

Notes of Meeting of Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Held on Thursday 7th December 2017

Attendance:

John Matthews (JM); Graham Morris; John Knight; Mike Johnson; Judy Sharp; Nigel Freeth; Graham Hayman; Nick Manassei; Harry Stevens; Rob Johnston; Kevin Smith; Anthony Price.

Apologies from:

John Thomson; Zoe Metcalfe; Giles Robinson; Pip Pettit.

Items Discussed:

1. The Vision – after a brief discussion the following “Vision Statement” was agreed for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. This was considered to encapsulate the views expressed by local residents as translated into a series of objectives.
 1. “To allow the village to continue to thrive as a vibrant community, and to evolve whilst retaining its unique and distinctive character.”
 2. “To manage development within and around the village in a sustainable manner that is both appropriate in scale and location sufficient to meet the continuing and future needs of the community.”
 3. “To provide and maintain an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations by retaining, enhancing and where necessary replacing a wide range of existing services and facilities.”

2. The draft Neighbourhood Plan documents:

Copies of each of the following documents had been distributed to all members of the Steering Group in advance of the meeting:

 - Draft Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Draft Consultation Statement.
 - Draft SEA Scoping Report.
 - Draft Sustainability Assessment.

All members of the SG had been invited to read through all of the documents in advance of the meeting so that the contents could be discussed and amendments made where necessary.

The following items were discussed:

1. POLICY 4 as currently drafted is as follows:

Site 1 West of Knockdown Road

“Approximately 3.3 ha of land situated off Sopworth Lane, as identified on Proposals Map 7, is proposed for a mixed use development to include the following:

- Sufficient land for the erection of a new enhanced GP surgery with associated parking and space for related mobile services.
- Sufficient land to allow for the future expansion of the existing Sherston C of E Primary School and staff parking together with a site suitable for the erection of a new pre-school facility with associated parking.
- Up to 45 dwellings to serve diverse residential needs of which 40% would be affordable housing (as required by Core Strategy Policy 43).
- Strategic landscaping and open space to retain and reinforce existing hedgerows, and to establish new areas of substantial planting and landscaping to provide a visual boundary to the village from the west and south.

Development will be subject to the following requirements:

1. Surface water management that can achieve less than current greenfield rates of run-off and decreases flood risks.
2. The provision of footpath links to both the proposed new surgery site and the western edge of the existing primary school as well as to the existing Parish playing fields to the north.
3. A design and layout that protects and preserves the character of the settlement and is consistent with the surrounding AONB.

All aspects of development will take place in accordance with a Masterplan for the site which is to be approved by the Council prior to the commencement of any development.

The following queries, comments were discussed (all of which had been made in writing in advance of the SG meeting):

ZM – suggests modifying bullet point 4 to read “Strategic landscaping and open space to retain and reinforce existing hedgerows and to establish new areas of substantial planting and landscaping so as to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the AONB”. She was concerned that, as drafted, the wording is too prescriptive and would not necessarily lead to the best outcome when consideration is given to landscaping the site in a manner that seeks to mitigate the impact of development on this site in the AONB.

JM mentioned that he had been speaking to the AONB Planning Officer – and asked (again) whether she would like sight of any of the documents before it is published. She advised that given time and staffing constraints it would not be possible to review these until after they had been formally consulted. She is looking forward to seeing it in due course.

Darren Summerfield (LRM Planning on behalf of Acorn) – made a number of suggestions. These included:

- *Incorporating approximate site areas for both the GP surgery and education facilities within the text of the policy.* After some discussion it was agreed that further work would be done to try and establish more precisely the likely land take required for each of these community facilities. NM to speak to Wiltshire Council re the “primary school site”. JM/MJ to speak to Saara Sharman re the pre-school facility. JS to speak to Acorn re the GP surgery. In the absence of any such detail it was agreed that no change be made to the wording of the policy. If such details can be provided it was agreed that the wording should be modified to refer to “sufficient land but not less than *** hectares” for each community use.

- **Modifying bullet point 3 so that it better accords with Core Strategy Policy 43** (which advises that ‘the provision of affordable housing may vary on a site-by-site basis taking into account evidence of local need, mix of affordable housing proposed and, where appropriate, the viability of the development.’). It was noted that Core Policy 43 states that:

“On sites of five or more dwellings, affordable housing provision of at least 30% (net) will be provided within the 30% affordable housing zone and at least 40% (net) will be provided on sites within the 40% affordable housing zone. Only in exceptional circumstances, where it can be proven that on-site delivery is not possible, will a commuted sum be considered. The provision of affordable housing may vary on a site-by-site basis taking into account evidence of local need, mix of affordable housing proposed and, where appropriate, the viability of the development. All affordable housing will be subject to an appropriate legal agreement with the council. This level of provision should be delivered with nil public subsidy, unless otherwise agreed by the council.”

MJ reported that advice had been sought from Wiltshire Council on whether it was considered necessary or appropriate to modify the policy as suggested so as to ensure that it complied with Core Strategy Policy 43. The advice given was that “LRM are correct in the fact that CP43 does say that affordable housing will vary on a site by site basis, however it is important to note that the policy also states: at least 40% (net) will be provided on sites within the 40% affordable housing zone. It seems to me that asking for 40% affordable housing is in conformity with the WCS policy”. The SG discussed this proposition and agreed unanimously to leave it unchanged.

- **Modifying item 1 of the requirements so that it better aligns with Core Policy 67.** Core Strategy Policy 67 Flood Risk advises that all new development will need to include measures to the rate of rainwater run-off and improve rainwater infiltration to soil and ground (sustainable urban drainage) unless site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable. It is recommended that the wording of the policy is aligned with this.

MJ reported that advice had been sought from Wiltshire Council on this suggestion as well. The following advice had been received. “Your policy currently requires development to decrease flood risk. The NPPF includes reference to not worsening flood risk affecting the site or elsewhere. However, practice requirements are now for end run-off rates to be less than current greenfield with an allowance for climate change. In addition, as the site is larger than 1ha it will need to be supported by an FRA anyway. The FRA should then demonstrate run-off rates etc. The Plan will become part of the development plan alongside the WCS when made, and development will still have to regard the higher tier plan and its policies including CP67.” After some discussion it was decided by the SG to leave this unchanged.

- **Modifying the final paragraph so that it sets a requirement for the masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of detailed planning application rather than prior to the commencement of development.** It was accepted that this suggestion was entirely sensible. It was agreed to modify the policy wording to reflect this.

2. POLICY 5 currently states:

“Mixed Use development is proposed on Site 2 (the Vicarage Site), as identified on Proposals Map 8, to include:

- Land for use as additional burial space.
- About 3 dwellings (including a new vicarage).

Development will be subject to the following requirements:

1. The provision of a footpath link to the existing adjoining churchyard.
2. A design and layout that protects and preserves the character and setting of the adjoining Grade 1 listed church.”

Comments on this policy had been received from NF who suggested that item 1 of this policy be reworded as follows:

1. “The provision of a footpath link to the existing adjoining churchyard from the proposed new burial area at the rear of the development.”

The Steering Group agreed unanimously to modify the wording as suggested.

3. POLICIES 10 AND 11

POLICY 10 as currently drafted states that:

“Site 4 (adjoining the Football Field) will be safeguarded for future use as additional playing fields so as to allow for the expansion of the existing sports facilities. See Proposals Map.”

POLICY 11 as currently drafted states that:

“Support will be given to the erection of new/replacement changing rooms on the Football Field.”

GH has expressed concern that as drafted these policies do not allow for the provision of a wider range of sports facilities on the Football Field site – which is something that the village has indicated that it wants. He referred to his earlier report on sports/leisure facilities. GH will update his report and make it available for publication as a reference document. The SG agreed with his comments and unanimously approved an amendment to each policy as follows:

POLICY 10 to be amended to read “Site 4 (adjoining the Football Field) will be safeguarded for the future expansion of the existing sports facilities. See Proposals Map 9.”

and POLICY 11 to be amended to read “Support will be given to the erection of new/replacement changing rooms and related sports facilities on the Football Field.”

Additional items discussed:

Comments received from Giles Robinson:

- GR had raised a query about the amount of detail contained in the various draft reports. He wondered whether it was necessary to provide so much detail about all of the sites that had been considered at different stages (including those later withdrawn). MJ

explained that it was essential that all of the sites that had been put forward for development were fully reported. In fact further work was still needed to ensure that the Sustainability Assessment adequately covered such matters.

- MJ advised the SG that he was still working on several matters relating to each of the draft reports. The intention being to have these completed by mid - January if at all possible.
- MJ asked the SG if they were able to help with both the formatting and tidying up of all of the reports – to make them ready for publication. James Pyle has offered some help with photographs. Harry Stevens will speak to a lady in the village whom he thinks might be able to help. Ditto Kevin Smith. JM to check whether any money in NP budget to pay for formatting/publishing the documents.
- Anthony Price suggested that we should consider selecting a common font size and typeface for use in all of the documents. This is likely to be done.

The following timetable for publication of the draft plan (and all related documents) was discussed and agreed:

End January 2018 – publish draft plan (minimum 6 week consultation period). Regulation 14.

End March 2018 – completion of consultation phase.

March to end May 2018 – review comments and modify documents as necessary.

June 2018- submit NP to Wiltshire Council. Regulation 15.

Meeting concluded at 2045 hours.