

Sandleford Masterplanning Meeting
30th March 2010 10:30 – 13:00
Council Chamber, West Berkshire Council

Attendees:

Consultants: Mark Carrington (White Young Green), Robert Collett (WYG), Stuart Goodwill (WYG), Peter Whitehead (Glanvilles)

From the Council: Gary Lugg, Liz Alexander, Alison Brook, Paul Goddard, Alistair Buckley, Caroline Peddie, Dawn Reid, Sarah McCullough, Caroline Walsh, Jenny Noble, Jeremy Davy, Stewart Souden, Michael Butler, Christina Duckett, Katherine Goodchild, Derek Carnegie, Gary Rayner, Christine Owen, David Appleton, Jackie Ward, Duncan Coe, Adrian Slaughter

Apologies: Education and Housing Departments

Gary Lugg introduced the meeting and gave the context for the discussion. GL explained that we were asking for early indications today to feed in to the iterative process of the masterplanning. He explained that the site is a great opportunity to create a sustainable community with buildings of the highest standards, delivering an exemplar scheme. Confirmed we are looking at 1,000 dwellings up to the end of the Core Strategy period of 2026 and that there is potential for another 1,000 on the site either after 2026 or before if needed.

Liz Alexander gave more detail on the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and explained the timetable of planning to submit the Core Strategy in June along with more information on the site proposal in the form of a top level masterplan to give more certainty to the Planning Inspector about the deliverability of the site. Questions we are initially looking at are how the site will be delivered taking into account the opportunities and constraints of the site? How will it link with the existing communities and the built and natural environment? What will be the needs of the people who live there?

Mark Carrington explained that the consultants are here today to listen. Understand that there are constraints on the site, such as the issues raised in the Local Plan Inspectors Report. One issue the Inspector raised was the deliverability of such a large number of houses on the site within the Local Plan timescales, which was approx. 5 years from adoption of the plan, but now the Core Strategy covers a longer time period (to 2026) the timing of delivering 1,000 – 2,000 houses is no longer an issue. No showstoppers from the Inspectors Report and decided that if designed in a certain manner then they can get around the issues raised. Landscape is a critical issue. Propose the southern section to be retained but not necessarily untouched, need to consider the setting of the listed building. The Inspector had issues with the management of the ancient woodland – we need to discuss this today. The Inspector needed more detail on a management plan for the woodland and also had issues with the highways arrangements but it was a different planning scenario back then with a new road to the south. WYG are not proposing connection on to the A339.

WYG have had two separate highways consultancies work on traffic modelling of the site and both concluded that the site can be delivered without major new roads and access on to the local network at the A339. They do now need to include the highways impact of the Racecourse site. WYG have done a lot of preliminary work on many of the key issues facing the site. Utilities are deliverable, there is always an

Assessment does not include Racecourse

How's this tie in with IDP that states new link rd required?

engineering solution but can potentially cost a lot to do so may need to find other ways to deliver, such as waste water capacity is an issue.

David Appleton (DA) asked how many people does 2,000 dwellings mean? Using a ratio of 2.4 people on average per household would provide housing for 4,000-4,500 people if the site is fully developed.

WYG consider 2,000 units to be achievable and at approximately 37.5 dwellings per hectare.

Stuart Goodwill talked through a series of maps of the Sandleford site and outlined some of the contextual detail developed to date.

Derek Carnegie raised a query with the access off Monks Lane creating a huge cul-de-sac and expressed concern that this may not be the best solution - should not rule out an access on A339 too early. Paul Goddard said that he would not be completely opposed to a new access on to the A339; it could help accessibility and relieve pressure on other points. WYG are prepared to look at this in more detail but it would likely be a large roundabout and large access which will impact on the planning delivery of the site, especially in landscape terms which could be very difficult to overcome. WYG would look at Monks Lane access first and then consider alternatives. There is a little flexibility with using Warren Road as bus access but may not be suitable as a major route. Highways confirmed that Warren Road has planning permission to bring the road to adoptable standards but it would still not have pavements. Duncan Coe asked whether rather than have the access opposite the school it could run through the college land? WYG raised concerns with running access through the college as it is not land owned by the Sandleford Partnership and therefore cannot rely on delivering something on land that is not in their ownership and control. Derek Carnegie suggested compulsory purchase of some Newbury College land in order to deliver the access. WYG would not want to use a compulsory purchase order as it could pose question marks over the deliverability of the site as a whole because it could take a long time. Paul Goddard reiterated that an access onto the A339 should not be ruled out as a Monks Lane cul-de-sac is not great. WYG confirmed that they would keep it as an option and explained why it is not shown in the current draft plans for the site. Stuart Goodwill confirmed that they have been speaking to the Rugby Club and the College as they are neighbours to the site. Liz Alexander explained that we would need to be clear on deliverability of the site and not flag up options where there were clear concerns over them being realistically delivered. WYG reiterated that they were flagging up the land ownership issue for access as a risk to the site and that we are at the start of the masterplanning process.

The meeting then split in to two groups to have more detailed discussions on the site, the issues, and how it could be developed, with suggestions as to what people would wish to see on the site.

Discussion Group

Mark Carrington (WYG), Jeremy Davy, Caroline Peddie, Robert Collett (WYG), Stewart Souden, Gary Rayner, Christina Duckett, Michael Butler, Christine Owen, Duncan Coe, David Appleton, Sarah McCullough, Caroline Walsh, Dawn Reid.

Highways & Transport:

Christina Duckett suggested using the finger of land at the north east corner which leads up to the roundabout as land to provide an access on to the site. Another suggestion was a land swap with the College to provide land for an access. Gary Rayner asked what the benefits of an access on to the A339 would be? What proportion of the traffic flowing onto the A339 would be heading north to/through town, along Monks Lane anyway, or south either on the A339 or Andover Road? Would the Newbury/Basingstoke bus need to go on to the site to pick up and set down passengers?

College:

There is an extant consent on the college site for a conference and leisure centre.

Landscape:

MC asked if the Council were happy with the contextual plan outlining the public open space and if there were other areas which should/should not be developed. It is the intention of WYG to hand ownership/management of the public open space to West Berkshire Council. Jeremy Davy and Stewart Souden agreed that they would be able to work on a management plan for the ancient woodland and public open space. MC explained that balancing ponds would be needed in the south of the site, and that at previous public consultation events the public have asked for the open area to the south to be informal space. There is scope for a strong green infrastructure network on the site. Christina Duckett would be looking from the Buildings for Life angle – the open space area would need to be safe, permeable and with natural surveillance i.e. so that people feel safe to walk their dog alone. There is an existing footpath through the middle of the public open space area. Stewart Souden suggested that there is potential for a Countryside Ranger post to help manage the site and work with the community and this may be something that could be investigated through S106 money. With the public open space being so large it will no doubt attract people to the site and questions were asked to whether there would need to be car-park facilities, toilets etc and if so how could the site accommodate these facilities? It was agreed that a separate meeting would be needed with WYG, Jeremy Davy and Stewart Souden.

Social infrastructure:

David Appleton highlighted that the site would need to look at other social infrastructure such as library provision, community centre, so not just open space. MC explained that Falkland Primary School may be looking to redevelop and Park House School has big aspirations for creating a 'learning for life' campus (3 level entry). David Appleton said that the Park House expansion would mean the school would have to move off site. MC explained that the Sandford site can provide a primary school as the policy requests but it needs to be considered in relation to what the plans for the other schools in the area are. David Appleton requested to be invited to the meeting with Education to be able to contribute to the provision discussion. The group enquired as to what retail provision would be provided. MC gave a brief run down of the retail choices surrounding the site and the nearby area and so the current thinking is to provide a convenience store and some other units such as a community centre which would become the hub/centre on the site, rather than a parade of shops and public houses.

Affordable housing:

The group asked what level of affordable housing would be provided. MC clarified the Core Strategy requires 40%.

Mix of housing types and sizes was raised but this is detail that would follow on at a later stage of the masterplanning – the Core Strategy policy states that the mix would cater for more family-sized houses.

Timescale:

The group asked about the timescale for development. Policy officers confirmed that the Core Strategy should be adopted in March 2011. High level masterplanning for the submission in June, then work on the detail of the masterplan would start after adoption of the Core Strategy; this would take at least a year so we could be looking at 3-4 years until a planning application could be submitted. Completions should start to come through on the site by 2016.

Business use:

The site is on the settlement edge and close to New Greenham Park. MC confirmed that the site would need some business use. WYG started by looking in the direction of near the waste facility as a location for the business use. Duncan Coe raised concerns with the proximity of the business use to the walled garden of the Priory. MC felt that the business use could go in the area but it would need to be designed appropriately and accommodate suitable use classes to avoid negative impact on the Priory. Looking at some low-density, high quality B1 units, with the potential for start up units, but these are provided nearby at New Greenham Park. Would not be looking at B8 or B2 provision on the site.

Renewables and energy efficiency:

Starting point is a CHP unit. Would need to consider whether the site has a CHP unit, or if the site can be linked to the CHP proposed at the Racecourse site. Where on the site would it go? Initial thoughts are the business site but group discussions suggested the parcel of white land to the south of the site, in order to minimise any harm on the heritage of the registered walled garden.

Heritage:

Duncan Coe asked how will the heritage impacts be integrated in to the management and design of the site? MC considered that the site would need a heritage impact assessment to look at that and that joint working would be needed to produce this. Duncan Coe said the assessment would need to look at the short, medium and long term impacts of the site on the heritage aspects.

yet demand:
for 2-3 bed
houses

Now May 2012

be on board. 50 extra care homes will be needed, as shared ownership properties and this would be part of the overall affordable housing provision. A mix of housing sizes from 1-4 bedrooms was needed with a few 5-6 bedroom houses. A private residential care home may also be needed. To fit with the exemplar nature of the site it would be good if a couple of the affordable homes could be built to code level 5 or 6.

Green Infrastructure

Allotments and community gardens should be provided.

Transport

Alternative options for access should be investigated. A detailed travel plan will be required. The scheme should be designed as much as possible to not contribute additional through traffic on the A339 through Newbury.

How can this be achieved?

Following feedback from each group, Liz Alexander thanked everyone for attending. The issues raised formed a good starting point for the masterplanning work. A range of more detailed discussions would now take place both internally and with the Sandleford agents to progress the work and take the masterplan forward.