



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2021**

Held at 7.00 pm in the

PRESENT:

Councillors N Clarke (Chairman), S Bailey, N Begum, J Cottee, L Howitt, F Purdue-Horan, J Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood and L Way

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Kevin Hard – Stagfield
James Smith – Peveril Homes
Toby Evison – AJA Architects

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Executive Manager - Transformation
C Evans	Service Manager - Transformation
A Pegram	Service Manager - Communities
P Taylor	Strategic Sites Delivery Officer
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors D Viridi and A Phillips

28 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

29 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 were approved.

30 **Abbey Road Update**

Mr Kevin Hard – Managing Director, Stagfield thanked the Group for inviting the Team, Stagfield and Peveril Homes, to the meeting to present their design proposals. Mr Hard expressed the desire to take forward the Council's vision for the development and delivery of a landmark and exemplar scheme through sustainable design, urban design and energy technology, and to create desirable homes that are functional and sustainable.

Mr James Smith – Managing Director, Peveril Homes, provided a brief introduction to other local partners who will be involved with the delivery of the project. These include Futures Housing Group for the affordable homes and Allan Joyce Architects Ltd. In addition, Mr Smith advised that it was standard practise to use local suppliers and sub-contractors also.

Mr Toby Evison – Allan Joyce Architects, the projects lead architect advised the Group that he would be working towards the design principles as specified by the Council and aims to provide detailed drawings and plans for the reserved matters and planning application. Mr Evison, continued to explain that there would be a good mix of property sizes, a central village green, footpaths running throughout the development linking with existing roads and communities, including an integrated landscaping scheme. The dwellings will be designed to be energy efficient, with EV charging points, bike storage, enhanced security and each plot will have parking provision to prevent burden to nearby roads.

In respect of the outline planning application, members were asked to note that some tweaks to the layout had been made to provide a better solution, these include, switching the apartments to the southern end of the development and replacing the northern entrance with houses.

Mr Hard presented a visual to highlight the design principles and features, including:

- Sustainable energy – heat pump systems and technology
- Fabric and orientation of the houses – insulation glazing and solar gain
- Natural ventilation – stack ventilation
- EV Charging points – solar energy
- Smart living – Smart homes
- Permeable paving
- Rainwater harvesting – urban drainage schemes on all homes

Members asked specific questions in relation to the 30% offer for local employment to construct the houses and how this will be achieved. Mr Smith assured the group that all partners involved pride themselves on using local labour, sub-contractors and local materials, adding that this would need to be confirmed within the reserved matters for planning. The Service Manager – Transformation advised that the Economic Growth Team as part of development programme would support developers with the delivery of their employment and skills plans and connect them with local partners.

Members commented on Nottinghamshire County Council's new Highways Design Guide, and whether this is likely to affect the planning application. Mr Evison explained that he would need to look at the regulations in more depth. However, he expressed the scheme brought to the meeting this evening is a head of the planning changes and would be adequately covered with this design.

Members asked whether the lockdown restrictions in respect of Covid would have any influence on the programmes timeline and delivery. Mr Hard advised that the outline planning application is expected to be completed in the next 3 to 6 months and does not anticipate any delays, adding that working arrangements have changed considerably with the implementation of health and safety restrictions around social distancing on site. In addition, the Executive Manager – Transformation advised members that to prevent further delay the Council has overcome the decontamination issue on site, which has allowed for a better position going forward.

There was some concern around the location of the affordable housing and it being in one place and not dispersed throughout the site. The Executive Manager – Transformation advised that this solution was the preferred option of the Management Company operating the affordable housing. In addition, Mr Hard explained that all the house types would be built to the same specification, using a mixed pallet of materials across the whole site.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group welcome the update and look forward to seeing the successful completion of the development.

31 **Management of Open Spaces in New Developments**

The Strategic Sites Delivery Officer, (SSD Officer) delivered a presentation that provided the Group with the updated position and information on the future of public open space on housing developments. At its meeting in July 2020 the Group asked officers to identify and investigate what is happening on housing developments across the Borough.

The SSD Officer explained the need for open spaces and the requirement by Policy on small, medium and large scale residential developments. Under the Local Plan the Council has identified 6 strategic sites within the Core strategy and 25 additional sites under the Local Plan Part 2, these developments range from 45 to 4000 dwellings in size.

In respect of the current position within the Borough, the SSD Officer reminded the Group that pre-2000 the Council adopted and maintained the open spaces which became costly, therefore, between 2000 - 2011 the Council collected commuted sums from the developer to help towards the cost of maintaining the open spaces. These commuted sums were in themselves difficult to obtain from the developer so from 2012 open spaces were required and the responsibility to manage and maintain open spaces fell upon the developer, most of whom collect a service charge as follows:

- The housing developer(s) are responsible for payments towards the maintenance of open space on Strategic Sites, Local Plan Part 2 sites and major windfall sites
- The developer(s) pass that cost/responsibility on to residents through a management company as a monthly charge
- That service charge is then payable for the entire time that each property on the development is occupied

However, the SSD Officer explained that the current model has shown up a number of issues, which residents living on these developments have reported, these are highlighted as follows:

- On the Strategic Allocations and some Local Plan Part 2 sites large community areas/parks to mitigate harm from the development are available for use by all, but are funded by the few residents living on the new development(s)

- Residents are experiencing issues with Management Companies – requesting extra charges for services above what is already collected in the monthly fees
- Residents have questioned the parity of cost paid which can vary across the different developments

Following the Scrutiny meeting in July 2020, the SSD Officer provided a summary advising the Group that support of Members and Developers was sought, 15 sites have been identified and from these, a small sample size of 9 responses were received. The average cost per household is £201 per year with most sites paying less than average. It was noted, that many of the issues identified could not be addressed through planning, the Council is doing what the majority of other local authorities are doing and any long term implications are unknown at this time.

In concluding, the SSD Officer provided an example from Warwick District Council of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which the Council may wish to consider, to set Rushcliffe standards and provide consistency for developers.

Members asked specific questions in relation to the management fees currently being charged, were residents in affordable houses charged the same or do fees vary according to the size/type of property and what would happen if a management company ceased trading, members were also concerned that the fees being charged were not capped.

The Service Manager – Communities advised that residents in affordable housing sometimes pay a reduced fee and that should a management company ceased trading it would depend on who owned the land as to who would be liable. In respect of fee capping this would be down to market forces and management companies would need compete for the work.

The Ward Councillor for East Leake raised her concerns in respect of ownership of the open spaces once the developer has passed the management of these open spaces to the Management Company, adding that resident associations created an extra burden for residents and were often overlooked by the Management Company. The Ward Councillor provided examples of residents being charged extra costs on top of the agreed management fees, for items such as fly tipping, which was out of their control.

The Chairman agreed that the Council's planning process does need to have more input at a future stage and welcomed the officer's recommendation to develop a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SDP) that would address some of the issues raised by members.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) Cabinet be requested to support the inclusion of guidance within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide consistency to future Open Space schemes

- b) Officers investigate the legalities to influence the management agreement to apply some controls that would provide extra protection for residents
- c) The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning writes a letter to the Secretary of State highlighting the issues raised and bring forward guidance to address these issues.

32 **Work Programme**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group consider its Work Programme and the following item for scrutiny was agreed.

12 April 2021

- Cycling Networks

The Chairman suggested that no other items would be considered and requested that officers contact a number of cycling agencies and clubs, inviting them to attend the meeting on 12 April 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.54 pm.

CHAIRMAN