (This came up in the Great Somerford hearing.) So, in essence, it should be OK to extend the Great Bedwyn settlement boundary to include land that is not currently developed but where development would be encouraged, providing that proposals are appropriate and align with all other policies of the neighbourhood plan and Wiltshire Core Strategy.”

- JB said that quite rightly VB is highlighting the site selection process which is a rigorous exercise, and the NDP should be mindful of the associated legalities too. PS can help with all elements of this along the way. It is important to differentiate between site selection and site assessment. JB mentioned the Great Somerford hearing too – please see Item 5.
- CN-J referred to the Pro-forma and that this **could be used to identify any** gaps in site selection and assessment, particularly gaps in evidence.
- The GBVDS could do with some **updates** according to JB. WC assessment of AONB's and landscape are a fairly broad-brush approach. It would be very useful to take detailed pictures of GB's setting, landscape and important vistas. PS to send NDP a brief of how to do this.

Action: JB/C-NJ - now done

Item 5 – Any developments in Planning Policy of which we should be aware?

- CH reported that NW referred to a recent government paper about mending Britain's broken housing system, with input from Clare Perry. JB's thoughts were that at the moment this is a strategic plan and not legislation, therefore not of notable importance for NDPs yet.
- Written comments VB from WC:

“Great Somerford neighbourhood plan – the plan is currently going through examination and a hearing was held on 22nd March. It is worth awaiting the examiner's report, which will include discussion of affordable housing and there was a mention of the approach to achieving affordable housing – the use of a rural exception site. The examiner's report is likely to be available in about 6 weeks. All existing documents can be found on our website”.

Item 6 – What is best category (Rural Exception, NDP site allocation or other) to propose for Browns Lane affordable houses site?

- Rural exception site is applied for a site with a max of 10 houses only.
- AH asked “What is the definition of affordable houses?” CN-J replied that the government definition is: social-rented, part-buy and starter homes, and typically a blend of those three, including flats and small family homes.
- CH explained that the NDP is trying to protect GB from more executive, and therefore expensive, homes.
- According to AD housing associations won't replace housing sold to tenants.
- JB advised all the more reason to complete a Housing Needs Study. There are issues relating to this study however, namely in his experience, by the time the houses are built the people in the study have moved. Even when a site has been identified, and housing needs are understood, the Housing Association may not want to buy in. The only route in which to guarantee affordable housing is a CLT (Community Land Trust), but be aware that with this trust there is then no right-to-buy for aspiring young people and families.
- The dilemma, according to JB, is that landowners like Crown Estates will get more value for their land once a site is designated. Browns Lane is a SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) site already. In order to go forward JB advised completing the Housing Needs Study. There can be other negotiations around, but outside of, the NDP with landowners.
- Outstanding SHLAA decisions at WC will be completed in the next 6 weeks. CN-J cautioned that SHLAAs are not always accurate and have been known to be overturned.
- CN-J urged caution also when considering the Rural Exception route. It would suppress the land value for the Crown Estate too.
- JB advised that the NDP should hold off any decision about changing the settlement boundary for as long as possible.
- JBo felt that further investigation into housing association houses (one in Shawgrove with a 106 local agreement) that limit housing to villagers could be of benefit to the NDP.

Action: JBo

Action: PS to prepare a note of the pros and cons for a rural exceptions site vs site allocation for consideration by the NDP group

- Written comments from VB from WC:

“An outline of the plan – with a moderate amount of detail, including policy intentions - is submitted to the Spatial Planning team for us to provide a screening opinion. The draft that Great Bedwyn has provided looks to be suitable, but once we process it we will request any further information needed for the screening. Due to our current pressures we should be able to do start this screening after mid April.

We draft the screening opinion and we then have to consult with Environment Agency, Heritage England and Natural England to confirm the screening decision. This consultation takes up to 5 weeks.

If the screening indicates that SEA is needed a full SEA assessment and report must be submitted with the neighbourhood plan. We recommend that a consultant is engaged to carry out the SEA, at the earliest opportunity since the SEA needs to be carried out during the plan development process. WC should be included as a consultee at different stages of the SEA process – e.g. **Scoping stage** – we may comment on the assessment framework. Final submission – we can help check if all docs are present.

If the screening indicates that an SEA is not needed, the screening must be included with the plan when submitted. Be aware that if the plan changes significantly after the screening has been done, you will need to have the screening done again to confirm that the SEA is still not needed. (This is the same for the HRA)

HRA – we do the screening internally and as far as I’m aware there is no need for further consultation.”

Item 7 – Housing Needs Assessment, inc timetable

- Written comments from VB from WC:

“Update on Rural Housing Needs

I have contacted Claire Moore, the Housing team development officer who would help carry out the Rural Housing Needs survey. She said she is waiting for Great Bedwyn to confirm that you would like to go ahead and then they can schedule everything. It is best to contact Claire directly to liaise with her.

I asked for an update regarding the current Housing Register figures for Great Bedwyn and currently the following households are on the register:

1 x 1 bedroom; 2 x 2 bedrooms; 1 x 6 bedrooms. In addition there may be demand for Shared Ownership properties. Unfortunately we can no longer access the Help to Buy South lists which show the demand for Shared Ownership. We now have to put in a request and it takes a couple of days to get the data back.

It may be worth pointing out that the housing needs survey may show a greater demand than the housing register. We often find in rural areas that even if there is a housing need, residents may believe that they won't be able to access an affordable house in their village due to lack of AH coming forward. They therefore don't put their names on register. That's why it's important to do a survey – so that we get a fuller picture.”

Item 8 – How is SEA and HRA work done by WC, and how can PS help the WG?

- These assessments will only be triggered if a site is allocated. It is quite likely that a full assessment will be needed for the GBNDP. A detailed consultation would take place; power, flooding, school capacity etc PS can help with this. JB said a SEA can be done without a consultant if it is just one site. PS have templates for this and can assist too.

Item 9 – Report on improving youth facilities and possible sites.

- JBo's report has been circulated to the WG/PS and WC. It is aspirational and should be included in the NDP under “aspirations and projects”. The report now should be shared with the PC and Village Hall committee.

Action: CH/JBo

- JB advised that when these sorts of projects are included in an NDP, with relevant evidence and detail, they can attract funding, from the Community Infrastructure Levy for example. However there are pros and cons of including projects and aspirations in an NDP – be careful to look out for conflicts of interest within the village. Both big and small aspirations should be included, and even projects that have successfully come to fruition.

Item 10 – Which Local Green Spaces (LGS) should we go for?

- Spaces flagged up by the WG so far: spaces at the end of the village, top edge of Church Field, Wharf, allotments, playparks, garages on Castle Road, green area by Spaines
- CN-J clarified the criteria for LGS:
 1. Reasonable proximity to the community **it serves**
 2. Not an extensive tract of land
 3. “WHY?” – demonstrate why this land is special to the community and **that it is demonstrably special to the community (i.e you have evidence the community consider the green space special)** therefore be protected ie tranquillity and beauty/historic etc
- CN-J advised the NDP to come up with a long-list of LGS ASAP. PS have a matrix and traffic light system to see whether a space is eligible to become a LGS. Please note: once a space has become LGS no building can take place on it EG if the whole of the cricket pitch was to be designated LGS then a pavilion could not be built on it. The long-list has to be shared with the relevant landowner and then the examiner.

Action: PS to prepare a toolkit for the NDP to identify potential LGS and then refine - now done

Item 11 – How much detail is needed in NDP on environment/ecology etc?

- MB has read the WC core strategy and noted for the Marlborough development of 220 houses at the Tesco roundabout that there is a huge amount of detail required; ecology, archaeology, environment, school capacity, water, power etc. Developers have to do all of this but JB said that the NDP would have to do some of this work for any site allocation.
- WC will already have maps that detail a lot of this work. JB advised that the NDP look at environmental policies that apply to our area, because at county level it's too broad, and be discriminating about what concerns the NDP.

12. Next steps

1. LGS – PS to provide NDP with a suggested methodology so that the NDP group can suggest a suggestions for an initial long-list that can be reviews. PS to look at the long list of sites on their next visit to the parish. **Action: PS/NDP**
2. Pros and cons Rural Exception site – PS to provide. **Action: PS**
3. Landscape setting and views - PS to provide a methodology for the NDP group to gather some new evidence on this. **Action: PS**
4. NDP – finalise evidence. **Action: NDPWG**
5. PS suggested that other bodies to consult for the NDP are AONB and Canal and River Trust. Look at Wharf area in more detail. An NDP can say what shouldn't happen as well as what should. **Action: NDP**
6. JB and CN-J would like to organise a visit and walk around Bedwyn to get to know it better. Members of the NDP welcome to come along. HS to organise a date with PS. **Action: HS/PS**

13. Timetable for paying for PS support

- JP from PC and PS to liaise as there is a 6 month clause to beware of with the NDP grant, i.e. all invoices must be received before 30.09.17 under the terms of the grant, to avoid having to return the grant.

Action: JP/PS

14. AOB

- JP asked HS to check if anyone from NDP is attending the Tottenham House open evening. CH and AB confirmed that they would be there, and have invitations already.

15. Next meeting - date tbc