

## Minutes of the Tilehurst Parish NDP Steering Group Meeting held on 16th March 2022

**Present :** Kevin Page, Peter Cross, Alan Wade, Julia Gentle, Joan Lawrie, Liz Alexander, Sandra Vickers, District Cllrs Tony Linden and Jo Stewart and from WBC Bryan Lyttle

1. **Bryan Lyttle, WBC Transport and Planning Policy Manager** was welcomed to the meeting and was invited to speak regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and housing number requirements.

### **Key Points :**

- Clarification of the the housing numbers required in Tilehurst which Bryan described as not straight forward. As background information the Eastern Urban Area of which Tilehurst Parish is a part, is proposed to be merged with East Kennet Valley area making a larger area. However, the revised AWE safety zones and flood plains restricted the area for development and the NPPF has strengthened restrictions on developing in the AONB. As a results areas for future development are restricted.
- The HEELA also has to be assessed for suitable housing allocations. A decision is finally made by planning officers of the numbers that can potentially be built in a specified area/parish. Bryan described the methodology to be used in calculating housing need numbers as required by central government. At present 509 + 10% new houses per annum are required in West Berks, but the method for calculating these numbers may change in future. There is a further complication in that Reading is amongst the top 20 urban areas in the UK and Greater Reading includes Tilehurst Parish along with many other areas outside Reading Borough and requires a further 30% up lift in housing pa. Liz questioned this additional 30% as she believed it was recently scrapped. Bryan would double check this point.
- With regards to the Tilehurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan, Bryan noted that the steering group were proposing no site allocations and that as a result if this decision stood it would be for the West Berks local plan to make the allocations. This might become an obstacle to our plan being passed by WBC as other ward councillors might raise questions/concerns regarding our zero allocation. Bryan also clarified that as guidance NDP site allocations should be for development outside the settlement boundary as there was a general presumption of approval for developments within a settlement boundary. So, for example, the Pincents Manor site could be allocated as outside the settlement boundary, but Calcot Golf course should it become a HEELA site, would be within the settlement boundary and should be treated as windfall.
- Bryan further advised that strategic gaps between settlements, an argument against the East of Pincents Lane development, had ceased some years ago (this needs to be double checked as it had been a reason for refusal being upheld at the last appeal).

With regard to the ongoing East of Pincents Lane planning application Bryan clarified that a senior WBC officer had determined that as there were potential issues with the Eastern Area decision to refuse the application, it was safer and would lessen the risk of appeal or legal related costs to seek the decision of the higher level District Planning Committee before making any final decision.

- The West Berks local plan is expected to be delayed by one year. We will need to keep in close contact with WBC to ensure the Tilehurst NDP remains in line , as far as possible, with the WBC local plan.

- Bryan advised that inclusion of a “Village Design Statement” into the NDP was recommended but we effectively had this though under a different name. We should consider changing the name in our plan. Liz advised we might qualify for additional funding if we had a VDS in the NDP.
  - There was discussion around any advantages of the NDP allocating sites but as the number of available sites in the HEELA was limited the likely developed sites would be the same whether in the NDP or not. However it was noted, from Bryan’s earlier comments that the Pincents Manor site could be allocated and possibly the Calcot Best Western site if that could be determined to be available for redevelopment.
  - There was discussion around the traffic implications/highways report relating to both the Pincents Manor and the U+I development and whether the reasons for refusing the U+I development on “land locking” grounds should also apply to Pincents Manor.
  - Bryan expressed some concern over some of our LGS designations relating to size and that they might have to go to full examination. We felt we had carefully considered the criteria for LGS including size but accepted this might well be subject to close examination by inspectors. We would seek comparisons with other LGS designations in other parishes. Bryan was thanked for his contribution to the meeting and he left the meeting at this point.
2. **Review of Calcot Golf Course LGS** - After discussion it was agreed to extend the area of this LGS to cover other wooded areas in the northern part of Calcot Golf Course. Alan/Peter would revise the map to show the precise area to be covered including the names of the copses/wooded areas to be included.
  3. **Apologies:** Fred Williams, Clive Taylor
  4. **Representations by members of public.** None
  5. **Declarations of interest :** None
  6. **Minutes of the previous meeting** had been issued and were approved with inclusion of Alans corrections and correction of the date of Bryan Lyttle’s attendance.
  7. **Actions arising from the minutes -**
    - Liz advised that she had distributed information on LGS as agreed from the last meeting.
    - Kevin to write to WBC to formally advise of our proposal to designate WBC recreation areas as LGS
    - Kevin advised that he had posted missing minutes on the website
  8. **Budget, Finance and Fundraising:** Peter reported everything relating to the accounts was up to date

## **9. Plan Review and preparation for public consultation :**

- Kevin had posted the display boards used at the earlier public meeting that Alan would review and revise as appropriate
- Date for the public consultation sessions need to be determined - Kevin to check on date availability in our community centres and make bookings.
- Liz to check with Leila at WBC Planning on the names of consultation bodies to be contacted and report back
- Survey questionnaires - Kevin would prepare a survey monkey mock up questionnaire
- Flyer for Tilehurst Directory to be drafted for April deadline - Alan would draft words, Kevin would do the desktop publishing

## **10. Any other business**

Alan raised issues over road surface conditions near the Stonehams development in Long Lane and delays in making or completing improvements. It was suggested that he contact WBC Highways for advice. Jo would also check on this against WBC's road works plans and if necessary escalate to the WBC portfolio holder.

Alan also asked if we should amend the NDP to include the need to review road infrastructure improvements where new developments take place.

## **11. The meeting closed**