

Meeting between Radley Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Redrow Homes

12pm, 6th July 2015
The Bowyer Arms, Radley

MINUTES

Those Present:

CLlr Priscilla Dudding, Chairman of Radley Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (PD)

CLlr Jenni Standen, Chairman of Radley Parish Council (JS)

CLlr Chris Henderson, Radley Parish Council (CH)

CLlr Ian Yorston, Radley Parish Council (IY)

Jonathan Wood, Redrow Homes (JW)

Krystian Groom, Curtin&Co (KG)

1. Introductions

The meeting opened with a chat about Redrow's background, Curtin&Co's role and the recent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening application submitted by Redrow for the site. JW said that Redrow Homes is a national housebuilder that also has other sites in Oxfordshire, and KG explained that Curtin&Co has been appointed by Redrow to help undertake a thorough community consultation around the South Kennington site.

PD asked about Redrow's relationship with the Dockar-Drysdale family. JW explained that Redrow Homes has an option agreement with the Dockar-Drysdale family, meaning that if a planning consent is achieved, Redrow can buy the South Kennington site.

KG outlined the purpose of today's meeting, saying that while it is an early stage, Redrow intends to be consultative and thought it useful to outline to Radley Parish Council (RPC) what had so far been undertaken and to take on board any feedback.

JW explained the technical studies that had so far been undertaken and the upcoming site promoter meetings with Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC). He said that some Roman pottery had been found on site, but that this does not at all preclude development on the site and is fairly common. He offered to share the finalised reports with RPC when available.

CH asked if he could have the data from the traffic and speed surveys undertaken by Redrow, saying that this is more for his personal interest. JW said that the data is fairly raw at the moment, but that he would speak with Vectos and see what could be shared.

PD asked about Redrow's timescales going forward. JW said that Redrow would not progress a planning application until the Planning Inspectorate has recommended VWHDC's Local Plan Part 1 for approval. PD then asked as to the timescales from then. JW stressed that he has only a best estimate, but that it would take roughly six months from a successful consent to have things in order to begin construction, and then construction would be likely to take three to four years.

PD asked if all the houses would be built in one go and JW said it depends on the housing market at the time. PD indicated that a lot of housing may come forward on several sites at the same time.

JS agreed with this and expressed a concern that VWHDC's approach would see housing flooding the market. KG mentioned the booming Oxford housing market and the considerable amount by which housing supply needs to increase.

2. Infrastructure and Access

PD asked whether an application for South Kennington would come under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106. JW said that VWHDC's CIL has yet to be examined, but that this application would most likely come under it. PD asked if this absolves Redrow of responsibility when it comes to developer's contributions, to which JW responded that 25% of the CIL funding will go to RPC due to the Neighbourhood Plan and KG pointed out that the CIL process is very much led by VWHDC and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Nonetheless, Redrow would like to see funding directed to the most appropriate places.

JS turned to highways and asked whether JW and KG had driven up Sugworth Lane. Both confirmed that they had and JS went on to say that there is "no easy way from South Kennington to the real world". JW acknowledged that Sugworth Lane has its limits, and asked if RPC had let OCC know of their concerns. JS said that they certainly had.

As it was agreed to first finish the food that had just arrived before looking at the indicative information that JW had brought with him, JS asked about the plans for sewage on the site and Redrow's conversations with Thames Water. JW passed on the difficult nature of engaging with Thames Water, which PD said she had now heard from several other sources. CH asked whether Redrow is considering the impact of the planned Western Conveyance Channel on the site and JW thanked CH for highlighting it and said that its potential impact would be included in future plans. KG also mentioned that he had picked up on it in the local media in recent months.

JS asked about Redrow's style in terms of design and water run-off. JW said that every site is different but pointed to Redrow's reputation for high design quality. JS mentioned to PD that consideration for proper drainage systems rather than run-off should be part of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan.

PD said that the site will have the most impact on the people living in the mobile homes across the road from it, particularly in terms of their view.

JW said that Redrow is trying to enhance sustainability through pedestrian and cycle paths within the site, as well as potential improvements to bus services.

CH said that at least one controlled crossing across Kennington Road is vital, which JW confirmed is certainly on the table. CH went on to say that local people had campaigned for a crossing at Pebble Hill following a road fatality, but that OCC hadn't bitten. CH feels that a crossing would improve the quality of life of those on the mobile home park.

JW turned to the slides that he had brought with him. JW explained that these had been prepared for meetings with VWHDC's Design Review Panel, which is overseeing the proposals for draft site allocations in the District.

PD asked who sits on the Design Review Panel, to which JW answered that Urban Initiatives had been appointed as consultants by VWHDC, with their own Policy and Development Management Officers also sitting on the Panel. JW added that the Panel is attempting to ensure that developers comply with VWHDC's Design Guide.

IY asked whether the site will be impacted by First Great Western's plans to expand the railway between Didcot and Oxford into a four lane track. JW said that he is investigating this and thanked IY for flagging it up. IY said that it could take place in 2017-2033, and JS wondered if it may be a pipe dream of First Great Western. JW added that the planned electrification could potentially reduce noise on the line.

Discussion again turned to transport matters and the site's linkages, with JW talking about the site's pedestrian and cycle links into Oxford. CH asked about the range of Redrow's potential cycle improvements, as there are currently limits to cyclists who want to get through to Oxford and Abingdon. JW showed CH the indicative maps and CH said it seems that Redrow is currently only looking within the site. JW said that this is only the case at this point and that Redrow will be looking into broader linkages. JS asked that Redrow pays attention to detail if they intend to dual the pedestrian and cycle path through the development, as poor design can cause accidents.

CH said that, if the existing footpath across the site is enhanced and dualled for cyclists and pedestrians, he does not see the point of also providing for cyclists on a second pathway along the site's western edge. CH thought it better to instead look at enhancing the existing link from the south of the site to the rest of Radley. JW highlighted that the second path within the site was OCC's idea, but thanked CH for his feedback and idea.

JW went on to talk of the green buffer to the eastern edge of the site, for which there are several options. For example, it could be an area for enhanced biodiversity, or an area for water infiltration. JW highlighted that existing hedges and trees will be retained or enhanced, and that if any foliage has to be lost for the access points, then they would be at least replaced on-site.

CH said that the access points to the site are a key issue. Redrow must pay careful attention to the site lines and the way that these accesses are designed.

IY asked for clarification as to what JW means when he says "landmark building". JW explained that these are eye-catching focal points of the residential development. IY said that he had thought this to refer to community facilities and asked whether Redrow is planning anything akin to a pub or

church on the site. JW compared the scale of this site to Redrow's emerging proposals for around 1,500 homes in Bicester, and the limits to how much could be provided, although something could certainly be considered. IY understood this and said that he does not expect Redrow to provide everything. JW said that the Neighbourhood Plan could perhaps consider this. JS said the provision of a community hall would be something within the Neighbourhood Plan. IY said that a coffee shop is also worth considering.

CH thought that there is already a pub nearby and that the issue is health services, as these do not appear to be accommodated for in VWHDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

PD said that RPC must consult with residents about this, and turned the conversation back to the potential access points. She asked CH what residents along Sugworth Lane would think of an access opposite them. CH said that they won't like the idea, but JS indicated that there are always some who are disadvantaged wherever an access is put.

JW talked about ensuring that the access points are not located too close together. CH asked about how these vehicular accesses would relate to potential pedestrian crossings. JW explained that OCC wants pedestrian crossings at the accesses. CH asked whether these accesses would be light-controlled, and when JW said that he doesn't think so, CH was sceptical that these would work. JW highlighted that the detail is yet to be worked out.

JS asked that Redrow makes sure they consider where people will go to work and the connectivity to these places.

PD asked about the likely housing mix. JW explained that this would be likely to comply with the SHMA, but would be a diverse range of largely two to four bedroom houses, as well as some five bedroom houses and perhaps some flats and bungalows.

JS asked for confirmation that Redrow would provide affordable housing at a policy compliant tenure split. JW confirmed this. When CH asked as to Redrow's definition of affordable, JW said that they would get in touch with Registered Providers to enquire as to the area's need. CH said that there are better and worse RPs, and KG said that it would be useful to know RPC's preferences.

3. Radley Neighbourhood Plan

KG asked about the Neighbourhood Plan and the timescales for it. JS said it looks as if the boundary will be confirmed in the relatively near future.

PD said that RPC will be talking with Kennington Parish Council and setting up a website, on which it would be useful to incorporate information from Redrow. She went on to say that there will be a local consultation about Radley College's emerging plans.

KG asked whether RPC is appointing planning consultants, and PD said they may at some stage. KG thought this a good initiative, as Neighbourhood Plans are complex things. KG briefly explained Curtin&Co's experience with Neighbourhood Plans, including in Thame and Henley and said that he would happily provide advice if it was helpful.

JW said that it was most likely that Redrow would approach the Parish Council for another meeting after the release of the Inspector's Report on VWHDC's Local Plan. PD asked if anything will be progressed until then, and JW said that it is unlikely.

PD asked whether she could have a plan with the proposed accesses to put on the website. JW said that he will look into this and see if something can be agreed, finalised and sent through to RPC.

KG said that he is happy for RPC to include his contact details on their Neighbourhood Plan website.

After some further brief discussion about Radley College's plans, the meeting came to a close.