

Summary Notes of Meeting held to discuss Bloor Homes Proposal & responses to Village Questionnaire

Padbury Village Hall

24th January 2015 2:30-4:15

Present: District Councillors Sue Renshell & Llew Monger; Parish Councillors David McGahey, Peter McHenry, Debbie Gibbs, Martyn Bailey, Stephen Dickens, Ken Roberts; Parish Clerk and 92+ members of the public.

Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr David McGahey thanked all for attending and introduced the District & Parish Councillors. He also advised that the West Bourn planning application had been withdrawn that day, proving that public opinion can hold sway.

Cllr Llew Monger, a member of the AVDC Strategic Development Committee spoke as a member of that body with no pre-determined view and no opinion to express for or against, in particular as no application has been submitted for comment. He explained that Planning is governed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and that ideally Development should be Plan Led. Unfortunately 50% of Local Authorities do not have a compliant Local Plan. The AVDLP expired in 2011 but some policies were saved in the interim. Two new plans have failed and the new VALP will not be ready until 2017.

The current 'Call for Sites' has brought 4 options in Padbury but these are not planning applications, just proposals for possible sites.

Requirements state that the District must have current planning permission to accommodate 5 years' growth. For AVDC this means just over one thousand homes per year. Currently (as of Oct 2014) AVDC has 4.3 years. It is on that basis that the recent Aston Clinton Development was approved. The presumption is in favour of 'sustainable development'. If an authority does not have 5years' supply, its policies are considered out of date. In this instance, Para 14 of the NPPF applies so developers applications will be approved unless viable criteria against development is shown. Since this came in nearly all applications have been approved.

Developers are required to make contributions in form of S106 monies to mitigate harm caused by their actions. This can include contributions to education, sports and leisure facilities etc.

Decisions on development have to be balanced between benefits such as housing supply, affordable homes, construction jobs, local economy and schools versus adverse impact from highways, traffic, site access, location, biodiversity & prematurity.

Cllr Monger advised residents to wait until the application is submitted. Individual letters to the Planning Department are more effective than petitions. More than 80 letters triggers extra time for representation at Committee. Material planning issues must be stated. At the end of the day there will have to be some increase in housing.

Questions to Cllr Monger:

Will drainage issues be mandated – Yes.

S106 monies – does community benefit? – The community needs to be proactive in directing these from the beginning.

Will planning decisions be bypassed from AVDC? – No, 5 year plan must be addressed and all planning decisions go through AVDC Planning Dept. Planners must look at each application in its own right.

Has land already been sold to Bloor? – No, they probably have an option to purchase.

If an application for a site has already been rejected – does previous rejection come into play? – It can.

Why is AVDC in the state of having no plan? – Cllr McGahey responded that press reports have indicated that AVDC did not consult sufficiently with regard to their previous plan proposals or make allowances for sufficient houses.

Cllr Ken Roberts (Chairman of Planning Committee) then presented a summary report on the Housing Questionnaire which was completed by 115 individuals. Details of this are on the website under 'Report on Questionnaire', 'Survey Free Text Responses' and 'Survey Tables'.

The meeting was then opened to the floor for questions/comments and these are summarised with replies where given:

What percentage of homes in AVDC would 1000+ per year mean? – Unknown

Infrastructure – what about water run-off and its effect through the village – this does not promote a healthy community? The development is on the 'wrong side of the road'.

Flooding management is a health concern.

Affordable Housing – there is now a loophole for developers to avoid providing – Cllr Monger refuted this by saying this is not strictly true and Bloor have offered to provide 35%.

What is affordable housing – (rented or for purchase)? – refers to rented social housing or shared ownership for purchase. 50% of new affordable housing should give 1st choice to the north AVDC area.

Assuming the application does come in – how will the Parish Council react? – The Parish Council will formulate a number of objections on behalf of the village, based upon planning considerations. However, individuals should also respond (there will be a 13 week consultation), since this will give more weight, and may also result in the village being allocated more time to make our case at any committee meetings.

There is an action group within the Parish – this must show developers and the Planning Committee that there is strong opinion.

According to a radio report a developer only has to provide affordable housing if there are 10 or more houses proposed – what's to stop them for applying for several 'batches' of homes? – They cannot. It is one application for this development.

Why are there traffic management strips in place through the village at the moment? – These are not associated with the Bloor Homes proposed development, but are routine traffic flow surveys. Why are surveyors on the land in question? – There is nothing to stop the developer preparing evidence.

Is there any point in objecting completely or should the PC negotiate for certain conditions? – This depends on what the actual application states and whether or not S106 monies can be used to advantage.

There have been comments that Bloor may reduce number of homes – unknown until application received – still expect 30-40.

If the application succeeds does it open the floodgates? – Unknown.

With regard to conserving the environment – doesn't this destroy a green field? – Planners have to weigh the ecological impact versus the need for homes.

Flooding & Drainage was raised again; however it was pointed out that the drainage goes towards Adstock rather than Padbury.

It was stated that a few homes may be needed but there was general astonishment that there is a need for so many considering the developments at Bicester, Buckingham etc. – it is anticipated that over the next 20 years there will be 20% more people in England. Only half the number of homes needed is built in the country. This area appears to be overdeveloped versus the rest of the country.

What about pre-school capacity to allow for progression to the neighbourhood school? – This is not a consideration for the planners.

A representative of the Action Group suggested that if villagers wish to be kept informed they should join the group's e-mail list which has 71 members so far. He also stated that no matter how many homes are proposed AVDC has no plan. Winslow has a Neighbourhood Plan and Padbury should too. Funding is available for part of the costs and it is estimated

that each household paying £40 would make up the difference. Cllr Monger responded that he led the Winslow Neighbourhood Plan's development. Even with a Plan in place a determined developer can still prove difficult. Cllr Monger is willing to attend any groups and make a presentation on the topic.

Is schooling not a consideration? – Every application goes to Bucks CC for a decision on the contribution needed by the developer towards this.

Is the 15% of housing needed throughout the Vale spread equally geographically or how is it allocated? – Padbury is designated as a 'large village'. The Parish Council has argued that it is a 'small village'. However, there is not an even spread and AVDC is currently consulting on this in preparation for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). If Padbury developed a Neighbourhood Plan which stated that the village needs 10 new homes and the VALP then comes in to force stating 60 homes are needed then the VALP overrules the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, if full community support for a Neighbourhood plan cannot be proven then it will not be adopted. Stating zero development is not an option.

Currently there are approximately 330 homes in Padbury so 40 new homes would be a 12% increase.

If AVDC rejects the developers application, how expensive is it for the developer to appeal and can AVDC afford to lose? – It is almost guaranteed that there would be an appeal and the cost relates to the scale of the development. So far AVDC has been able to afford the cost of appeals.

It would appear from a resident's research that Bloor tends to target villages and has won two appeals.

Ownership of the land was clarified – it is apparently owned by the Osborne Family and currently tenanted.

Cllr McGahey thanked Cllr Monger for volunteering to speak and advise; and Cllr Roberts for all of his efforts in co-ordinating and summarising the Village Questionnaire. He also thanked everyone again for attending and advised that if any residents have further comments that they would like the Parish Council to consider they should make them known either to individual councillors or through the Parish Clerk.