

Planning the Neighbourhood: Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan
23rd September 2014
Notes from Meeting

PRESENT: Mark Airey, Tim Duncan, John Flashman, C. A Godsave, Sarah Hamilton, David Henshaw, Bill Hills, Mrs & Mrs J Large, Graham Latter, C. Latter, David Marriott, Andy Mackie, Simon Mckay, Jacquie Morris, S. Ramsden, Paul Smith, (PWBA), Paul Smith (HCRA), PCSO Sarah Stanley, Steve Terry, Elizabeth Thomas, Peter Trent, Chris Wise,

Jane Lynch Head of Planning at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Jean Marshall, Head of Planning Policy Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

1. Update from previous meeting –
 - A common email address should be set up for the group
 - Research suggested that the best document storage system would be Google dox. It was free and documents could be edited on site.
 - The town centre concept which was presented by Tim Duncan at the last meeting – TD had started speaking to the landowners regarding the suggestion.
 - Sarah Hamilton reported that she had attended a seminar on ecology and planning and the neighbourhood plan group will need to look at ecological concerns
 - Mascalls manor had sold for £500k
 - The town council was trying to find out what had happened to the old railway bridge
 - There were concerns from residents about the capacity of the health centre

2. Jane Lynch and Jean Marshall answered previously submitted questions from the group.

The current timetable for the core strategy document is as follows:

There were public consultations on the allocations document between March & May. The original document was for 6,000 houses borough wide, of which 600 were allocated to Paddock Wood. The borough's preferred sites were at Church Farm and Mascalls Court Farm (Green Lane). The third site put forward by Berkley Homes on Badsell Road was not put forward by the borough, although a number of residents preferred it. Berkley Homes have not been in contact with TWBC for some time.

It is anticipated that the submission document will be ready to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate early next year, when there will be a public enquiry.

However, there is nothing to stop developers submitting applications for the proposed sites earlier, and it is anticipated that Rydon Homes and Persimmon will submit applications this autumn.

It is also expected that the Berkley Homes site will come forward eventually.

Once the applications are received the borough has 13 weeks to determine them. That will be increased to 16 weeks if as expected they are accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.

There will be a 3 week public consultation period, notices will be sent to those properties who share a common boundary with the sites. Public notices will be posted adjacent to the site. Any resident who has registered on the website will also be notified. Although the consultation period only lasts 21 days they will take into account comments received right up until the last minute.

The case officer for the applications will be Antonia James. The plans will be complicated and the issues are expected to be complex, with them being part outline and part detailed.

There will inevitably be negotiations and amendments to be made to the applications, and all amendments will have to be sent out for consultation. Fourteen days are allowed for consultations on amendments.

The final report will be written a week before the committee meeting. They do not expect to get it all sorted in 13 weeks.

Section 106 agreements will be negotiated after the planning permission has been granted and will take 3 – 6 months to finalise. The principles will be agreed as part of the planning permission but agreeing the legalities will take longer.

Persimmons and Rydon Homes have been working together on the various strategic elements of the applications. The borough did not want to consider the sites in isolation.

Even if the planning applications are submitted before the public enquiry next year the sites will remain in the allocations document.

The placing of legally binding covenants is outside the remit of planning department and cannot be considered by them. Covenants are placed on the land and are between individuals.

The planning applications have to be determined within the set time scales irrespective of the work load of the planning department.

The sites are likely to have Environmental Impact Assessments, which will mean there are a range of studies accompanying the applications. The necessary bodies will be consulted.

Much of the work was done at the policy stage. None of the providers have suggested an infrastructure capacity issues other than the school. Flood mitigation measures will have to be submitted. Road improvement plans may need to be reviewed.

It will be up to the developers to submit expert details and the borough will refer to statutory consultees to check technical details. The borough will not employ its own independent experts. The fees generated by the planning applications would not cover the costs.

All statutory consultees have already been consulted on the principles of the development and have no objections.

With regard to Section 106 money, it cannot be used to put right existing problems. It can only be used to mitigate the impact of the developments.

There have been no significant applications put forward on either site in the past. One resident believed that approximately 25 years ago pea shingle had been discovered under the site at Church Farm. The EHO should be aware if there are any concerns of the land conditions. If however, any members of the public have information they should let TWBC know.

Planning is only part of the process – there is other legislation which will have to be complied with. Just because PP has been granted does not mean the developments will be built.

The pace of the building cannot be controlled by planning law – the market will determine how quickly the properties are built, but the expectation will be approximately 5 years. Planning can control hours of work etc.

Infrastructure improvements will depend on the final agreements but they are likely to be phased according to the number of houses built; however, some may need to be done in advance. The developers cannot pay in advance for all infrastructure, they need to sell some houses to pay for the improvements.

The legislation regarding the adoption of drainage ponds etc has been put off by central government.

Southern Water will have to determine whether there is sufficient sewerage capacity. Developers will be required to make a contribution if it is needed.

There will be talks with the Environment Agency regarding the drainage and it will be up to them to look at the overall picture. The Church Farm site should improve overall with a drainage scheme in place.

They were not aware of any plans for a relief road, and the Borough was working on transport solutions, but they will have to be paid for by someone. The developments will encourage not car use alternatives.

Improvements to the car parks cannot be pushed onto the developers.

The borough has looked at the main employment sites, and the key employment sites will be protected.

There will be a new strategy in 2016 and further houses will be required. The borough is required to have a 5 year land supply.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.