

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT) At the Scout Hut, Burrige on 20 February 2020 at 3.30pm

Local Plan Supplement Public Meeting Thursday 20 February 3.30-5pm

Who was there?

Speakers:

- Cllr Seán Woodward, Executive Leader of the Council
- Gayle Wootton, Planning Strategy Manager

Residents: Approximately 40 residents at the public meeting

What was talked about

Introduction by Cllr Woodward

Cllr Woodward gave an introduction setting out the background of changes to the Government requirements for housing in Fareham that have led to us needing to make further changes to the Draft Local Plan. We are consulting on a Supplement to the 2017 Draft Local Plan and this is one of seven meetings and six exhibitions that are taking place this winter. He encouraged residents to ask questions at the end of the presentations.

If we do not have a Local Plan the Planning Inspector may take control of our planning decisions and to meet the Government housing requirements may well agree proposals that locally we would object to. This has happened in neighbouring authorities and we do not want that here. He highlighted the phrase “an obligation to help other areas”, in practice this means we are expected to absorb unmet housing need of neighbouring authorities. As a result, we must look for further development area and this is where the proposals for strategic growth areas come in.

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Cllr Woodward also presented a slide on Rookery Farm in greater detail:

'It is useful for the plan to be put up to illustrate the site, entrance to the site and public open space which would be a significant part of the proposal. No proposals have been approved yet. The pale areas are the bits they are suggesting could be allocated for building. If it happens, it could be 150 houses, not 250 houses. Planning Officers are talking to developers about the potential for a Swanwick Lane access and where should it go. Cllrs make the decisions and Planning Officers make the recommendations. The two other areas pointing at the top, are not owned by Raymond Brown. There are planning consents outstanding on that site. Raymond Brown were granted a temporary planning consent as a recycling site. If it was given consent for housing, then this would override any other permissions.'

Main Presentation by Gayle Wootton, Planning Strategy Manager (presentation lasted appx. 30 minutes)

Gayle advised residents how we started this Local Plan process in 2015 after the current Local Plan was adopted. From 2015 onwards work started on the draft Local Plan and the first regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan that took place in 2017, which received 2500 responses.

In 2018 the Government introduced a new method of calculating housing need which resulted in the 2017 Draft Local Plan needing to be revised.

From the Issues and Options consultation last summer, Fareham Borough Council found residents were more in favour for Brownfield sites as opposed to Greenfield sites, and in support for higher density housing where there is good public transport. There was widespread support to preserve green spaces and areas of landscape value, such as the coast.

In the Issues and Options consultation, we asked about Good Growth. We define this as encouraging quality of life, maintaining our distinct communities, minimising environmental

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impact, promoting green and active travel and meeting our housing need whilst making sure the necessary infrastructure is in place (see slide). Central Government made three changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018. The impact of these were:

- Higher housing need, from 420 dwellings to 520 dwellings per annum.
- Diversity in housing sites, with at least 10% as smaller sites.
- We need to plan for the unmet housing need of neighbouring authorities for which we have a 'duty to cooperate'. Our own requirement is 520 houses and we must add a buffer in addition to sites that have already come forward. We are proposing an additional 10-15% to meet these requirements.

The total housing need for the Borough up to 2036 we estimate to be between 9152 to 9568 dwellings (see housing supply slide). We also expect windfall sites, these have averaged 70 sites per year, these are additional sites that we were previously unaware of but have been put forward from developers. Draft Local Plan sites from the 2017 consultation will continue to be counted against the target figure as are the planned development at Welborne which will be over 4000 within the time of the Local Plan (6000 in total). This brings the total figure close to 9500, so we only need a few additional sites in the Supplementary document to meet the requirement.

Ongoing work will remain to secure a five-year rolling Housing Land Supply so Fareham Borough Council can meet our year on year requirement. Without this, the Planning Inspector can be asked to intervene and make approvals outside of our Plan, this is a further reason why the buffer is so important. Before the Publication Plan later this year we will merge the 2017 Draft Local Plan with the Supplement consultation outcomes and set out our full proposals. (see Revised Development Strategy slide).

We are proposing to re-instate Areas of Special Landscape Quality (see landscape quality slide). We propose to designate these as areas where major development would be deemed inappropriate unless the proposals can maintain landscape character.

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We have four new Proposed Allocations (see slide). Rookery Farm is currently an aggregates recycling site and the owners have promoted the land to us for development. 1-2 The Avenue is close to the train station in Fareham. There is a site in Botley Road of 5 houses and a sheltered housing scheme at Cams Alders.

There are two Strategic Gaps at present, one in the Meon Valley and the second between Stubbington and Fareham. We have a commitment to continue to provide a gap between the settlement areas (see strategic gap slide). The focus of these areas is to maintain settlement identity and prevent coalescence.

There are two Strategic Growth Areas (see slide). These are proposed as areas to undergo a process of Council-led master planning. Being led by the Council has the advantage of the Council taking control of the planning process and only allowing development in specific areas where infrastructure allows or could be enhanced, and that fits in with existing settlements. Without this we are subject to speculative proposals from developers that the Council must defend through the planning process. This is a way of the Council having more control over these development areas, as well as residents and businesses having certainty about where growth is planned beyond the scope of this current plan and well into the future.

- SGA Downend (slide):

One of 8 areas consulted on last year, it would have distinct neighbourhoods well related to existing settlements. They would be close to transport links and would provide new infrastructure and interconnected green space with protected biodiversity.

- Strategic Growth Area (SGA) Stubbington/Fareham gap:

Another of the 8 areas consulted on last year. The three main landowners and site promoters are willing to work with us to retain a strategic gap whilst creating residential development with social infrastructure, leisure and parkland facilities and health provision. There are mitigation opportunities in the area - protection for Brent geese, nitrate offsetting, this would provide more

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green space for residents and wildlife.

We are also proposing new housing and environmental policies:

- National space standards, minimum size of rooms/homes to promote health and wellbeing and ensure homes are liveable
- Increasing the diversity of supply. Promoting small-scale development where there is access to rail /bus routes and shops
- Protecting our 5-year housing land supply, in order to control of our planning process
- New over-arching policy for climate change
- Flood risk and sustainable drainage systems
- We are proposing a new policy specifically on protecting trees and woodland
- A new policy on air quality, including provision of electric vehicle charging points

We want you to 'Have Your Say'. The supplement and survey are available online and by request at the Civic Offices. You can also view it at libraries in Fareham. There are also supporting evidence documents to comment on. There will be another consultation in the summer on the Publication Plan before it is submitted to Government.

End of Presentation from Gayle Wootton, Planning Strategy Manager

Any Questions from the audience? (Cllr Woodward answered these)

Q1: Will the plans satisfy the needs for housing until 2036? Will you not be looking at any other planning applications in this area?

A1: Once there is an adopted plan, then these are the applications we expect, but there are windfall applications that must meet the Local Plan parameters.

Q1a: You mentioned the infrastructure? How will we cope with the extra cars?

A1a: 3500 houses at Whiteley will have an impact on the area around here. The Highway Authority is consulted in terms of infrastructure e.g. roads and schooling. Botley Road needs improving; we need traffic calming measures here. It is likely that a roundabout would be required, however the Highway Authority would be the ones who would investigate that.

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Q2: I live in Botley Road and it is extremely busy. We get to an age where we can't drive, but we don't have a frequent bus service.

A2: Buses are all run by private companies. They are not permitted by law to make a loss on any route they run. If they are well populated by pensioners, they only get 60p-70p per person. They do often get a subsidy from the Council, however it's down to affordability. Those developers in Whiteley have said they will provide a bus service but if they are not used, they won't keep it.

Q2a: Is there a proposal to lower the rates of the shops to ensure they stay? A lot of people don't shop online.

A2a: Councils don't set rates in shops. We collect business rates, but only keep about 6% which is a very low amount. The Government is looking to reduce business rates nationally to address the crisis on high streets. Online shopping is the cause and online companies don't pay business rates as high street shops do.

Q3: Can you confirm the proposals for the Rookery Farm development?

A3: The proposal is for 150 houses, on a site that the developers have put forward to us. Initially their plan was 250 houses, but our Planning Officers have assessed it and believe the site is only suitable for 150 in total.

Q4 [Statement]: I live in Botley Road, people talk about the environment and the consideration isn't there for this area. Please be aware of reducing the traffic.

Q5: What are Gosport and Portsmouth doing for their housing need?

A5: Gosport and Portsmouth are putting together their Local Plans. They must test out their Local Plans; even in those areas there are landowners and developers who are looking at sites and the Planning Inspector will ask if they have been properly assessed. They cannot just decide not to build. If they haven't allocated enough land, they will have pressure to allocate sites. Gosport are failing their housing delivery; they are not allocating the land which is needed. There are MOD sites there. There are areas we have here which we may have to consider to help meet their need, such as in the Strategic Growth Area at Stubbington.

Q6: Where will the cycle route on Botley Road go?

A6: I think it is on the left side of the road, however the plans are online on Winchester's website.

Q7: Regarding the Rookery Farm development, what is the access on Swanwick Lane for and what is the logic of having an access lane there?

A7: This has come from Planning Officers and the developers, personally I don't think it needs two access points. I think it could be served through a single access in and out on Botley Road, with an all-ways roundabout. It is in the consultation to be commented on.

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Q8: How do you know there is a housing demand in this area?

A8: Through the work that was done for the Draft Plan in 2017. There was a formula used based on ONS (Office for National Statistics) figures. We have an older proportion of 85-year olds than anyone else in the country. When we were growing up, it was just our parents that needed a house. Now there is a need for three generations to be housed because people are living longer. There is a local housing need due to population trends such as family break-up. There needs to be housing in this area for local people. The Government is also putting pressure on us, we have people in this area who are on waiting lists. There are 1000's of families who need houses who are on waiting lists.

Q9: Rookery Farm development will congest this area if it is to go ahead.

A9: When Whiteley Way is joined up, we need to see the A3051 downgraded from an A-road here because Whiteley Way should be the A3051. I will be reminding our Hampshire Highways colleagues about this. According to the technical engineers forecasts the traffic should be reduced once Whiteley has those extra northern routes.

Q10: Winchester covers a big area. What pressure is being put on Winchester City Council?

A10: Fareham Borough is 38% built on. Winchester is 4% built on. Each area has to consume its own smoke, but Fareham has no Green Belt, whereas Winchester has National Park. I have pushed back directly to the Secretary of State about our numbers. The Affordability Calculator the Government has applied; which has put up our housing numbers by 20%; has impacted us more than Winchester, even though their house prices are much higher, so it doesn't really make any sense.

Q11: Concern re: Rookery Farm and traffic issues.

A11: I agree that the traffic issues are bad, but it is a populated area and the houses have to go somewhere in the Borough of Fareham. This area hasn't had much housing in the last few decades. I have been able to show we are impacted by Whiteley, but that development is outside of Fareham's borders and we cannot count it against our housing need.

Q12: I appreciate the need for houses, but there is no road infrastructure to support the houses. I live a stone's throw from the M27 and yet it can take me ¾ hour to get through the gridlock.

A12: I agree, please make your comments known in the survey.

Q13: Traffic monitoring has been going on at Botley Road. They shouldn't be able to do it in school half-term – is this related to the Rookery Farm development?

A13: Monitoring happens at any time of the year and it will go beyond half-term.

Q14: Regarding the traffic for Burrridge – what happens about closing roads? If this was a dead end, could they go around the other route if you close it?

A14: It isn't ever going to happen. It's an HGV route and that road is used due to the Hamble railway bridge not being high enough. I am trying to get it downgraded from an A-road and the

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traffic should move to Whiteley Way.

Q15: Is it too late to have our say on Welborne's infrastructure?

A15: There are tens of millions of pounds being put into infrastructure at Welborne. There will be a new motorway junction, open spaces, a new community centre, a health hub and plenty more.

Q16: I am interested in the new junction as well as a cycle way. From the end of Whiteley Way by Tesco, people have to queue for a mile long. How can people live in this area?

A16: It's the Winchester cycle way. We do talk to Winchester City Council. It is the aim that when the new junction is in place, and the road downgrades from an 'A-road' (with the A-road being Whiteley Way) the traffic will be reduced.

Q16a: Can you ask Winchester to sweep the cycle ways too, they clean the roads and not the cycle ways?

A16a: Yes. I can enquire about this.

End of questions

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