

Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan

Arrangements and Matters for debate at oral hearing

Monday 5 March 2018

10.30am

Town Hall, Market Place, High Street, Watlington OX49 5PY

Context

I have now visited the Plan area, read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. In accordance with paragraph 9 (3) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 I have concluded that it is in order to ensure adequate examination of the Plan it is necessary to hold a hearing. That hearing will allow oral representations to be made on the following matters:

The Proposed bypass of Watlington

- What evidence underpins the proposal in the Plan for a Watlington bypass?
- Would the combination of the three proposed housing allocations and the bypass represent sustainable development?
- There are various references in the Plan (para 2.6/WNDP10) to earlier proposals to use Willow Close and the access road to the Watlington Industrial Estate as the western part of a bypass for the town. Does this route have any status and/or is it safeguarded?
- How will the proposed route be delivered in general terms? Is its delivery dependent on financial contributions from the emerging residential development at Chalgrove (as set out in the submitted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033) and/or from other sources of funding? In broad terms is the development of a bypass commercially viable?
- What discussions have taken place between public bodies and potential site developers of the sites proposed in the submitted Plan to ensure a co-ordinated approach towards its design and delivery? Has an appropriate technical standard been determined?
- When is it anticipated that the bypass (within the NP area) will be delivered?
- Are any measures being pursued by public bodies to secure the connection of the proposed Watlington bypass to the B4009 to the east of the neighbourhood area (in Pyrton parish)?
- What would be the likely impact of the proposed new developments (Sites A/B/C) on the free and safe flow of traffic in the town before an effective bypass of Watlington is developed?
- What would be the likely impacts of the proposed scale of development on traffic levels along Pyrton Lane (with or without a bypass)? What impact will any changes in traffic levels have on the character of Pyrton Lane?

The proposed housing allocations

- Can the proposed housing allocations be sensitively incorporated within the neighbourhood area in general, and its surrounding agricultural landscape in particular? Do they take account of the Chiltern Hills AONB to the south and east of the town?
- Can the three sites be satisfactorily incorporated into the design, layout and townscape of Watlington? Do they take account of heritage assets?
- Would the development of Site A be compatible with the ongoing operation of existing businesses on the Watlington Industrial Estate?
- What is the current progress of planning application P17/S3231/0 on Site A?
- What is the anticipated timetable for the submission of planning applications on sites B and C?

Timing and Location

The hearing will be held on Monday 5 March 2018 between 10.30 and 16.00. The session on the proposed bypass will take place between 10.30 and 13.00. The session on the proposed housing allocations will take place between 14.00 and 16.00. The venue is the Town Hall, Watlington. The general public are invited to attend the hearing.

I would like to meet the various participants for each session at 10.15 and 13.45 respectively on that day in the venue to discuss procedural matters and to assist in the smooth running of the hearing. These pre-meetings will not debate any of the substantive issues.

The participants

In accordance with paragraph 9 (3) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Watlington Parish Council (the qualifying body) and South Oxfordshire District Council (the local planning authority) will be entitled to make oral representations at both of the sessions at the hearing.

In addition, the following persons are invited to participate at the specific sessions to address the matters set out earlier in this Note. The reference numbers are those set out in the SODC schedule of representations.

The Proposed bypass of Watlington

- Oxfordshire County Council (63)
- Homes England (64)
- Providence Land (36)
- Pyrton Manor/Beechwood Estates Company Limited (59)
- Pyrton Parish Council (61)
- Archstone Projects and Bloor Homes (67)
- Historic England (70)
- Ms Nicola Schafer (4) *
- Mrs Elizabeth Harris (6) *

- Mr Michael Holden (14) *
- Professor James Simmie (16) *
- Mrs Penny Cole (17) *
- Mr Richard Harris (19) *
- Mr Alan Whitfield (22) *
- Mr and Mrs Taylor (23) *
- Mr Jonathan Moses (26) *
- Mrs Gillian Morris (27) *
- Ms Maria Mademyr (39) *
- Mr Graham Miller (41) *
- Ms Davies (42) *

The proposed housing allocations

- Chiltern Society (32)
- Chilterns Conservation Board (33)
- Providence Land (36)
- Pyrton Manor/Beechwood Estates Company Limited (59)
- Pyrton Parish Council (61)
- Oxfordshire County Council (63)
- Homes England (64)
- LCP Investments Limited (65)
- Archstone Projects and Bloor Homes (67)
- Natural England (69)
- Historic England (70)

It will be helpful if both the qualifying body and the local planning authority are represented by no more than two persons at each of the sessions. The other bodies and organisations should be represented by one person. If any party considers that this approach may be impractical to their circumstances, please contact Ricardo Rios at the District Council as soon as possible.

Several local residents have been invited to participate in the first session. I request that they appoint up to two spokespersons to present a common case to the hearing. The residents concerned are marked with an asterisk in the above lists. Plainly there will not be the time for largely identical cases to be made several times. In any event this would not make best use of the time allocated for the hearing. I would be grateful if the District Council facilitates a meeting with the local residents concerned to assist the process.

There will be no opportunity for other bodies or the public to participate directly at the hearing.

The format of the hearing and associated documents

The hearing will address the two matters listed above in turn and in the times set out in the Note. The format will follow that set out in the bullet points under each heading. There will be no opportunity for any party to question the other parties.

The hearing will proceed on the basis that all the submitted statements should be taken as read. Participants will be expected to present a summary of their case to the questions raised. In general terms answers to individual questions should not exceed two minutes in duration. I may ask follow up questions as the need arise.

I recognise that the matters that I have identified do not necessarily overlap with the information that has been included in the submitted Plan (by the Parish Council). In addition, I recognise that the Parish Council has not otherwise had the opportunity to respond to the various representations made to the Plan. On this basis, I invite the Parish Council to prepare a single document that addresses the two matters that will be explored at the hearing. This document should not exceed 2000 words (1000 words for each of the two sessions) and should be submitted by 5.00pm Monday 26 February 2018. Thereafter it will be circulated to all other participants invited to attend the hearing.

In my view the representations made by the District Council and other parties invited to the hearing are clear and comprehensive. On this basis, I am satisfied that the preparation of separate statements for the hearing is not required. Nevertheless, I do not want any party to feel potentially disadvantaged. If this is the case any other party invited to participate at the hearing is free to submit its own statement by the same date as that specified for the Parish Council. Any statement should not exceed 1000 words. In the event that an organisation has been invited to attend both sessions it is permitted to submit two such statements. Any documents submitted will be circulated to all other hearing participants.

The examiner's report

I am satisfied that the remainder of the Plan can be examined by written representations. I have sent a separate Clarification Note to the District Council and the Parish Council on a series of more technical matters that will not be discussed at the hearing. The Clarification Note and the responses to the Note will be published on the SODC website.

Following the hearing I will be working to produce my report on the submitted Plan by Friday 16 March 2018. There will be no separate report arising from the hearing. My findings and conclusions from the hearing will form part of the overall report.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner – Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan
13 February 2018