

# NPF Coordination Group

---

## Minutes of 6th meeting: 11/01/2016 – West Room 7.30pm

Present :-

Gill Bindoff, Norman Perry, Debbie Davies, Rob Smith, Keith Jackson, Peter Richardson

Members of the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan:-

Edward Baker (Pyrton PC), Henry Finlater (Pyrton PC), John Curtis (chair Pyrton PC), Jeff Lowe, Genevieve Young (Clerk)

From SODC :- Peter Canavan Senior Planning Policy Officer

In attendance :- Terry Jackson

This meeting was primarily arranged as a first step to liaising with Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP); particularly on the areas adjacent to the plan boundaries of both the WNP and the PNP.

Apologies – Pepita Bianchi, David Cotterell

Introduction

GB welcomed the members of the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan and Peter Canavan from SODC to the meeting.

GB described the progress made since the relaunch of the Watlington NP and outlined the aim of producing an initial draft of the WNP by the end of April 2016.

It was hoped that the next major public consultation would be a Housing Needs survey.

JC outlined the progress of the PNP. The results are in from a questionnaire delivered to all households within Pyrton parish which seeks to gather opinions on the future development of the parish. A report on these results will be available soon on pyrton.org. A draft plan has already been written and will be available to be seen by WNP when the legalities of the policies have been verified and any amendments arising from the questionnaire report have been made. PNP will also undertake a Housing Needs survey but are not anticipating that the results will merit a change to the draft NP. The target for completion is Autumn 2016.

JC mentioned that there were two 'brownfield' sites within the PNP boundary: the ex-MOD site at the junction of Shirburn Road and Pyrton Lane (WAT 7 in the SODC designation) and the ex-USAF communications tower site near Christmas Common.

It is not believed that the latter site would be attractive to a developer.

The remainder of the PNP area is substantially agricultural/rural with some potential infill sites in Pyrton village itself.

## 1. Boundary Sites

The two sites with substantial capacity for housing development which are within the PNP area but adjacent to the WNP boundary are designated by SODC as WAT7 and WAT8.

Both sites have some developer interest.

The PNP has yet to arrive at a policy towards development on these sites however a general view is that any development must not threaten the rural/agricultural character of Pyrton parish.

This view is unlikely to change if the development of WAT7, in particular, were to be considered as a site for alternative employment or infrastructure use, rather than housing .

It was noted that the recent SODC Landscape assessment did not recommend proceeding with WAT8 and recommended only partial development of WAT7.

PC suggested that this did not mean that development could not take place - it forms part of the evidence for overall site assessment and all the evidence has to be balanced and a judgement made- but any development plan is likely to require a substantial Landscape buffer to reduce the impact on the AONB, Shirburn Park and Pyrton itself. PC also suggested that any policies written in a NP which deal with development on these sites ought to include requirement for Landscape buffering.

Pyrton members pointed out that WAT7 does not have particularly good connections with either Pyrton village itself or Watlington.

PC echoed this view and suggested that development of WAT7 in isolation would not be regarded as sustainable by SODC and that some form of development in WAT8 which provided linkage to Watlington for both sites would be necessary to change this view. However an isolated development could not be completely ruled out.

GB asked if the WNP should include these sites and how they should be dealt with.

PC recommended a joint assessment with PNP of both sites.

Each plan could contain policies towards these sites that refer to *the impact of any development* on the sites. However the WNP cannot allocate the sites for development. Only the PNP can allocate the sites for development and contain 'requirement' policies towards them. SODC would seek consistency between the plans regarding the expected impacts.

PC advised that any references in the WNP to policies in the PNP should be by name.

PC confirmed that any houses built on either site would be considered as part of the 'settlement' of Watlington and would count towards satisfying the housing numbers allocated to Watlington in the SODC local plan and any amendment thereof.

CIL funds however would be allocated to Pyrton Parish.

## 2. Traffic/Roads

GB outlined the work within the WNPF traffic group with the various traffic management options and the various forms that an alternative route, relief/road by-

pass might take. Some options for the latter could involve a new road traversing the Parish of Pyrton and /or passing very close to it.

RS asked if Pyrton had considered the impact of a by-pass route located close to Pyrton. The general Pyrton view was that such a route would not benefit Pyrton Parish and might have an adverse impact on the rural nature of the Parish with the possibility of additional houses , but no detailed impact study had been undertaken.

Pyrton NP are in favour of improving 'green' links to Watlington and have looked at the possibility of an improved footpath from Pyrton to the area at the rear of the Watlington allotments.

GB invited Pyrton to attend the Traffic workshop that is planned for January 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Pyrton team then left the meeting with an agreement for further contact.

#### 5. Questions for Peter Canavan

(1) Is the housing allocation by SODC to the settlement of Watlington and not just to the Parish

PC confirmed this to be the case.

(2) Can exception sites be included in the WNP? These sites are usually small rural sites where standard planning policy would not normally support development, but where an exception can be made to satisfy a particular local requirement such as a need for affordable housing.

PC said that it is possible to include these sites but within the Watlington Parish it will be difficult to identify such sites because those close to Watlington are already under consideration and the more outlying sites would not be sustainable as affordable housing. PC suggested we look at the SODC settlement hierarchy.

(3) Is there provision for additional funding for NPs by SODC ?

PC confirmed this matter is under discussion and any agreed funding would be in the SODC 2016/17 budget.

(4) Please confirm that any dwellings built on WAT 7 or WAT8 would count to Watlington's allocation.

PC confirmed it would because in the case of housing allocation the Parish boundary is not significant and the dwellings would be regarded as part of the settlement of Watlington.

The CIL would at present go to Pyrton parish although it needs to be confirmed that some of the cost of infrastructure that would be required within Watlington Parish to support development on these sites could not be met from CIL funds.

(5) Should we consider sites for development in neighbouring parishes (other than Pyrton)

Answer No

(6) Should we consider every possible site including those with capacity of 5 or fewer

dwelling?

PC noted SODC regard 10 dwelling capacity or less as a small site. Do not consume time looking for small sites unless really obvious development opportunity is known.

Concentrate on evaluating the sites we already have first and then if time look for smaller ones.

(7) Do we need to consider sites used as amenities especially for purpose of protection, eg allotments.

PC suggested not but suggested we could include policies to protect amenity sites provided this was backed up by good current evidence of continued use.

Look at Natural England information on statutory protection of open and recreational spaces.

Also important to assess what we might need in the future regarding recreational facilities.

(8) What would be your advice on updating information from Landowners/Developers/Agents.

PC stressed the importance of having current information therefore it would be good to contact all the bodies that are known by WNP to be associated with the sites under consideration. Use the SODC questionnaire. Have a cover letter that mentions the date by which the NP will be confirming the availability of all sites under consideration.

Also consider publicity in the press and on the NP website which asks for interested parties to come forward with any intentions for development.

PC was thanked for generously giving his time to the meeting and left.

## 6. Consultancy Services

There was a brief discussion about the services in addition to the Housing Needs survey that the NPF CG might consider obtaining from Community First, Oxfordshire. These could include assistance with the sustainability scoping report, setting criteria etc.

We should also find out from OCC a contact who might be able to indicate a cost for providing consultancy on traffic related matters.

TJ has a contact who has provided some useful information about sources of consultancy on policy writing.

We should firm up on this at the next NPF CG meeting (18th January).