



RADLEY

8 February 2017

Mrs J Dymock
Radley Parish Clerk
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clerk@radleyvillage.org.uk

Dear Jane

Radley College - Consultation Response in respect of the Draft Radley Neighbourhood Plan

We are writing on behalf of Radley College to provide some additional feedback in respect of the consultation for the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Radley village.

By now, you will also have received a formal technical response from Barton Willmore acting on the college's behalf, and this letter is intended to supplement that feedback.

The college has enjoyed, over many years, working in collaboration with Radley Parish Council and other village stakeholder groups. We have found engagement to be polite and respectful, and we have many shared interests, as we all want to play a role in making Radley village a better place to live. As such, we feel it is important the college provides its input to this process.

As you know, Radley College is the largest employer in Radley village - indeed 191 of the college's employees live in Radley Parish, and so, with their families, a community of around 500 residents are associated with the college (together with our 690 boys, all of whom are boarders). As such, many of those associated with Radley College are also involved with the Parish Church, the Primary School, frequent the Bowyer Arms, hire out and enjoy the Village Hall facilities, and make use of the Village Shop. In short, collectively the college community participates in, and values, the community of Radley village.

When it comes to new development, the college is passionate about delivering high quality cohesive buildings - whether on or off our campus. We hope this is evidenced by recent developments and that residents will also see that in our consultative approach in respect of the Radley North West site. We feel engagement in this project - through the various consultations we have hosted and the recently established Developer Forum - has been positive and constructive.

Turning to the draft Neighbourhood Plan, we recognise significant work has gone into its preparation and it is a well presented and carefully considered document, and we are grateful for the hard work of all who have taken it to this draft stage. However, we do have a number of observations we would like to make which cover process, substance and deliverability and we set these out below:

Stakeholder engagement

For a Neighbourhood Plan to truly work it should include all of the main stakeholder organisations within the village. Whilst they will have differing views, this is healthy and would help to put together an achievable plan rather than one that represents a well-intentioned 'wish list'. In our view, the group, rather than being a subset of Parish Councillors and individual appointees, should have included delegated representatives from the following:

- The Church
- The Primary School
- The Bowyer Arms pub
- The Village Shop
- Radley College
- The Village Hall Committee
- Sporting and other groups

We recognise you may have had a small number of meetings with representatives of these groups individually, including with ourselves, but these have been bilateral meetings and there has never been a representative steering committee (despite our recommendation at the outset) or working party of stakeholders, nor even a workshop to surface issues together. We are each aware of others in the village (with no connection to Radley College) who feel similarly on this point.

Village Hall

As you know, we have offered an alternative solution for a new Village Hall. The majority of those who participated in an earlier college consultation supported the relocation suggestion (and we have in the past shared the evidence base for this) and this too was supported in your own consultation with 37% supporting a move and 32% objecting to a move. (Confusingly, the Plan is proposing a move of the allotment site, rather than retaining it in situ, despite a similar response mix in which a number did not state an opinion.)

While we recognise a decision has to be made, and will respect a final outcome to this process, we feel it is a great shame, and a potential opportunity missed for the village, not to support the majority view. Particularly as a college-backed project on college land had greater funding certainty, and it is not now clear how development on the existing site will be funded.

Pitches/open spaces

If the Village Hall and parking is extended at the current site, this will erode green space and playing fields. The village is getting larger and we believe this is an unhelpful reduction in open amenity space.

We also believe it is flawed to assume the new pitches planned at the Abingdon North development site can be considered as part of the solution to Radley village's need - and certainly not without consultation with the residents of Abingdon.

Deliverability

There are a number of aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan which are reliant on the support of, and agreement from, third parties. Examples include the footpath and cycleway across Peach Croft Farm, moving the allotments (both in finding a new site, and in clarifying access and delivery arrangements for a new shop) and alternative access from Thrupp Lane into Audlett Drive. On the former, as we indicated prior to publication of the draft, we believe investment in "Path 8" and the proposed Whites Lane Road improvements as part of the North West Radley development will significantly improve Radley/Abingdon pedestrian and cycle access. We are very uncomfortable with the proposal to site a cycle path across a working farm (which would also have no lighting) - and an analysis of distances to the station may show a marginal gain at best. It would seem better to reserve this aspiration for another day, and review after the existing planned developments and improvements take place with what would then be a wider population.

Again, we feel it is a shame there has not been more collaborative engagement through the process, and there is a risk that the plan, in its current form, unduly raises expectations within the community, especially as we had already raised our concerns prior to the publication of this draft.

On a related point, while we support the aspiration for improved access at Radley Railway Station, we note (from the recent Developer Forum) the possibility that this may be relocated at a future date, and so would encourage engagement with the relevant Railway authorities.

Context

While Part 1 of the Local Plan has been adopted, Part 2 is at an earlier stage. A number of the proposals in the Local Plan cut across potential future land allocations in Part 2 of the Plan, and it would seem appropriate to await publication of a draft Part 2 plan before adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, or to make reference to the fit between these separate planning processes.

Contributions

The Neighbourhood Plan makes references to contributions required from developers. As a developer, Radley College will be making contributions via CIL and S106 as appropriate, and in accordance with the Local Plan. We do not see a need for further contribution, albeit support the Parish Council in applying its greater share of CIL payment if the plan is adopted, in investing in the ways anticipated in the plan.

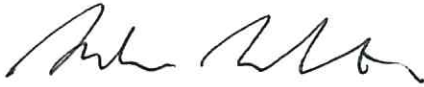
Conclusion

We appreciate it is a very difficult challenge to prepare a plan in any community with many different perspectives and interests and in the context of many moving parts (Local Plan etc.). The thing that unites all stakeholders in a village such as ours is a desire by all to contribute to a better village for all, and we congratulate those concerned with the Neighbourhood Plan for trying to reconcile different views and put forward a plan.

We would be delighted if the output of this consultation and subsequent plan iteration and review is to establish a Neighbourhood Plan the whole village can be proud of, can believe in and that can represent a clear blueprint and reference point for future change to Radley village.

We remain willing to participate in onward discussion to contribute to this process, and, once a Plan is agreed by the village, the college will look to play its part in its ultimate delivery, accepting there may be issues of detail to work through.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Ashton
Bursar



David Anderson
Estates Bursar

Cc John Moule, Warden