

Minutes

Daws Hill Area Reference Group
Tuesday 7th August at 6PM

Chairman	Gill Gowing
WDC	Chris Steuart
	Richard White
	Ian Manktelow
	Jerry Unsworth
	Jonathan Crowhurst
	Cllr Trevor Snaith
	Cllr David Johncock
BCC	Marcus Rogers
	Chris Colbourn
CWPC	David Onslow
DHRA	Arthur Winning
DHRA	Stewart Armstrong
FFSRA	John Moore
FHRA	Carolyn Leonard
FHRA	Liz Johncock
HWS	Tony Fooks
Ryemead NAG	Robert Kin
SCRAL	Ken Tyson
Taylor Wimpey	Bill Luck
	David Peyke
	Geoff Armstrong (DPP/ARP)
	Lynsey Rigg (DPP/ARP)
Observer	Cllr Hugh McCarthy

Apologies for absence were given for Cllr Jean Teesdale and Cllr Paula Lee

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.
 - a. A response was provided from Catherine Wooley of the NHS on access to dental care and GP services. [LINK HERE](#). Cllr Snaith stated that this was an opportunity for the NHS to review GP provision across the town and that they should consider shifting the focus to east of town. The group were reminded that health planning decisions are beyond the scope of the Reference Group and the remit of either council. Individuals/organisations with views on health planning should make these known to the NHS.

- b. An executive summary was provided from BCC setting out on one page the benefits of the SQTs.
- c. No other matters raised and the minutes were agreed.

2. The July 16th Stakeholder Event

Jonathan Crowhurst and Chris Colbourn provided an overview of the June 16th stakeholder consultation event. [LINK HERE to the report online](#). Jonathan reported that in addition to transport issues, the main issues commented on were the content, form and location of the non-residential uses indicated in the brief. Chris Colbourn provided an overview of the BCC presentation on June 16th at the stakeholder event with reference to the need for a strategic overview and the importance of the NPPF tests. The key issue discussed was the need for improved, robust and commercially viable public transport and, if the SQTs proposals for public transport were considered unacceptable, how else could this objective be met?

3. Daws Hill Development Brief Consultation Update

Chris Steuart gave a report on the analysis of consultation responses to date. These number over one hundred and thank you to everyone that has taken the time to comment. This analysis is ongoing and more information will be published on line in due course culminating in the report to WDC Cabinet 10th September (the report will be public 5 days earlier). 8 key issues had been identified so far:

- a. Transport impacts and capacity, Daws Lea bus link, and parking
- b. Character and density and the desire for buffers to the existing residential areas
- c. Whether business development should be required/allowed and if so how much, in what form, and where on the site
- d. Concerns around phasing and delivery of the primary school and the availability of secondary school places
- e. Sustainability, including environmental and ecological aspects as well as building technologies
- f. The capacity of other infrastructure

g. Anticipation of adverse impacts from the local centre, but some support for a local shop

h. There should be less integration with Abbey Barn South

Stewart Armstrong questioned how the Council will weigh up people's comments and views. Chris reminded the group that what matters in planning consultations is the substance of the comments made, not the number of people making them. This prompted a discussion around the risks of subjectivity in this approach. Jerry Unsworth reflected on the need for planning authorities to balance local concerns with wider interests and the inherent and natural quasi-judicial role of planning decision makers, whether that's officers, committees or inspectors.

Stewart asked a further question on sustainability and in particular whether there was a single document which defined this. This prompted a discussion around the table about the wide scope of sustainability as a concept and the inherent difficulty in trying to comprehensively encapsulate this (see for example the NPPF). In terms of the Council's position on sustainability the group were referred to the early sections of the Core Strategy, the Living within our Limits SPD [LINK HERE](#), and the text in the draft SPD.

Arthur Winning then asked about retail viability and economic sustainability which prompted a further round table discussion about the need to ensure that the brief does not require any "white elephants". Council officers confirmed this is their view also.

Geoff Armstrong asked about the Council evidence on the viability of a neighbourhood centre.

<http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/Core/DownloadDoc.aspx?documentID=5366>

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4. Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy Consultation Update

Marcus Rogers addressed the background to the SQTS – this is the transport authority's response to growth and development pressures across the southern side of High Wycombe, and not just the Daws Hill area. The "Southern Quadrant" is a priority area to develop a strategy due to the development pressures arising from current and anticipated

development proposals. Marcus reminded the group that BCC had in fact met their promise to answer any reasonable information requests received in the first week of the consultation. It was also noted that resources had been diverted to servicing the Task and Finish Group scrutiny of the draft strategy.

Marcus then gave feedback on the analysis of consultation response to date. This included a number of comments on specific locations, such as the Sports Centre / Fair Ridge junction, and more general comments about the apparent lack of detail and the accuracy of the assessment underpinning the strategy. He explained that the purpose of a strategy document like this is to set out a high level framework, and that the negotiation of detailed junction designs and the conclusive testing of the various measures would be undertaken as part of the development management process in relation to individual development proposals and the individual developers' transport assessments. With regards to issues of accuracy, the County maintain that the SQTs is entirely accurate (aside from the previously reported comment on page 11).

The SQTs proposal that had attracted the most objection was the proposed Daws Lea Bus link but few alternatives had been proposed and none that had come forward are considered to achieve a public transport solution which will be sufficiently robust and/or commercially viable. This is an issue where the Transport and Planning Authorities will be required to balance local concerns against wider needs in reaching a conclusion.

The group then discussed the timetable for the Councils to consider adoption of the SQTs / Development Brief and the role of the Task and Finish Group. The TFG is a Councillor led WDC based scrutiny group which will report to the WDC Improvement and Review Commission in early September. In the same time frame County Council officers will report to their cabinet member, Cllr Peter Hardy, seeking his agreement to their proposed response to the consultation and to a revised version of the SQTs. At Wycombe, the IRC will consider the TFG recommendations and submit a report to the WDC Cabinet on September 10th at the same time as the WDC Cabinet Member reports on the Brief. Each report will be published five days before each meeting. Copies of both will be

passed to Cllr Peter Hardy at each stage to inform his consideration. It should be emphasised that Cllr Hardy will not be making a final decision on the adoption or amendment of the SQTS until after the 10th September WDC Cabinet. However it is equally important that the WDC Cabinet are advised on the 10th September whether Cllr Hardy is minded to approve the SQTS to inform their consideration.

5. Adequacy of SQTS to handle congestion

Ken Tyson explained that residents were on the same page as BCC that development pressures across the Southern Quadrant required a strategic response BUT that due to a perceived lack of supporting information so far they needed greater reassurance that the SQTS will be effective AND the summary plan offered as an executive summary of the benefits of the SQTS following the last reference group meeting does not do this. Marcus Rogers responded that if we do not move forwards on the SQTS we will be far worse off; that there was no silver bullet; that there is no scope for significant additional road capacity (without national investment, e.g. the junction 3A proposals). As a consequence the strategy builds on the adopted Local Transport Plan TRIM objectives. Further information on the LTP [LINK HERE](#) . Applying this to the Southern Quadrant and the range of developments proposed in this area the clear priority is securing public transport improvements with robust journey time reliability, the right destination coverage, and routes which can become commercially viable over time, in order to provide a realistic alternative to exclusive reliance on the private car.

The group then discussed the government's growth agenda and the requirement for the Council's to respond positively to this. It was noted for example that CLG had proposed an NPPF without any transport impact tests and that the final text (severe residual impact) was a compromise on the growth agenda.

Jerry Unsworth advised the group of recent progress made by the M40 Environmental Group in tackling motorway noise [LINK HERE](#)

6. DHRA Information Requests

Stewart Armstrong spoke with regards to a list of information requests submitted by various parties that had been emailed to WDC earlier in the day. The discussion also identified a concern that this was creating obstacles for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. As the list had only recently been submitted and it still required checking it was not possible to discuss these issues in detail. Chris Steuart highlighted the fact that the list summarised all of the requests that had been received since the start of the reference group not just the outstanding/unanswered issues.

7. Daws Hill Neighbourhood Forum Update

Jerry Unsworth advised the group that the present situation was that the Cabinet had supported approval of the Forum, but with the smaller Area excluding RAF Daws Hill and the Sports Centre but that the formal decision would not be ratified until receipt of legal advice on the issues raised by the emergent forum in their last letter and not until the call-in period had expired. Jerry advised that the initial verbal feedback from Counsel was that there was no legal objection to the proposed decision. Stewart Armstrong advised that the emergent forum had written to CLG seeking their advice and support. Tony Fooks stated that the HWS supported the forum's bid for a larger Plan area.

Stewart Armstrong queried the level of support available to the community for the Neighbourhood Forum and Plan, suggesting that requests for resource had been declined. Jerry Unsworth reported that to the best of his knowledge all requests for advice had been responded to but that no additional funding or resource was presently available to the District Council.

UPDATE: Post the meeting, the Cabinet decision from 31st July regarding the application for a Neighbourhood Forum / Neighbourhood Area has been "called in". This call in will be considered at a meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission on 4th September 2012.

8. The Future of the Daws Hill Area Reference Group

As we have reached a point where the SQTS and DHDB are at an advanced stage of preparation, it seemed an appropriate time to cease to have Reference Group meetings in their current form. This was therefore likely to be the last meeting of the Reference Group.

The Chairman in introducing this item said that the Reference Group had been running for nearly a year and with both the planning brief for Daws Hill and the Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy now being finalised it was now appropriate to consider both the effectiveness of the Reference Group and its future.

She reminded the Group of its Terms of Reference. The purpose of the Group as set out in the Terms of Reference was " To provide a regular information sharing forum to enable key local stakeholders and member/officer representatives to discuss the progress of major development proposals affecting the local area and the opportunities and challenges that emerge.' And that the Terms of Reference made it clear that the Reference Group did not have a decision making role nor did it have a role in responding to consultation that would be for residents/organisations/ward members to do so on their own account.

The scope of the Group as set out in the Terms of Reference was as follows:

To act as a sounding board and discuss opportunities and concerns raised by local residents/interest groups and consider ideas about how they might be dealt with. To discuss relevant topics/reports - e.g. re master planning, design, supporting infrastructure and impacts, transport, with input from relevant professionals and those closely involved in the proposals.

To consider/comment upon arrangements for wider public consultation/engagement in the development process and act as an interface with the wider community.

Other matters the group feel are relevant as the process unfolds.

She went on to say that the Reference Group was an entirely new approach There had been a very significant input of resources both by

the District Council and by the County Council in terms of both officer and financial resources; there had been an unprecedented level of information sharing with information and ideas being shared almost as soon as they were formed. At times this had caused disquiet to the local ward members since they were not receiving information in advance. The landowners/developers had also committed resources to the process. Furthermore as the process unfolded it led to a number of workshops and the preparation of a development brief neither of which had been envisaged at the start. The typical pre application consultation process for a site such as this might well have involved no more than a couple of developer led consultations by this stage.

Chris Steuart explained he would be seeking the feedback of the group on their thoughts on the Reference Group process. A report would need to be made to the Planning Committee on their views on winding up the group. It was noted that residents, the planning and highway authorities and the developer would still be likely to meet, but these meetings would take a different form. A number of questions were asked as a prompt for discussion.

- Was the Reference Group worthwhile
- Has the RG added value to the planning process
- Has the RG aided understanding of the planning process
- Has the RG aided understanding

Some initial views were shared and all agreed that further comment and reflection was required. However at the meeting on 7th August there did seem to be acknowledgement from the members of the Group that information had been widely shared and an acknowledgement that this went far beyond what usually was available at this stage of the development process.

9. Date for next meeting

In light of the above no date was set for a future meeting. The Chairman concluded by thanking all those for their participation and contribution to the Group.