

## HENLEY-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 1 MAY 2015 AT 9am IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

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**Present:** Councillor D Hinke (Chair)  
Councillor M Akehurst (Mayor ex officio)  
Councillor S Gawrysiak  
Councillor W Hamilton  
Councillor D Nimmo Smith  
Councillor K George (Harpsden)  
Councillor M Plews (Harpsden)

**Officer:** Mr M Kennedy (Town Clerk)  
Ms C Adams (Committee Administrator)

**Also present:** 9 Members of the public

#### **83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs J Wood (Deputy Mayor ex officio) and an apology for lateness from Councillor S Gawrysiak.

*Councillor Gawrysiak entered the meeting at 9:02am.*

#### **84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declaration of interest was received:

*Councillor S Gawrysiak – currently employed as a teacher at Gillotts School.*

#### **85. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

*Mr N Walden, Cromwell Road*

Mr Walden stated that as a long term governor of Gillotts School and Chair of Governors from 2005-2013, he was passionate about education. He is proud of Gillotts' achievements over the years, the results and quality of education and wants Gillotts to be the best state school in the country. However, a major step change in the building provision is required to enable this.

Fundraising could not raise sufficient amounts and government grants will not be forthcoming as good schools in affluent areas are not popular to fund. He requested that the Committee supported the inclusion of Gillotts as a development area in the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Mr T Howell, Blandy Road*

Mr Howell stated that he did not support the development of greenfield sites or the disposal of school playing fields, but did accept that Gillotts School needed new buildings. He did not accept that playing fields should be sold to

fund buildings and suggested that the community needs to be creative and responsive to finding alternate funding solutions for the school.

Catharine Darnton, Headteacher, Gillotts School

Ms Darnton informed the meeting that she had spent the 8 years since joining Gillotts School looking for funding for better buildings. The site that the school occupies is larger than that which would be allocated to a new secondary school today. The site proposed for building is land that is used infrequently and is remote from the school buildings. It would be exchanged for buildings that would be used a lot.

Gillotts School's exam results last year put it in the top 3% of schools nationally. The community should be proud of this and support the school. The school receives £4,000 per pupil per year – those with knowledge of private school fees will know how low this is. If the budget is spent on buildings, this will take money away from the pupils. The school has spent many hours communicating with the community, including a flyer sent out with the Henley Standard in June 2014. This was funded by a donation. The school would be ecstatic not to sell the land if they could get the money elsewhere. If they were looking to raise £500,000, fundraising could be feasible, but the school needs £14million.

They have discussed with SODC, but they have no established strategy, other than to sell land.

Gillotts need the support of Henley Town Council and would be happy to meet with the Council to discuss the proposals.

Mr D Bond, Woolf Bond Holdings, Representing Millgate Homes about Parkside

Mr Bond stated that Parkside had not been included in the final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, despite receiving approximately 70% support. The SODC response had been twofold – either to remove from the allocation or provide evidence of the impacts. The option exists to retain the site within the plan. They have resolved the issues that the inspector identified. The significant trees are not of high quality and there is no impact on the AONB. There is no area of ecological interest. The Millgate scheme will retain all the trees on the Gravel Hill frontage. The scheme will provide high quality apartments for the retirement of local residents.

**86. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee Meeting held on 8 April 2015 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**87. PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chair presented the JHHNP Forward Timetable. He expressed concern that the Referendum was not planned until November. The Chair is to speak to SODC to see whether the dates can be brought forward. A member enquired whether representations can be made direct to the examiner. It was confirmed that they can.

**88. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was moved by the Chair and

**RESOLVED that the public and the press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

**MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 1 MAY 2015**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**89. TO CONSIDER THE HOUSING SITES AND PLANNING POLICIES WITHIN  
THE 'JOINT HENLEY AND HARPSDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN'  
PRIOR TO APPROVAL BY FULL COUNCIL FOR SUBMISSION TO  
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL HAVING REGARD TO THE  
OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION, THE ADVICE FROM  
NEXUS PLANNING AND SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Chair informed the meeting that papers for the meeting were to be tabled and collected back after the meeting for reasons of confidentiality. He also stated that results of the consultation cannot be released until after the elections because of the current pre-election purdah state.

The meeting commenced with a review of the Summary of Draft Plan 2015 Consultation Matters from Nexus Planning.

**i) Gillotts School playing field residential allocation**

The Chair drew the meeting's attention to the Core Strategy, which states that the Neighbourhood Plan must support the aspirations of Gillotts School, though this does not necessarily entail supporting the sale of land. He also referred to the consultation results and highlighted that as only people who live, work or study in the area of the Neighbourhood Plan are entitled to respond, 104 respondents were removed from the consultations received. The response figures listed exclude these 104.

Wide ranging discussion regarding the retention of the Gillotts School site took place. Observations from Lucy Murfett at SODC were noted regarding the removal of the site increasing pressure on Lucy's Farm site. In her view, the Lucy's Farm site does not have the wider community benefits that Gillotts does. Sport England have expressed concern about playing pitch provision in the town, this will need to be addressed. A consultation exercise with the town by Gillotts would be necessary. They have currently not highlighted the provision of a new all weather pitch and the fact that there will be no loss of pitch usage as a result of the development of the land.

Councillor S Gawrysiak was asked to convey the concern of the committee to the school regarding the need for further communication that will both promote and inform the community of its plans.

A member stated that as well as not supporting the Gillotts site because of the impact on views from Harpsden and the Golf Club, there was also a feeling that the public was being forced into supporting Gillotts developing its fields and that school development should be funded another way.

The Chair suggested that the wording should be altered before the referendum, in consultation with Nexus.

*Councillor S Gawrysiak left the room at 10.01am.*

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Gillotts School Playing Fields site would be retained in the JHHNP for 50 residential units with caveats to be discussed with Nexus.**

*Councillor S Gawrysiak returned to the room at 10.03am.*

## **ii) Fair Mile**

The Chair introduced this site with the information that 57% of respondents were in favour and 38.7% against. Votes from Bix residents were excluded other than those that met the criteria. Bix Parish Council was asked to comment as a separate consultee. This was a site where spreading the area for developments has made an improvement in the figures.

The advice of a QC had been sought by a consultant for the developer. This concludes that the site could be used in the JHHNP even though it is in a Conservation Area. A member stated that two previous planning applications for development on the land had been put forward.

It was agreed that access to the site would have to be sympathetic to the conservation area and felt that it would be best achieved by access via Luker Avenue or Crisp Road, rather than a new access. Submissions could be made to the County Council to approve this.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Fair Mile site should be retained in the JHHNP for up to 40 dwellings.**

### iii) Highlands Farm

76% of respondents were favourable for this site, with 17% against. Concern over transport was the issue most frequently commented on. This will be covered by the Transport Strategy report currently underway. It was felt that the current allocation of 140 houses was sufficient and preferred by the community. It was noted that archaeological investigations may slow down development. Concern was raised over the reduced CIL contributions that would result from a high percentage of older persons housing and affordable housing on the site. However, a trade off may be possible on this.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Highlands Farm site should be retained in the JHHNP for up to 140 dwellings.**

### iv) Station Site

75% of respondents supported this site allocation. However, a major issue with the site is its location in the flood plain and that the Environment Agency does not support the site's inclusion without a sequential test. The landowner (Network Rail) is not currently disposed to fund a sequential test.

Concerns were also raised about the loss of parking spaces for the station and a request was made that a caveat should be included that sufficient space for a future second line into Henley should be retained.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Station site should be retained in the JHHNP for Class B uses providing employment generating activity; Hotel development, with the caveats that the developer should undertake the sequential test, the existing number of parking spaces is maintained and sufficient space is left for a future second line to Henley Station.**

### v) 357 Reading Road

80% of respondents supported this allocation. It was noted that various parties have commented that the JHHNP does not support the SODC Core Strategy retail requirement and have argued for additional retail allocation at this site. A new retail requirement has been undertaken by SODC and will be available soon. Written confirmation from the managing director of Stuart Turner Ltd that this site will be made available has now been received. This would be a preferable retail site.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the 357 Reading Road site should be retained in the JHHNP as a housing site for up to 30 residential units.**

**vi) Further Matters**

**a) Site Densities**

SODC and others have commented on the low densities in the JHHNP. The Committee were in favour of keeping the low densities in the JHHNP – Nexus have commented that further explanatory text can be made to support the planned densities.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the existing Site Densities should be retained in the JHHNP.**

**b) Youth Club**

Discussion ranged around how best to support youth provision in the town. The Chair stated that he would check, but was sure that CIL was to be used for infrastructure rather than donations. He felt that the Town Council should provide more support for Nomad.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that alternative Youth Club provision should be detailed in the JHHNP.**

*Councillor D. Nimmo-Smith left the meeting at 10.50am.*

**c) Number of sites pressing for inclusion**

**c) i) Parkside**

SODC are against the inclusion of this site because of the loss of trees. The committee felt that it was preferable not to enter into conflict with the District Council at this time, but to keep the site under consideration in case of future allocation needs.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Parkside site should remain out of the current JHHNP.**

**c) ii) Treetops**

This site is located in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is not required to meet the JHHNP housing target.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Treetops site should remain out of the current JHHNP.**

**c) iii) Drawback Hill (Lucy's Farm)**

The site is not required to meet the JHHNP housing target. It was noted that the developer has challenged the Site Assessment process.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Drawback Hill site should remain out of the current JHHNP.**

**d) Youth Club/118 Greys Road**

The agent for this site has stated that the allocation quantum are insufficient and do not maximise the site capacity. Councillors felt that this was based on a desire for more capacity and thus profit on the developer's part and therefore members preferred to retain the existing allocation.

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Youth Club/118 Greys Road site should be retained in the JHHNP with the current allocation of 23 dwellings.**

**e) Henley in Transition (HiT)**

Very detailed comments have been provided by Henley in Transition (HiT) as part of the consultation process.

It was **RESOLVED**

**to thank Henley in Transition for preparation of an excellent report in response to the JHHNP consultation.**

**90. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Discussion regarding the next steps took place. It was agreed to issue a statement to the Henley Standard after the elections.

The meeting closed at 11.15am.

*ca*

*Chairman*