

PADBURY PARISH COUNCIL
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Summary notes of meeting with Bloor Homes 3rd June 2015

These notes are based upon comments made either by the Bloor Homes representatives or the three parish councillors. Unless otherwise stated the comments are from Bloor.

Attendees: Councillor David McGahey, Councillor Ken Roberts, Councillor Martyn Bailey, Mrs Deborah O'Brien, Robert Webb (Bloor Homes), Emily Hale (Bloor Homes)

1. Introductions

Emily Hale is Bloor's Lead Planner for the development – and has been with them for about 7 weeks. Her background is in Town Planning. She will manage the planning process throughout and will be a point of contact. (She is also managing Bloor's Bedford project and others that cannot be discussed).

Robert Webb has been with Bloor for about 8 years and is their Land Director. He is also a Chartered Surveyor and Agricultural Valuer. His area includes Aylesbury Vale, Oxfordshire, Herts., Bedfordshire and South Northants.

Councillor McGahey introduced himself as Chairman, Councillor Ken Roberts as Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Martyn Bailey as a member of the Planning Committee and Mrs O'Brien, Parish Clerk.

Bloor Homes is a privately owned family business; - CEO is Mr John Bloor with his son Adrian Bloor also involved in the business. Based in Derbyshire – builds about 7,000 homes per year. Mr John Bloor also owns Triumph Motorcycles.

The company tends to build developments between 40 and 300 homes. They do not want to be seen as a speculative developer but want to engage with the community to develop according to community needs. Their homes are middle to upper market.

2. Site context and background

Emily & Robert brought some illustrative plans for view but these are not final and could not be left. They are similar to the proposed final layout but have not yet been formally signed off by Sales Department. They are hoping for a pre-application meeting with AVDC Planning next week. They have done a topographical survey, some market research assessing affordability in the area (CACR report). They have looked at incomes; history of sales, gaps in the market etc. 30% will be for affordable housing. Councillor McGahey indicated that in principle some affordable housing is desirable within the village. The proposal shows 12 affordable housing properties to be located towards the rear of the site closer to the view of the pylon. This could change.

The edge of the proposed development is setback from the road frontage to reduce visual impact and noise exposure. (A noise survey has been conducted with no major issues apart from road traffic).

The entrance to the development is planned to fall between the Springfields entrances – this is a road safety consideration. The boundary adjoining Witts End was set to avoid overlook from a second floor window and will be suitably screened and buffered.

They do not plan to disturb existing hedgerows and these will be retained where possible. There are very few trees and they are undertaking a tree survey.

There will be no homes above 2 storeys. There will be 2 maisonettes and 2 or 3 bed houses in the affordable housing cluster (per AVDC advice). The bulk of the 40 homes are 3 and 4 bed properties – 3 x 3BR and 25 x 4BR (of varying size).

There will be a pumping station for foul drainage and surface water will drain to the ditch at the rear.

Materials will include brick, tiling, render etc. Some examples of elevations and fasciae were shown and Councillor Bailey highlighted that two similar houses should not be adjacent.

There needs to be more of a mix of styles and appearance. He also commented upon the fact that the hedgerow would need more trimming back than indicated on the plans for access splays. Councillor Bailey also remarked that materials used to finish the houses would also be important in terms of their acceptability.

Councillor McGahey suggested that the developer might want to recognise in some way that this land was the old Cricket Ground.

Councillor Bailey also commented that this proposes a very big development for Padbury and concerned villagers comments include 'where is it going to end?' The fact that the roads at the back of the property appear to indicate that they are potentially suited to being carried on into the fields at the back and leading to more development is something that needs to change. Robert indicated that it is not planned to develop beyond this proposal, and Emily said that AVDC had advised a linear style of road layout rather than a 'loop'. The councillors felt that the affordable housing should be re-oriented and the roads closed so that further development could not be made beyond the existing proposal.

The proposal references Padbury assets of a shop and 2 full service Public Houses. Councillor Roberts refuted this stating that the shop is a high-end butcher which cannot be considered a shop and that the term full service Public House does not apply to both establishments.

3. Aylesbury Vale policy context

There is no up to date AVDC Plan in place since its rejection by the Planning Inspectorate, nor is there a 5 year housing supply (4.2 or 4.3 years at best). AVDC is looking for more housing in both urban and rural settings – for instance more sustainable settlements such as Padbury. Councillor Roberts advised that Padbury is sustainable as it stands but would not necessarily be so with increased population and housing. There would not be sufficient resources. The PC disagrees with the categorisation of Padbury as a 'larger village' and has in fact lodged a disagreement with AVDC. [Addendum: this was highlighted as part of our response to the VALP Parish and Town Council consultation in October 2014, and a robust critique of the metrics used in the Settlement Hierarchy definitions was also sent via the North Bucks Parishes Planning Consortium]

AVDC is aware that it is in a weak position policy wise and Bloor will provide a policy statement with their application regarding existing or saved policies.

4. Public engagement/consultation

Bloor was not planning another public consultation. Councillor Roberts made it clear that the Parish Council will not be Bloor's mouthpiece and if they want to engage with the public they need to hold another public meeting. There has been a 6 month gap with little or no information. The PC advises another public consultation. Emily stated that she understands that there has been a time-gap and that other applications have also appeared. Councillors stressed that some residents perceive a link between all developers even if that is not the case.

Bloor now has more technical information available and once the AVDC pre-application meeting has taken place and finalised elevations and plans are ready a further public consultation could take place – perhaps in July. (To be agreed by Bloor and then the PC to be notified. A piece by Bloor should also be submitted to the Padbury Pump). The actual planning application is anticipated to take place in August/September.

Councillors asked for feedback from the last consultation and some examples were given: 'Effect on traffic; no to affordable housing; if necessary – maybe the best location; a lot of negative comments such as not needing new housing.' Bloor will supply more in-depth feedback to the PC. They do not want to be viewed as a hostile developer and once the application is submitted AVDC will conduct formal consultations.

5. The proposed Padbury Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Roberts explained that Padbury has now been designated a Neighbourhood Area which is the first step in the NDP. A feasibility study working group will be set up in the next couple of weeks and this group will in turn come back to the PC with recommendations based on scale, appropriateness of development etc. He also explained that the PAG was independent of the Parish Council and promised to pass on Emily's contact details to the PAG, to see if they wished to make contact. Bloor might consider setting up an engagement website.

6. Other residential planning applications made in Padbury

Councillor Roberts stated that it is a matter of public record that Padbury Parish Council is objecting to 2 other proposals – one for 4 houses on Thornborough Road and one for 15 homes on land adj. to West Bourn. Again, perception within the village is a fear of when will it all end? There have been a large number of objections from residents and Bloor has taken note of these. Bloor feels that their development satisfies 'Padbury's 10% requirement' irrespective of other projects on the horizon and that Padbury should be able to accept some level of development dependent upon AVDC's plan. Councillors stressed that these plans are already on the table and so 19 homes are potentially already under consideration.

7. Work so far, technical survey reporting

Bloor has been conducting many surveys but no ground-breaking – Tree; Ecological; Landscaping; Sewage & Drainage; Archaeological etc.

8. Application submission

Proposed August/September dependent on above surveys being complete.

9. Proposed timescales

This is dependent on AVDC. In theory they would be on site by September 2016 with completion (in one phase) between 18 months – 2 years subject to market sales.

10. A.O.B.

A construction management plan will also be submitted which includes things like HGV restrictions. A traffic assessment is to be carried out which will consider such things as the installation of a pelican crossing for school and bus stop access.

S106 agreements will be determined by AVDC but will include such items as education contributions, leisure and sports contributions, mobile library contributions etc. Bloor does not have a policy per se but goes on a site by site basis.

Councillor Roberts stressed that this is seen by many residents as a divisive issue in that a perception of the old village vs the new village exists and this proposal could reinforce this view. The proposed new development could contribute to an imbalance within the settlement. Robert asked what the Parish Council's view was on the proposal and the answer was that the PC has not yet seen an application and therefore has no view until such application has been reviewed and considered in a Parish Council meeting.

Any further questions can be sent to Emily via e-mail and, Bloor Homes would be willing to meet with the Parish Council further should it be necessary.