

## **Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan (KDBH-NP)**

### **Note of meeting on “Call for Sites” and related NP matters**

held at Solihull Council Offices, Orchard House at 1.30pm on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Present:** Gary Palmer, Places Directorate, Solihull MBC (GP)

Steve Lyle, Housing Topic Group, KDBH-Neighbourhood Forum (SL)

Gill Griggs, Housing Topic Group, KDBH-Neighbourhood Forum (GG)

SL opened the meeting by giving GP a copy of the Residents Survey Questionnaire, the explanatory leaflet to be delivered to every household and one of the posters. He explained the timescales and the processes for preparing, completing and analysing the information.

The meeting then went on to discuss the Call for Sites information, followed by the questions already submitted to GP by Bryan Hunt and by GG.

#### **Call for Sites:**

GP provided a plan showing the sites around the KDBH area submitted by landowners and developers in response to the Council’s “Call for Sites”. This was on the understanding that the information would not be made public prior to the Council publishing all the material on its web site early next week. He also referred to a composite plan showing all the sites that had been submitted Borough- wide together with schedules identifying each parcel. GP explained that Peter Brett Associates (PBA) have been appointed by the Council to undertake an independent analysis of all the sites, referred to as a “Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment” (SHELAA). This will report around the end of June 2016. The assessment will focus on those sites recently submitted but will also consider the 2012 submitted sites although the extent of that analysis has yet to be determined. The assessment by PBA of the 2016 sites will follow the most up to date guidance and methodology set out in the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance.

GP stated that very differing levels of information on the sites has been submitted. GG asked if the brief to PBA is available and if the information supporting submissions around our area could be made available. She commented that the KDBH-NF had been given detailed site information by some developers and it would be preferable to have all the information on all the sites in the interests of residents having the best possible information available.

**Action: GP to check whether the brief to PBA could be made available.**

***KDBH to review sites and information to be published next week and then list sites where further information is requested from the Council.***

**Earlswood Road consultation:** A copy of the leaflet distributed to some houses in Earlswood Rd by Tyler Parkes was given to GP. He was not aware of the proposal or whether his colleagues in Development Management had had pre application meetings. He confirmed that the Council does not currently have a 5 year housing land supply but was confident that the circumstances of an application on Green Belt land on Earlswood Rd would be materially different from an appeal site at

Tidbury Green where the land in question was not Green Belt and therefore housing had been allowed. He thought the Green Belt status of land in Earlswood Rd would override the shortage of housing land. It was noted that this land would be assessed as part of the SHELAA.

**The following questions were then addressed:**

**1 What is the Council's latest thinking on the number of houses to be accommodated in the Borough in the period to 2033 / latest evidence on housing need?**

GP advised that there is no more information available than that already set out in the Council's Issues and Options Report (November 2015) ie 4000 homes are required in the Borough over and above the numbers in the existing Local Plan. This figure is a minimum and assumes the Council can argue for the same rate of windfall developments adopted in the current Local Plan and can carry forward existing site allocations. The 4000 figure is derived from a Housing Market Assessment undertaken for a much wider sub regional area and the Council is now undertaking its own Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA) taking account of local factors eg market signals, affordability, aspirations for jobs growth. This work will determine the Council's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)- an assessment that the Council must undertake as the basis for its housing targets. This study is nearing completion and the Council will share this information with interested parties before they publish the Preferred Option for its Local Plan Review later this year.

**2 Does this figure include a potential contribution to the shortfall of 37,900 homes within the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area?**

No. The shortfall of 37,500 homes in the wider area is now less as negotiations between the 14 local authorities continues. Some authorities want more population and housing ( eg Telford has a jobs led strategy and therefore wants more housing.). GP could not say when all 14 authorities will sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding relating to the distribution of additional housing numbers to address the shortfall. The distribution will be reflected in the Spatial Plan For Growth being prepared by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

**3 What sort of contribution towards housing numbers will the Council be looking for in the rural areas in general and specifically in KDBH?**

In view of the above uncertainties, GP was unable to say what housing numbers the Council will plan for either across the Borough or in sub area. The Council does not want to make assumptions about numbers in case they prove to be too high.

**4 Are Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed under the Local Plan Review? What methodology is being used?**

Yes, a Green Belt assessment is currently being undertaken. This is not a review of individual sites but an assessment based on various parcels of Green Belt land. WS Atkins is undertaking the assessment using standard methodology. They are assessing the parcels against 4 of the 5 main purposes of green belt (as set out in the NPPF) and will assess them according to the extent of contribution each parcel makes to each purpose of green belt. The assessment work is nearing completion.

There are various other pieces of work being undertaken simultaneously which will add to the evidence base and be taken into account as part of the overall assessment of sites. These include landscape and character assessment, flood plain, ecology and a sustainability appraisal.

GP was not sure if an agricultural land quality assessment was being undertaken.

**Action: GP to check if an agricultural land quality assessment is being undertaken.**

#### **5 What is the position on the review of potential housing sites in KDBH?**

See answer to Q3 above.

#### **6 Is there a fairly recent affordable housing study that indicates, for KDBH, what are the affordable housing needs of the community?**

GP explained that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is in two parts: i) assesses the OAN for the Borough and ii) assesses what level of affordable housing is needed and what sort of housing should be provided. The study looks at sub areas but does not go down to settlement level. It will review the needs of the rural area within which KDBH lies.

The study is nearing completion and will be published in the next month or two.

Government policy on affordable housing has recently been challenged but the latest position is that affordable housing is only required on developments of 10 houses or more.

#### **7 How will the Council engage with community forums on how best to spend neighbourhood funding?**

GP advised that, as the NF is not a Parish Council, the Council will be responsible for spending any CIL monies arising from development in the KDBH area. However, if the NP sets out clearly the community's priorities for infrastructure spending, the Council will take those into consideration. The Council draws up its own list of priorities so it is important that the NF gets its priorities included in this list as far as possible.

**Action: KDBH to consider its infrastructure priorities arising from development pressures and include them in the NP.**

#### **8 What is the Council's view on completing the Neighbourhood Plan in advance of the Local Plan Review - for example, by identifying allocations (Conditional Housing Allocations) that would only come into effect if the respective sites were taken out of the Green Belt in any future review of the Local Plan; also by setting out a provisional contribution towards the housing needs of the Borough, a contribution that would have to be up-dated at a later date to reflect the provisions of the Local Plan Review?**

GPs view is that an accelerated Plan, ahead of the Local Plan, would have a very short shelf life as it would become out of date when the Council's Local Plan incorporating housing numbers/allocations is adopted. His preference is for both plans to move forward together. The concern with Conditional Housing Allocations in the Green Belt is that they may not be required but once shown on a Plan they would be likely to come forward for development at some stage sooner or later.

GG asked GP what the Council would do if, in the absence of a known growth target for our area, KDBH NF assumed a housing growth figure and indicated where those houses should go, subject to the Council formally allocating those sites if they were in Green Belt. Surely if reasonable provision for growth had been made with public support and adopted at referendum, the Council could not ignore this and allocate even more housing? GP indicated the risks that the NP could be superseded by a new Local Plan or, alternatively, the NP could end up allocating more housing than it needed to.

**9 Are there any listed Assets of Community Value within KDBH?**

None as far as GP is aware.

**10 Since the council are likely to use the same examiner for Hampton-in-Arden Neighbourhood Plan as KDBH, can you advise who was involved and what was the outcome.**

The examiner has not yet been appointed and the examiner for the KDBH NP will not necessarily be the same person.

**AOB**

There was discussion about a possible “**developer day**” when all those who had proposed housing sites in or around the KDBH NP area would be invited to set up stands to show and explain their plans. GP said the Council had no objections to that but cautioned about ensuring that all sites/participants were treated equally. GG commented that some proposals were already well known whereas others were not and it was important that residents had the opportunity to understand all the possible options for development.

SL enquired how much weight the Council would give to local views in light of the Council’s own technical work – what if local opinion favoured a site or sites that the Council did not support following the technical work? GP felt it was important that residents were informed about all the sites and had the opportunity to express preferences. He suggested that KDBH could obtain views on a non-technical basis, recognising that there will be a need for the technical assessments to be taken into account later. It was suggested that some sort of ranking by categories (eg which sites are considered to cause most harm/least harm/neutral) could be considered.

**Officer support for NPs-** GP advised that the Council is appointing 1 or 2 officers who will support each NP and provide advice on subject areas.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** –this is being introduced by the Council on all new developments from July 2016. The subject of contributions from new developments will be discussed in more detail at a later meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm.