

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

At the Scout Hut, Burrridge on Thursday 20 February 2020 at 6pm

Local Plan Supplement Public Meeting

Thursday 20 February 6-7.30pm

Who was there?

Speakers:

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

Residents: Approximately 70 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 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, except where noted)

Q1: I found out about this consultation from my neighbour, as I didn't receive a copy of Fareham Today. I also missed the previous consultation because that was promoted through Fareham Today, which I also didn't receive. I've therefore missed out twice on my right to comment!

A1: The Issues and Options consultation which was the pre-amble, was a special Fareham Today. There was also information in newspapers, on the website and all the other ways that we use to tell people.

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Q2: I didn't receive information for the Issues and Options consultation, and I didn't receive anything for this consultation. The Council has already agreed to this site, but what other options were there?

A2: There were submissions made by landowners and developers for approximately 18,000 new homes. All of the sites were assessed by the Planning team and can be viewed in the SHELAA. We only need half that number, but because of the increase in the numbers from Government we are considering the site at Rookery Farm which they have put forward to us.

Q2a: Were there other sites?

A2a: Yes, you would need to look in the SHELAA.

Q2b: I have lost out on opportunities earlier. It looks like the Raymond Brown site has been accepted by the Council.

A2b: You found out about this meeting due to the letter I asked officers to send out, because I too became aware that Royal Mail didn't deliver Fareham Today, as I didn't receive my own copy. This is the first discussion on it; we are consulting to hear your views; nothing has been decided yet. The officers put forward their proposals, the Council consults and only then do the elected representatives make any decisions.

Q2c: When did the Raymond Brown site become available?

A2c: It was first proposed to us in 2016, but the numbers were too high.

Q3: Firstly, I would like to thank you for arranging this meeting, because we haven't received the Fareham Today. If the Rookery Farm Site is included in the 2036 Supplementary Plan, any planning application for development will obviously be granted by Fareham Borough Council, making the usual process of making objections to the application at that time futile?

A3: It will not automatically gain planning consent. It would come before the planning committee and could still be refused. A Local Plan proposal doesn't necessarily get granted. There was a large site in Portchester that is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan, but its planning application was not approved since it did not include the points that the Council considered it required, and on appeal, this decision was supported by the Planning Inspector.

Q3a. All this before the impact of the North Whiteley Development has been ascertained. These roads are subject to traffic jams daily, and it will get worse. Would you agree that there is no opportunity to improve the road infrastructure in this area, so we should not be building more houses to further increase the congestion?

A3a. They are valid points that you make; how are we going to increase the road infrastructure? Are we going to create a dual carriageway? Every proposal is assessed by Hampshire Highways and every developer will need to provide mitigation required by Hampshire Highways to make the development acceptable; for example, at Barnes Lane, Warsash, traffic lights are to be installed. Two new roads north of Whiteley (which is not within the Fareham Borough) will be coming out of Whiteley to take the vehicles north so Whiteley Way will become a dual carriageway. These roads, so I am told, will produce a reduction of traffic on Botley Road.

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I am making the case for the Whiteley Way to become the A-road and downgrade Botley Road. Traffic from the West will go to the motorway at Junction 9. Bluebell Way is supposed to open in June (previously March), and it should also alleviate some of the traffic.

Eastleigh had their Local Plan thrown out and we see what happens there, developments are going in everywhere, so we must keep control of our planning, and we can press for the road infrastructure that we need. There has been next to no developments in Sarisbury Ward, except for one we lost in the bottom of Swanwick Lane, for several years. I have always been able to argue this because of the developments at Whiteley, but if we are to meet our numbers, we need more sites. There is a lot more pressure to have building over here.

I am not defending the Rookery Farm development, but it must be looked at as there is a lot of space there. If the land isn't used for housing, the other option is that it's a recycling facility with the lorries which are associated with that until 2036. The Draft Local Plan is put forward with recommendations from our Planning Officers, but after these consultations, it is the Councillors that will make a decision on what will go into the Publication Plan. This is the start of that process.

Q4: Will it be hard to get it through the planning process in the future?

A4: There is a lot of stabilisation of land which needs to be created there and lots of work will be required to make it possible to build housing on.

Q5: 520 is an extreme number of houses in the borough. How many do we usually build each year?

A5: It is the requirement which has been handed to us. We have never built more than 350 houses. I think it is impossible for this number of houses to be built each year. We have passed the housing delivery test for the houses for the last round but given that we haven't permitted any houses in nearly two years because of the nitrates issue, I can't see how we are ever going to meet that requirement.

Q6: What happens if you fail?

A6: A penalty of a further 20% gets added if we don't build 520 houses per year. The Government is going to have to wake up to that, if we can't build those, the Government telling us to build more won't make that happen. It should be about the quality of houses, and not the numbers. Developers will build what they can sell.

Q7: It beggars-belief that there could be 250 houses built at Rookery Farm. The new Whiteley houses will impact on our roads. You're showing they could be built on the Orchard - I went to the meeting at Brookfield School where you said that would be protected. That map shows they are planning to build on the Orchard.

A7. This is the developers map from their first proposal, which we rejected. The recommendation from officers was that the site cannot sustain 250 houses and they want the concentration to be in the central area here [illustrated on map] rather than the orchard area. The officers are recommending a maximum of 150 houses. Not all the land belongs to Raymond

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Brown, some is owned privately.

Q8: You said you have been offered land for 18k houses site in the SHELAA. Then why are you building here and not elsewhere?

A8: This is a draft local plan. They are proposals submitted by the Council's Planning Officers; if you don't think it's appropriate, you should say so in the survey.

Q9: The rivers are extracting more than they should. We haven't had many dry summers. Where is the Water Board coming on to support water for all these houses?

A9: There is a new reservoir being built at Havant Thicket. When new proposals for houses are put through, we have statutory consultees – this includes the water boards. There are also nitrate issues in the area currently. South Hampshire is currently subject to an embargo, effectively, on housing unless sites are nitrate neutral.

Q10: What is the definition of "Good Growth"? Why isn't the orchard a greenfield site?

A10: If Raymond Brown didn't get the site for housing, there is permanent planning permission for the landfill, until it is full, which may in the long run be far more disruptive for longer than housing – the whole site is a brownfield site.

Q11: It doesn't make sense to add to the frustration of having more traffic which puts further pressure on the infrastructure in this area.

A11: You need to write your own comments and report back your thoughts.

Q12: I've heard in Gosport that there are concerns about a site because it is a waste site; if that site can't be built on, how can Rookery?

A12: It cannot be built on [Cllr Woodward showed the site map again]. There are only certain parts of the site that can be built on.

Q13: The Hampshire County Council land is no longer needed for landfill, now they want to build 250 houses. I will refer to another letter this week, which says that in that area there are dormice, which is a protected species. Also, the actual bung itself against the motorway is a really high gradient, so you can't use that as parkland as it's too steep. How will that be good public space for children? They told FBC [reads from letter] "We plan to run down the site to make it ready for redevelopment in 2020".

A13: These intentions were put forward in the SHELAA document; it was assessed for 250 houses and it was rejected at the time. In terms of the stabilisation, it was made clear that if this was to come forward a lot of work needs to be done to the site to enable it to be built on. There are concerns that the land isn't flat enough, there is a concern over viability. Raymond Brown proposed several hundred houses; however, our planning officers believe the site could take 150 houses. Ideally the houses would be built so that not all the area is built on, but there would be areas of greenfield space also handed over to ensure future maintenance.

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Q14: Am I right that the plan was submitted at the meeting I was at with you this week for the Rookery Farm Liaison Group? Can you indicate where it will be?

A14: Gayle: We are only recommending 150 as the appropriate number. We will continue to discuss the exact location as their plans develop.

Q15: Is the proposal only for the central area, the north area was to be in the plan. Now you are saying, that it might only take the central area for 150 houses, and not to the north?

A15: Gayle: This (indicating the Raymond Brown masterplan on screen) is not the Council proposal. There is no assumption that it will be all built on for housing. Raymond Brown have submitted this plan to us, and this was their masterplan. I mentioned earlier how we are protecting trees in our proposed new policy. We think that's about 150 houses. We are looking to 'sure-up' that figure. We can get your views on it now, which will inform our final proposals.

Q15a: So, for the consultation, it says a red line of the map, but it's not filling inside that red line? I'm saying personally I don't want an access to Swanwick Lane.

A15a: Cllr WW: That is an area that our Officers are looking into and how they think Raymond Brown can develop it reasonably, the next iteration we will be more specific.

Gayle: We will keep working on the plans, but this is the general area.

Q16: Where are the landfill sites other than Rookery Farm?

A16: We don't have any landfill sites in the Fareham Borough. Our waste is incinerated.

Q17: Have Raymond Brown put forward a date to vacate the site?

A17: No, they haven't.

Q18: Is Park Gate oversupplied with development? What will the Council do to protect the hedges there?

A18: There is a planning application in from Foreman Homes – you can respond to the planning application and lodge any concerns.

Q19: Can we have another meeting soon just about Rookery Farm? I want to know more about Rookery Farm as the red line goes over my house.

A19: I will be happy to another meeting about Rookery Farm.

Q20: The difficulty is, you have put a plan in the supplement. Then you have provided a different map here which is completely different. Are developers able to have their say here? It's their map. I accept that not everyone has been notified through Fareham Today, so which is the real map? It isn't something we can understand. We are commenting on things that seem to be misleading.

A20: The commentary which goes with it makes it very clear on the Council's view on the site. It is 150 houses. I want to hear your views.

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Q21: When will the technical assessment be completed that we can respond to?

A21: Gayle: More information will be supplied as the process goes on. Our consultation is not restricted to this meeting.

Q22: Any consultation response is in response to the whole site. The red line around the outside is about the site proposed. Is it correct that we can now comment on the proposed site? We can look at Rookery Farm and meet with you another time – correct? But you are also saying we need to get our responses to the consultation before 1st March?

A22: Cllr WW: That is correct.

End of questions

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