

Minutes of Meeting held at Arden Academy on 26.04.2017

1. Chair's Address

Having returned from extended holiday over winter, Jane Aykroyd (JA) has now resumed her role as Chair of the Forum. She thanked Ian Fisher, and all the team, for keeping everything running so smoothly since November, particularly given how busy this period was due to the SMBC Draft Local Plan consultation.

The break did allow time to think about how to address some of the challenges we've been wrestling with for a while, namely:

- engaging with younger people in the Area and understanding potential variances in views for different groups (eg by age, location etc)
- how to get more detailed insight at a level below the 'big picture' view provided through the residents' survey
- how we test and refine policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Tonight we will trialling some new tools aimed at starting to address these challenges.

2. Housing Needs Assessment Study

At the end of last year, we commissioned a study to look specifically at KDBH housing needs (part of grant-aided support available to Neighbourhood Planning). This study analyses housing demand in terms of both the number and type of houses required. Unfortunately, various factors have delayed finalisation of the report, so we will need to come back to this at our next meeting.

3. Update on Meeting with the Council (SMBC) on 20 April

SMBC's target date for submission of their updated Local Plan for formal consultation is slipping considerably - more likely now towards the end of this year. This, in turn, means that Local Plan adoption is looking more like later in 2018.

Upshot of which is that the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan (NP) development timescales, originally scheduled to mirror those of the Local Plan, are now ahead of SMBC. We still aim, and are on course, to submit the NP to SMBC in late 2017, with a possible referendum in Spring 2018 - perhaps to coincide with local elections in May? We are continuing to progress the NP on 'full throttle', as the closer it is to completion the more weight it carries in influencing the Local Plan and future planning applications.

We have continually stressed to SMBC our need to be involved at the earliest possible opportunity in 'Concept Master Planning' (CMP) for the two proposed allocated sites in Knowle. SMBC are requiring developers/landowners on all 20 proposed allocated sites in the Borough to liaise with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums. What did become clear in our meeting, however, is that these CMP's will only define *general* characteristics of the sites at a high level, eg. discrete parcels of development, natural features to be kept etc. They will NOT define details of housing type, design etc. SMBC will include any agreed CMP's in their Local Plan submission at the end of the year.

We agreed to meet more regularly going forward (we await dates from SMBC), providing an opportunity for early informal discussion of the emerging NP policies. Housing proposals are a first priority, so that we can start opening up discussion and debate on this aspect with Forum members.

Above all else, our main priority currently is still to get the overall housing numbers down.

4. First Draft Neighbourhood Plan

We have now produced a first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan! In creating this, we have sought, and employed, good practice from other Plans that have been successfully adopted. The draft NP has been reviewed by the wider Steering Committee and their feedback is now being incorporated into an updated document.

The main sections of the Plan are:-

- A vision for the future of KDBH
- Discussion of key findings arising from our evidence base (eg. the Residents' and Business surveys and relevant data sources such as the census), and how we have applied this to policy development
- A summary of key issues arising, both overall and within the main themes of:-
 - Village environment (eg. green belt and landscape; conservation areas, assets of community value etc)
 - Natural environment (eg. trees hedgerows and woodland)
 - Housing and Housing Design;
 - Infrastructure;
 - Traffic and Transport
 - Recreation, Leisure and Sport
 - Education and Learning
 - Healthcare
 - Employment
- The Policies
- A separate section on Community Actions. Not all of aspects of feedback can be addressed through a Neighbourhood Plan. That's because NP policies must relate to **NEW** development affecting **LAND USE**. Nonetheless, we felt it was important not to lose sight of these aspects, the aim being to follow up on these by co-ordinating actions across a range of groups in the community (for example the Knowle Society / DDRA etc).

We also need to make sure that housing policies accurately reflect community feedback on housing issues. For example, 50% affordable housing is SMBC's general 'aspirational target', but is not necessarily deliverable in KDBH. Concerns were also expressed about the amount of social housing being proposed and the degree to which this can be influenced, if at all. These are just two examples of areas we are identifying for discussion and clarification with SMBC.

5. Communications

We've been investigating various tools that will enable us to be more flexible in how we communicate with members and residents, eg. to gain more specific feedback on proposed policies; and to engage more people, whether in meetings or remotely by electronic means. Tonight we are demonstrating one of these tools that will support 'voting'.

In Neighbourhood Planning, only Forum Members are allowed to vote on the policies that actually *go into* the NP. (The only reason for this stipulation is that all Members have confirmed that they live, work or run a business in KDBH, ie. so people with no interest in the Area don't end up influencing the outcome.) Future meetings involving policy discussions / debate / voting will therefore be for Members only. Of course, at the very end of the process everyone in KDBH can take part in the Referendum to vote on whether to accept the NP.

6. New Website

Also to introduce new ways of doing things (via apps), we have decided to move to a new website. This will enable us, for example, to create a secure area where members can vote electronically on issues or feedback their views. This website has a beefed up 'Community' area, including a new **Calendar of Events for KDBH. Any KDBH community group or organisation can publicise their event on this calendar for free** – so please spread the word and contact us for more details, either in person at a meeting, or via the website.

Jane Aykroyd gave a presentation of the new interactive voting tools and new website.

7. Solihull MIND site

The MIND site located on Arden Triangle is owned by Solihull Council and is used by the charity for those with learning difficulties. There is concern that this site will be lost to the proposed new development. Martin Murphy confirmed, however, that there is absolutely no intention of developing this part of the site.

8. AOB

A concern was raised about the needs of those who do not have electronic forms of communication. The Forum will look at getting paper copies of key documentation put in Knowle library for those without internet access.

All those present were urged to vote in the upcoming mayoral elections. Regional developments - for example Green Belt considerations - could have an impact on our Area.