

**Minutes of Meeting held at Arden Academy on 13.02.2017**

**Agenda item 1 Vice Chair's update - Ian Fisher**

A brief update on the progress that has been made on a variety of Activities over the past month.

**Firstly the Business Survey.**

As you will recall, Steve Lyle provided an overview of the main findings of that survey at our last meeting. These are being taken into account and form part of our evidence base for the policies which we are drafting. I think it is fair to say that the business survey did not highlight anything dramatic that we were not already aware of from the resident's survey, except perhaps for the number of comments regarding the poor quality of mobile phone coverage and the reliability of the power supply both of which are surprising.

The final report is now on the website and we have e-mailed participants to ensure they have a copy.

**The Forum's response to Solihull's Draft Local Plan**

At the last Forum meeting, Gill Griggs outlined the general thrust of our response and we gathered more feedback and views from the attendees. We have also received a steady stream of feedback by e-mail.

At the meeting if you recall:-

There was strong opinion that our response should primarily focus on challenging the total numbers being allocated to KDBH because:-

- There is no Evidence to support the demand in KDBH
- The proposals are at odds with the spatial strategy in the councils own plan
- The numbers are disproportionate – especially when windfall and existing recent or in progress developments are added to the total numbers

The suitability of the specific locations for the proposed sites was challenged, with many attendees commenting that road infrastructure and parking capacity within Knowle was already at breaking point.

The future of the Solihull Mind site was also highlighted as a serious consideration that needs to be taken into account.

The proposed response to the draft plan has now been completed. It's on the website and it has been distributed.

One of our first items on the agenda this evening is to walk you through the key points.



## KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Limited

### Neighbourhood Forum Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017

7-9 pm, Arden Academy

#### **Inviting Councillors for their views**

At our last meeting, many expressed a desire to hear the views of our councillors as they relate to the draft local plan and its impact on KDBH. In the past month, we have written to councillors on that subject and I sent an early draft of the Forum's response. I have also re-iterated that our councillors are always welcome at the Forum meetings and if they wish to speak on any subject that relates to the Forum activities we will make time.

I have had replies back. Most would like to assess the full feedback to the draft plan before expressing their views.

#### **Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

This meeting is a bit of a transition point. We should be able to put to bed our response to the draft Local Plan. It has been the main topic for the past two meetings but this evening it has only shared billing.

We need now to move our focus onto the policies that we should include in the Neighbourhood Plan. The major purpose of the Forum is to create a Neighbourhood Plan and the major deliverables in the plan are the policies.

If you read examples of neighbourhood plan documents you will see a lot of fluff included but the real meat is in the policies.

So Bryan Hunt is going to present our current thinking with regard to the range of policies and give some examples. Over the course of the next couple of meetings we may well devote time for some debate among the membership on specific topic areas. I am conscious that these meetings can be soporific if they entail us standing up front with presentations and we would like to get your grey cells exercised.

#### **Grant application and consultancy work**

A quick update on the thinking around grant applications. Our current grant funding has to be spent by March 31st. The business survey was one such item covered in that last round. If we need grant funds to cover external consultants or publicity for events, and we anticipate that need in April, for example, then we need to prepare quotes and get our application in for the end of March to hit the ground running.

One such parcel of work may be a Traffic and Parking infrastructure impact assessment from the proposed new housing numbers. We would like to get such work underway, in parallel with the council's deliberations on the plan feedback and before the next version is submitted for formal consultation.

Another piece of work is a more localised housing needs assessment. We can get free technical assistance in the form of independent consultancy under the grant process and we are in conversation to agree the brief for this.

**Agenda item 2 – Membership update**

We have a steady flow of new members, which is excellent news and gives us confidence that we are reaching a good representation of residents. The current breakdown is:-

Knowle	374
Dorridge	232
Bentley Heath	52
Total	658
Subscribers	27
	685

**Agenda item 3 – Forum’s response to the Local Plan consultation**

Ian Fisher explained that we have tried to be Objective in the document and we have tried to strike a balance that reflects the feedback received.

The feedback is often emotive – and we have no problem with that – it does show that residents really care about the villages.

In our response, we have tried to be objective and turn that raw emotion into our evidence base.

It is fair to say that opinion is split on the merits of the two major sites and whether the additional housing is a price worth paying for the community benefits that could materialise.

Opinion is not split, however, on the scale of housing numbers proposed and the impact that those would have on the infrastructure.

There was strong opinion in previous meetings that our response should primarily focus on challenging the total numbers so that is what we have done.

Gill Griggs has unpicked the Solihull plan and found many inconsistencies between the visions and policies that are set out and the reality when it comes to the housing allocations proposed.

The main points of the response were re-iterated (see presentation material) and there was also a slide to show how the neighbourhood plan and local plan development can run side by side with the intent of the forum influencing the latter concurrently.

The response was at this time strictly speaking still a draft, reflecting views and input to date. The deadline for submission being the 17<sup>th</sup> February only minor amendments from meeting feedback could be considered at this time.

A discussion followed with a number of points being raised by attendees.

1 - There was some opinion expressed that the tone of some aspect of the response were still somewhat subjective as opposed to objective. (Subsequent to the meeting, these were examined with a critical eye and some adjustments were made)

7-9 pm, Arden Academy

2 – Questions were raised as to whether the Forum membership, feedback received and the survey data is truly representative and whether there is a bias toward certain age groups. The reality is that we do not know the age profile of members but we have been advised that the survey results (where age bands were captured) has sufficient data from all age groups to be representative.

3 – There were views expressed that the consultation response to the Draft Local plan was rather ‘negative’ and some members did not feel that this reflected the conversation they had with residents.

The chair pointed out that the forum is obliged to reflect the views of members and residents based on the evidence received; Feedback at meetings or via e-mail, together with the earlier evidence from the survey. It may be the case that those motivated to give feedback fall more in the camp who object to aspects of the local plan as opposed to those who support it.

It is unfortunate that the consultation responses detract from the more ‘positive’ work that we are trying to progress with the draft policies and the neighbourhood plan itself.

#### **Agenda item 4 Progress update on our draft plan preparation - Bryan Hunt**

Bryan Hunt gave an update on the progress of the Policy Planning Group (PPG) whose focus is to write the Neighbourhood plan. The presentation material is available on the website.

Housing has expanded rapidly over a relatively short time period but facilities and amenities have not increased accordingly leaving a significant gap.

Concerns that additional housing development will put pressure on already stretched amenities such as the local Doctors’ surgery and the Primary Schools.

There is a need to provide a wider range of housing types, particularly family homes, starter homes, and homes designed for older people (including bungalows).

The village shopping centre does not provide a large supermarket or wide variety of shops and services; resulting in the need to travel elsewhere to access facilities.

The village centre car park is badly designed and lacks sufficient space to meet demand

There is a lack of facilities and opportunities for young people within the village, resulting in the need to travel elsewhere to access facilities

There is a strong desire to preserve existing publicly accessible open spaces and green spaces surrounding the village, to ensure that any new developments maintain public rights of way and also to improve footpath networks to provide access to the surrounding countryside

#### **Future meeting dates**

See website [www.kdbh-nf.org](http://www.kdbh-nf.org) for details