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**Notes of the meeting with Victoria Land and Hunter Page Planning on Thursday 17th August 2017 at the Town Hall at 10.00a.m.**

**Present:**

Jenny Hutchins, Duncan Morris (Victoria Land)

Giles Brockbank (Hunter Page Planning)

Tom Bindoff, Terry Jackson, Tony Williamson (Watlington Parish Council)

Tony Powell, Peter Richardson, Gill Bindoff (Watlington NDP Forum)

1. **Context for the meeting:**
2. The meeting was held to give an update on the progress of the Watlington NDP and on proposals for development at the site known as PYR 1 (formerly WAT 7). The site is in Pyrton parish and is included for development in the draft Pyrton NDP. For clarification, it was noted that the meeting was held without prejudice to any planning application.
3. It was noted that the previous meeting had been held on 16th March 2017.
4. In the intervening period, representatives of Victoria Land and Hunter Page had held two meetings with Pyrton Parish Council, of which one was with the Clerk and one with other members of the Neighbourhood Planning team. A further meeting was being discussed.
5. It was emphasised that the Watlington NDP only references the site in the context of the possible re-alignment of the B4009. It was understood, however, that any development of the site is likely to relate more closely to Watlington than to Pyrton village because of its location.
6. **Update on the Watlington NDP:**
7. The regulation 14 pre-submission consultation had taken place between 18th April and 2nd June 2017. Hunter Page had made a response.
8. The outcomes of the consultation were very positive. Over 80% of respondents supported the Plan. Minor changes had been made to the Plan, mainly as a result of comments from the statutory consultees.
9. The Parish Council had decided to obtain an independent ‘health check’ of the draft Plan before submission to SODC. This had been completed and suggestions for improvement were being followed up.
10. The aim is to present drafts of the documents for submission to SODC to the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee on 4th September for approval by the Full Council on 12th September.
11. Two matters are outstanding which may delay the proposed timetable:
12. The Environment Agency has specified the need for a sequential test on the sites considered for development together with a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Arrangements for this to be undertaken are ongoing.
13. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is also required in view of the proximity of Watlington to EU designated sites – the nearest being the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, designated as a Special Area for Conservation. SODC is making arrangements for this to be done.
14. The outcomes of a Watlington Traffic Management Study commissioned by the Parish Council are expected in September. When these are available a meeting will be sought with Oxfordshire County Council to discuss the outcomes and the detail of proposals for a re-aligned B4009.
15. Meetings have been held with the Homes and Communities Agency in relation to the highways infrastructure needed to enable development at Chalgrove Airfield to proceed. There is a new HCA team in place to take this development forward.
16. **Update on proposals for development at PYR 1 (WAT 7)**
17. Beechcroft Developments Ltd has reached a formal arrangement with the landowner for an option to develop the site. The agreement has a time limit and the company is expecting to progress an outline planning application in the next few months. If planning permission is granted, the expected build out would be about 24 months.
18. The proposal will comprise a 60 bed Care Home and 44 housing units. It is unlikely that single storey homes will be provided. Beechcroft specialises in upper market homes for the over 55s: proposals on the site will be for 2 storey homes and flats. A brochure illustrating a characteristic Beechcroft development was tabled. The homes would be sold on a long lease (probably 999 years) and would include contributions to site maintenance fees plus a commitment to use services provided by the Care Home. The development is intended to provide nursing and other services to residents which can increase as residents’ needs for care change.
19. The Care Home would be developed by Sanctuary Care. The company wants to extend its existing provision in Watlington. The Care Home and housing would be developed at the same time.
20. Parking provision would meet Oxfordshire County Council agreed standards. These are for 1.5 spaces per dwelling.
21. A pre-application meeting with SODC has been arranged. It will be with Emma Bowerman who is also the planning officer for the proposed development at a site allocated in the Watlington NDP and identified as Site A between Britwell Road and Cuxham Road.
22. Proposals include provision of land for a safeguarded route for a re-aligned B4009. Various options for location within the site have been considered and the most likely land lies along the route of the existing lane which leads to the Pyrton crossroads. This land is adjacent to the listed Shirburn Park and Garden and would require careful landscaping to avoid an adverse impact on the historic site.
23. **Further heads of discussion:**
24. It was noted that the Pyrton NDP allocates the site for 18 dwellings on the footprint of the existing buildings. In the view of Victoria Land and Hunter Page this low level of development is not commercially viable.
25. A major consideration regarding development on the site is the impact it would have on the landscape. The site is prominent in views from the Chilterns AONB, especially from view points on Watlington Hill which is a very popular visitor destination.
26. S106 payments will be agreed with SODC but care homes and retirement home developments may not attract a Community Infrastructure Levy.
27. Routes for construction vehicles will need to be agreed. These should not include Pyrton Lane or the town centre. The likely route is from the M40 along the B4009.
28. The draft WNDP has a policy to increase opportunities for local employment which are in keeping with the scale and character of the town. The retention of the site as an employment site would be welcomed.
29. It was noted that Sanctuary Care employs care and nursing staff from overseas as well as providing local jobs. The WNDP supports the provision of staff accommodation at the Care Home in Hill Road. If provision is made for a second Care Home to serve the town the issue of staff accommodation will be expected to be addressed in any proposals.
30. Opportunities for off-road pedestrian and cycle routes from the proposed development into the town were discussed. The WNDP includes a proposal for an off road route along the boundary of the site with the existing B4009 to link with the Oxfordshire Way at the Pyrton crossroads. Other opportunities to link with existing footpaths would need to be explored.
31. The aim to protect the dark skies around Watlington was noted. Proposals for lighting schemes on the site which have a minimum impact will be expected. It was recognised that, if planning permission is granted, lighting will be dealt with as a reserved matter.
32. Opportunities to develop some shared community and Care Home use of transport were discussed. The existing minibus may be provided by the Trustees of Watlington Hospital and this would need to be confirmed. This aspect could be discussed further with the trustees and/or Sanctuary Care in order to explore the possibility of using transport linked to the Care Home for a wider community purpose.

Notes taken by T. Bindoff

19.07.17