

## **Development Sites Group (DSG) Meeting Minutes, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015, Parish Office**

Members of the DSG present: Debbie Davies (Facilitator), Gill Bindoff (Scribe), Rob Field, Nick Greaves, Keith Jackson, Terry Jackson (Cllr), Luke Johnson (also present Rob Smith)

DSG members' apologies: Pepita Bianchi, David Parker

1. The structure of the Forum and the relationship between the Forum and the Parish Council was explained.
2. Rachel Gill had notified all those who signed up for the DSG. DD noted the group should represent across Watlington, as per approach used by Sonning Common NP. RG to notify widely again of the next meeting.
3. Documents relating to the sites for development were tabled, including the folder of letters from developers and agents; indicative plans etc; SODC site assessments and landscape assessments; maps; NP Consultation documents. Members of the group have started to familiarise themselves with what is a large amount of documentation.
4. A tour of the sites will be arranged , possibly over the Christmas holiday period. NG to provide schedule of sites, ideally this will be information sheets following those for the South Oxfordshire Strategic Land Availability Assessment ( July 2013) for all sites. GB/TJ to to bring together all the information about each site into a separate folder so it is all in one place per site.
5. TJ said SODC has made clear (at an NP seminar for parish councillors) that NP groups need to consider all possible sites for development. Peter Canavan, SODC planning officer, advised (DD) the housing allocation in the Core Strategy is to the settlement of Watlington. DD/GB to check with PC relevance of 'all possible sites'. Rural Exception Sites for affordable homes will be considered, although they would not be part of the NP.
6. Site assessment criteria were included in NP Consultation 2. DD provided assessment criteria used by SODC for larger villages Benson, Chinnor, Crowmarsh, Goring and Nettlebed . DD noted infrastructure providers are yet to be consulted. LJ said that asking whether sites could directly support the development of an alternative route was a 'loaded' question and that a more neutral question on the impact of the development sites on existing roads, as well as access to sites, as appears on other site evaluations, was fairer and more informative. There was discussion of an alternative route for HGVs. The group thought this would be a different type of road to service type roads for new housing. NG said service roads could skirt new housing development. RF and NG raised costings. GB said criteria from the various Advisory Groups and Sustainability Appraisal relating to environmental, social and economic sustainability will need to be considered. The third consultation will consider additional information about the sites as well as possible additional sites.

7. The site selection process developed by the Malmesbury NP team had been discussed at the previous DS meeting and at the NPFCG, 1<sup>st</sup> December. KJ presented a trial of the system for sites Wat 1 – 4 as an exemplar only (the group was asked to mark their copies as such). DD presented alternative traffic light evaluations from Sonning Common and Henley and Harpsden NPs, which are plans more progressed than Watlington. The Malmesbury approach of point scoring was favoured by LJ, KJ, TJ and GB because it offers a nuanced assessment rather than the simple binary system using 'Yes' or 'No'. DD said PC cautioned against empirical systems unless the group has substantial resources and time for resolving how criteria are weighted. NG supported PC's advice. It was agreed that the group will retain both systems as options in the short term. RF will contact the NP teams in Henley and Sonning Common to find out why they used the traffic light system, how well did it work, what advice can they pass on. The issue will be discussed again at the next meeting.

8. PC has advised (DD) that it would be helpful if we could assess sites Wat 7 and Wat 8 in conjunction with Pyrton to reflect that the housing allocation is to the settlement of Watlington, not the parish of Watlington.

9. Date of next meeting: it was agreed that the next meeting will be on Thursday 7th January 2016.