

Minutes of the meeting of Hungerford 2036 project team held on Monday 15th November 2021 at 7pm in the Library, Hungerford

Present – Chris Scorey (CS), Tony Drewer-Trump (Co-chair), Cllr John Downe (JD) (Co-chair), Town Clerk, Denise Gaines, Steve Bickell, Cllr Rupert Mills

1. **Note apologies** – Cllr Richard Hudson, Cllr Ellie Yakar-Wells, Cllr Claire Winsor, Cllr Helen Simpson (Mayor)
2. **Review actions from minutes of 21st July 2021, update on actions from last meeting, not included in the agenda** – Minutes were agreed. A ‘Draft of Proposed Changes to FAQ’s’ paper was handed out with some amendments. **ACTION:** Contact WBC and NR for the missing data on parking. It was noted that traffic is not a determining factor for suitability of any of the sites. However, traffic was a major consideration for members of public that commented during the consultation. **ACTION:** Once the paper is updated and complete upload to website. Add FAQ about the referendum. It is a simple majority etc. Add a FAQ on sewers, which is a Thames Water and developers’ concern.
3. **Additional Sites** - There have been 3 late applications. A site was put forward in Marsh Lane, which went through the HELAA process, and was concluded as ‘not developable within the next 15 years.’ The applicant has been informed.
We have been approached about another just north of Cottrell Close consisting of approx. 10 houses. Our consultant has advised that we are within our rights not to include this in our NDP as we are too advanced in the consultation process, and we don’t need the site to reach the required housing site numbers. **ACTION:** Advise applicant this and recommend they approach WBC who are still considering sites for the HELAA, due to delay in their Local Plan.
There is also a third, which is a live planning application. WBC has advised the applicant they are minded to refuse their application as it is outside the settlement boundary. HTC has declined to request that the settlement boundary be changed. WBC has included the site in their HELAA. Even if the above two sites come back as developable it is still too late to include them in our NDP. **ACTION:** Query why WBC are considering sites with only two houses in the HELAA.
4. **Project funding status** – There is £4800 in Ear Marked Reserves, £3,180 left over from this year’s budget and potentially £4,500 available from a further Locality grant (£5,500 spent so far from a previous Locality grant). There is £7,000 in the draft budget for 2022-23. This totals £19,480 which matches an approximation of forthcoming expenditure including printing of the NDP. WBC will pay for the referendum.
5. **Recent inputs from Schools** – The Mayor received a request for a meeting from the Head of the Primary School who is concerned over the projected pupil numbers for the years 2024 and 2025. Looking at capacity figures compared to projected, a low birth rate threatens the ability to fill two full classes. However, it is thought the shift in people moving from London to rural areas and ‘covid’ babies will help reverse the trend.
6. **Public Consultation on Potential Housing Sites**
 - i. **Review of responses received** – Cllr Mills presented a pictorial PowerPoint to demonstrate the different consultation responses. Cllr Downe advised he plotted the postcodes for all those that responded, and they were very evenly spaced throughout Hungerford. It was queried whether the small sample size was acceptable to use.
It was noted the responses were heavily weighted on highways and access which is not a main issue but is perceived as one. HUN15 was perceived as attractive by a number of consultation respondents - mainly it is thought due to the view that it would cause fewer High St traffic movements. The NDP needs to be comprehensive on showing data evidence. In respect of traffic movements, the requirement for consideration of a bypass is around 25000 a day. Hungerford has approx. 6000. Concern over the impact of development on the Surgery and Boots was a common theme. This has been addressed in the FAQs. There is a national shortage of GPs but there is local capacity.
Concerns raised over site HUN14, included the distance from the town and that ‘affordable housing’ is still unaffordable. More concern was expressed over impact on the AONB with

HUN14 than HUN15. Lancaster Park houses do not blend into the background. There may be a misconception that HUN15 will not affect traffic in the town. Generally, traffic and the AONB (conservation and specifically biodiversity) are the main concerns expressed. Specific types of housing requested included a combination of housing, bungalows (so less of an impact on skyline) and smaller houses, which should be of sympathetic design and environmentally friendly. The request for affordable housing included both official government 'affordable' and lower market priced property.

When feeding back to the public we can list what the public have requested, where concerns lay and present the facts alongside. Some of the AONB concerns have been acted upon and sites reduced in size.

ACTION: Cllr Mills to write a summary of the consultation for presentation to the public.

Further data / inputs needed to address any issues raised - A request for a traffic count survey has been lodged with WBC for where Church St changes to Smitham Bridge Road due to public concern of potential traffic impact of site HUN07. Current parking on the road and HGV's accessing the industrial estate is thought to be the main cause of traffic at present.

The view from planning policy was that changes to national policy will not affect the number of houses required for Hungerford, being 55. We can't excessively reduce density of housing to reduce housing numbers as sites need to demonstrate good land use and less density is likely to increase house size and price. There is a need for more affordable housing to keep prices down and sustain schools. Can we look at allocating part of the sites to give 55 houses in total. Would this satisfy our NDP and be accepted by the inspector? **ACTION:** Obtain professional advice,

7. **Completing the NDP timing and method** – Previously it was thought that it was wise to synchronize with the Local Plan Update however, now the WBC is delayed we should consider progressing the NDP ahead of the WBC Plan. How much of the NDP will be aspirational? There was support for a full detailed NDP including aspirational issues that could be paid for by CIL, prescribing site detail, suitable gardens, allotments etc.

It was agreed to write the content pages and then to outsource the writing of the plan to one professional to ensure continuity. **ACTION:** Consider style of writing required (look at other NDPs) and decide on chapters for the contents page.

The importance of public friendly text was stressed, Practical considerations such as the size of the printed document best to fit letterboxes and the maximizing of page use should not be forgotten.

8. **Next Meeting Date** – Thursday 2nd December, 7pm.

Meeting ended 9.15pm