

**Minutes of Meeting held at Arden Academy on 21.06.2017**

**1. Chair's Address**

Jane Aykroyd explained that central grant funding had enabled the KDBH team to commission an independent housing needs assessment for KDBH. An independent consultant is assigned - in this case AECOM - to undertake the work according to a pre-prescribed standard methodology agreed with DCLG (central government). The consultants are required to take an "unconstrained" view of total demand, ie. ignoring any constraints such as Green Belt, infrastructure impacts etc. These constraints could reduce the number - particularly in our case given that our Area is tightly bounded by Green Belt. (A separate analysis assessing 'supply side' constraints can be undertaken subsequently to arrive at a final number. )

AECOM's research analysed government and local authority housing data. It also includes input from local estate agents. The basis for calculating a total number of houses to be built in KDBH is taking a 'fair' share of the Borough's requirements - with KDBH representing 9% of Solihull's population.

The report concludes with a total **975** new homes in KDBH between now and 2033, within an overall range of 990 – 1090 houses. This figure represents *all completions, including windfalls*. Deducting windfalls at a modest 30 per year (based on recent history) gives a figure of **450 – 550** for *allocated* new homes - so SMBC's proposals to allocate 1100 houses represents a significant over allocation.

The AECOM report will now form part of the KDBH 'evidence base' and is being discussed with SMBC.

Jane presented a short video created to explain the position re. SMBC's proposals. This was well received by attendees. It needs a bit more work to finalise, after which it will be put on the Forum's website and social media, with a link sent to members.

Jane also presented the results of a poll issued to members prior to the meeting with the aim of better understanding the level of support for, and views on, the two proposed allocated sites. Over 150 responses had been received. Both the findings and the questions raised were invaluable in helping the KDBH leadership team to get a broader / more representative spread of member views (ie. beyond just those able to attend Forum meetings). We will continue to make more of these tools going forward. The results will be put on the website.

**2. Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policies Presentation**

Gill Griggs set the scene by explaining what a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) can and cannot cover – reminding Forum members that a NP polices must relate to **land use** and **new development**. Residents have raised a wide range of important issues that do not fall within this remit. Although these matters cannot be addressed within the NP, they will not simply be forgotten. Instead, the KDBH team has recorded them as 'Community Actions', to be managed separately in collaboration with other local organisations, such as the Knowle Society and DDRA.

## KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Ltd

### Neighbourhood Forum

Gill Griggs gave a presentation outlining the issues that the draft housing policies seek to address (eg. from feedback in our residents and business surveys). In particular:-

- The design and layout of any new housing
- Ensuring new property is of high standards and in keeping with the environment
- Keeping new development in line with current housing design and streetscape
- Reflecting the current lower than average housing density
- Making provision for starter homes, retirement homes, sheltered housing and family housing
- Determining a mix of house sizes that meets the needs of the population
- Safeguarding the quality of existing property.

Gill outlined the four main housing policies in the draft NP that focus on:-

- **Policy 1 - Housing Allocations:-** including setting and design, density, transport and infrastructure impacts, local services etc. It includes a figure of not more than 500 allocated new houses in the period to 2033 (based on the AECOM report discussed earlier);
- **Policy 2 – Affordable Housing:-** this policy requires that 25% of all new affordable housing should be occupied by households with a strong local connection, i.e. those who have lived in KDBH for 5 out of the last 8 years or those who have lived in KDBH for at least 5 years and whose parents or children are currently living in KDBH and have at least 10 years continuous residency there. 60% of affordable housing should be provided by shared ownership schemes, with the remainder being in the form of rented occupation.
- **Policy 3 – House Types:-** allocated sites should make proportionate contribution to the need for housing for older people, namely 60 sheltered housing units and 2 dementia homes. Other housing should be provided in the following proportions, 50% detached houses, 20% semi-detached, 6% terraced, 17% flats and apartments and 7% bungalows.
- **Policy 4 – House Sizes:-** 45% 3 bedrooms, 35% 4 bedrooms, 10% 2 bedrooms and 10% 5 or more bedrooms, with no specific requirements for bungalows or flats. Where the character of an area would not be compromised, there may be scope to include a higher proportion of smaller dwellings.

In discussions with SMBC, it has become clear that they will not be undertaking any analysis of the impact of their proposals to build 1100 new homes in Knowle prior to submission of the Local Plan. To fill this gap, the Forum needs to urgently undertake two further pieces of consultancy work, covering landscape and transport impacts. The KDBH Forum team has created consultancy briefs with a scope covering the impact on KDBH *as a whole* (ie. not just specific to the two proposed allocated sites in Knowle), and put these out for quotations. We need to undertake the work as quickly as possible so as to provide further hard 'evidence base' to challenge SMBC's proposed housing numbers. The two reports could cost in total around £10,000 - £12,000 (with the option to reduce scope if we cannot raise the full amount).

## **KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Ltd**

### **Neighbourhood Forum**

These very specific areas of consultancy are not available through grant funding, so funds would need to be raised through local donations and Forum Members. When asked if it would be appropriate to ask for contributions in this way, those Members present felt that local people would indeed be prepared to help with the costs. The KDBH team will now therefore look at ways to enable donations to be made as a top priority.

#### **3. Further discussion**

A general discussion ensued with various issues being raised:-

- Any shared ownership schemes should be structured to prevent subsequent sales of the property so as to prevent such houses being bought as investment opportunities
- How do we ensure any new school is built to proper building standards
- How do we ensure any community facilities associated with the new school remain open to the residents in perpetuity.

Jane Aykroyd confirmed that the executive summary of the AECOM report, and all the draft housing policies discussed, will be put on the website, and encouraged members to feedback their comments. The team will be producing further short videos in due course to help explain the policies.

#### **4. AOB**

Members inquired as to why Local Councillors were not more visible / active regarding the SMBC plans. Two of the three Knowle Ward Councillors sit on the SMBC Planning Committee, and therefore have a conflict of interest, and cannot participate in the NP process. That's not to say that residents cannot contact them to make their views known.

July's Forum meeting will be dedicated to explanation and discussion of the draft transport policies.