**WATLINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FORUM:**

**Meeting with Archstone/Bloor on 23rd May 2018.**

The meeting was held at the request of Archstone in order to make an informal presentation to members of Watlington Parish Council and the WNDP Coordination Group of revised proposals for development at Site A in the WNDP. The meeting was held without prejudice to any decision which Watlington PC may make when the amended plans are considered formally by the Planning Committee.

**Present:**

Matthew Gough Archstone

Jonathan Porter Archstone

David Joseph Bloor Homes

Jacques Toerien Barton Willmore

James Bonner Barton Willmore

David Knight Clarke Bond

Mike Joffe EDP (Landscape)

WNDP Coordination Group

Gill Bindoff

Keith Jackson

Tony Powell

Peter Richardson

Watlington Parish Council

Jeremy Bell

Tom Bindoff

Ian Hill

Fergus Lepage

Terry Jackson

Andrew McAuley

Matt Reid

1. Update on the WNDP:

The Plan has gone through the examination process. Changes to the Plan proposed by the examiner have been agreed with the parish council and SODC. Main changes were to wording of the policies in order to make clarifications and ensure compliance with the NPPF. The referendum on the Plan will be held on 28th June 2018. If there is a majority ‘Yes’ vote the Plan will be ‘made’ and will carry full weight.

1. Update on the proposed amendments to the planning application on Site A:
* Archstone expect to be able to submit the amended plans in about 8 weeks.
* Meetings have been held with SODC and OCC on details of the plans. A further meeting with OCC regarding traffic and transport issues has been arranged for 25.05.18.
* Highways proposals have been changed to remove vehicular access onto Cuxham Road.
* This change has led to re-worked proposals for access from Britwell Road and for the transport assessment.
* The longer term design for access from Britwell Road when the Edge Road is constructed is still in place and will be delivered when needed.
* Mitigation measures are proposed to offset the impact of additional traffic through the town centre. They include a proposal to re-locate the existing on-street parking spaces in Couching Street near the junction with Brook Street to the north side of Brook Street before the junction. This is intended to improve traffic flow through the junction. There was a negative response to this proposal from the Watlington representatives. It was noted that the Watlington Traffic Management Plan includes an alternative proposal to re-locate the parking spaces to the opposite side of Couching Street.
* The short term impact of the development on Britwell Road was discussed. Archstone has been asked by OCC to put forward proposals for mitigation.
* The design of the edge road through the development has been changed to give a minimum distance from the carriageway to new homes of 10m. The majority of new homes will be 17m from the carriageway.
* The representatives of Watlington stressed that the local objective is to ensure that the full edge road is constructed before the housing in order to minimise the impact of construction on the town centre.
* Streets within the development will be ‘shared use’ with cycle and pedestrian routes connecting all areas of the development.
1. Design Issues:
* References were made to guidance in the SODC Design Guide.
* SODC has consulted an independent urban designer regarding the design of the proposed development. The focus has been on the nature of the development as an urban setting within a rural area - some minor changes have been made as a result. One recommendation is to introduce a wider range of materials to reduce the dominance of brick. The Watlington representatives strongly rejected the proposal to introduce stone as it is not at all characteristic of buildings in Watlington. The option of using more ‘rough’ render as a finish was discussed and will be considered further.
* JB stressed the importance of a consistent approach to design treatments including window design and verges, eaves and barge boards. Some proposed design features are not typical of Watlington buildings. Design features which reflect the existing character more closely would be likely to integrate the new development more successfully into the town. The Watlington Design Guide includes characteristic features and designs which should provide good guidance on local style.
* The majority of new homes are now 2 storey with a smaller number of 2.5 storey buildings in two areas within the site.
* Advice has been available from SODC Environmental Health officers regarding the building adjacent to the Watlington Industrial Estate. Rooms at the rear of the building now have more natural light.
* A lighting scheme will be provided as reserved matters once planning permission has been granted.
1. Landscaping:
* The western boundary retains a 5m ‘green’ area but will include more tree cover.
* The development includes 2 equipped play areas for young children and one equipped area for older children’s play.
* Proposals for the flood zone area remain the same with areas for informal play, sustainable drainage settlement ponds, wild areas, mown paths etc.
* Access to the site from Windmill Piece is proposed. This will be discussed with South Oxfordshire Housing Association at a later stage.
1. Development timetable:
* Work on the site could begin 6 months following the granting of planning permission.
* Houses are likely to be developed at the rate of 50/60 per year.
* Construction of the first homes could be 6 months after work on the site begins.
* The developer contribution to transport is now set by OCC at £1200 per new home. It is paid in a lump sum.