

Notes of Meetings with Developers

NP Panel:- Ian Hill (SC), Gill Bindoff (NPCoG), Jeremy Bell (SC), Norman Perry (NPCoG), Tony Powell (NPCoG); Rachel Gill (NP Admin)

Note taking: Tom Bindoff & Terry Jackson

Sound recording: Peter Richardson

26th May 2016 - Jonathan Porter, Jason Hill, Matthew Gough, James de Havilland Archstone – Wat 2, 11 & 12

Introductions:

Jonathan Porter said his background was as a town planner and he is the planning director with Archstone

Jason Hill is a director of Savills and representative of RM Harris, the Trustees of the Estate.

Matthew Gough, a director of -promote sites for new homes and community facilities in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. -Their company places an emphasis on engaging with Parish Council's and communities and had had no appeals yet. They take through planning and would select a housebuilder partner to build the development-

James de Havilland, a design partner at Barton Wilmore, a design and planning consultancy.

It was clarified that the focus of the meeting would be on Wat 11 and Wat 12 which form effectively one site. When asked if Wat 2 would be likely to come up during the plan period it was established that it would be likely but that the focus for now was on Wat 11 and Wat 12 because Wat 2 being adjacent to AONB and not a brown field site left it with less advantages than 11 & 12. Wat 2 will come later and is not off the table.

Following an introduction where it was explained the objective of the meeting was to update developers/agents on the progress of the NP and to give them an opportunity to demonstrate how 'their' site/sites can meet the aims and objectives of the NP and it was made clear that the meetings are not part of the NP Site Selection Process'. What Watlington Wants and What Watlington doesn't Want were listed, explaining that we are attempting to discover the 'tipping point' of what level of development would be acceptable and what would not be acceptable to local residents there was some discussion about the 'wants' and 'don't wants' of Watlington.

Tony Powel went through the 3 stages involved in listing site preferences:

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1. Listing all possible sites starting with those suggested by SODC Listing
2. Arriving at Potential Criteria, against which to objectively evaluate sites.
3. Arriving at which sites are available, which are not available and which are unknown or not currently available but could be in future.

This was all done in communication with SODC and the list of criteria have also been justified deriving mainly from Consultation 2

Jason Hill wondered how did we identify 200 units, in the absence of SODC core strategy to which Ian Hill responded that this was not an official figure and that we would have to monitor numbers but it is the figure we are working on. Jason asked if we had heard that Chalgrove Airfield had been selected for SODC's share of Oxford City's housing numbers meaning 3500 houses were scheduled to be built on the airfield possibly starting next year. We had not heard this news. Gill B explained that we are not naive but are doing all we can to provide a sound evidence base. SODC planning department seem recently to have had difficulty defending planning appeals and we need to get the greatest benefit we can from our NP. Our position won't be solid if the SODC core strategy is not in place but we are aiming to be in as strong a position as possible. This was a technical point about the legal status of the NP – The NP has to comply with the SODC Core Strategy – if this should fail what status then would the NP have?

Presenting their plans Jonathan Porter expressed that they would work well with the community to understand and incorporate in their proposals. This is an illustration of their approach. There is plenty of space for facilities and landscaping schemes. In Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds they have worked alongside NP Chipping Norton which included a link road and was edged by an AONB so somewhat similar to Watlington. The road was, as this road would be 6.5 m wide with pavement on both sides. Their applications were all supported by the town or parish councils and are now being built James de Havilland presented their site plan explaining that the flood plain would be respected. We are looking at a staggered development. Jason mentioned that there is a rolling 6 month tenancy of the Pig Unit and a good rapport with John Mearns, the tenant. They have agreed a hedge-line and land management with permission to relocate the pigs so they will be set well back moving off site further west.

James de H continued saying how historically important Watlington is and how although the site doesn't interrelate with the conservation area, any development must respect styles and building materials and deliver something sympathetic.

Ian Hill enquired about footpaths and integration of the site with the town. James's response was that although the site sits outside they will be able to look at facilities within the site. He went on to talk about how Watlington has developed with 4 main arterial routes and linking roads. He explained that this is a standard format and this can be achieved again. The

structure will have the same strategic character. Linking in to public rights of way and pedestrian issues with Britwell Road will need to be addressed.

At this point Jason mentioned that he was prepared to discuss with the Trustees opening up the blocked path at Watcombe Manor Yard, an informal path, they would be prepared to work on that as part of Wat 2.

Ian Hill mentioned improvements to the pedestrian access to the Town that were not realised with the development of Windmill Piece and expressed concerns that this shouldn't happen again and whether the situation could be remedied as part of these plans. Jason promised he would look into this. When Ian said it's a detail, James de H said it was an important detail and that sometimes we need to be inventive.

Rachel Gill asked how many units were planned for these sites. Jonathan Porter said they were indicating this would be up to 140 units, but it is flexible. James de H further explained that the site allows generosity and a good mix. The Southern edge away from the ridge and feathered would create a new green space. There are stunning views from the ridge. The density with 140 units would be low.

Gill B pointed out the SODC Landscape Assessment had lower figures. James de H pointed out that it was strange but they had missed the pig area in the lowest point. Gill wondered if the site could offer a wider range of provision than a smaller site perhaps providing for older people by supplying bungalows. Matthew explained that they'd presented a large number of family units. The site is 10 hectares in total but need to exclude the flood plain and green provision so that would leave about 7 hectares. If smaller units were preferred about 200 could probably fit within the net development area.

Jason mentioned that the flood plain doesn't flood regularly so he wondered how we'd manage that. They could probably bequeath that area for town use for anything from a football pitch to village green, park, allotments, or community orchard.

Gill B asked if the site could help with workshops or start-ups to help with providing employment to local residents because although part is in the flood plain, workshops etc may be acceptable. James de H said they could bring proposals for ground floor living and offices and the like and Matthew mentioned that as it is adjoining the industrial estate further industrial units could be considered. James de H confirmed they could bring forward more mixed use proposals.

Jeremy B wondered if there was scope for looking at design in a more creative way with a mix of styles to match the mix of styles in Watlington. James de H responded very positively emphasising that this is only a first draft contextual appraisal for design cues, repeating "an emphatic yes".

Gill B asked about timescales and any plans for planning applications. Matthew responded that there was no immediate plan to apply for planning. Their planning would be detailed and fully worked out with materials and styles. Jason said this was a million \$ question. They are ready but holding back but if someone else comes in they will too, at the drop of a hat but want to work with the town. They mentioned that they have been courted to work with other schemes but this is independent. They are conscious and sensitive to where we are at. Matthew asked about details of the road shows and Jason enquired about Tony's role and the sites group, reminding us that the larger the offer more opportunities for required infrastructure investment in the Town.

