
BROMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP** HELD ON TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2023 AT BROMHAM VILLAGE HALL

Attendees: Gianluca Guerriero (Chair)
Keith Smith
Kate Martinow
John Bennett
Sian Woodfine
Trevor Roff

Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer: Julie Betts

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

		Action
45/23	Apologies for Absence	
	There were no apologies for absence.	Note
46/23	Declarations of Interest	
	Declarations were as previously recorded in the minutes and Trevor Roff declared his employment with Bedford Borough Council (BBC).	Note
47/23	Notes of Meeting Held on 13 July 2023	
	The meeting considered the draft notes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023. <u>RESOLVED:</u> That the notes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be approved. <i>(Proposed by: Gianluca Guerriero, Seconded by: Kate Martinow, All in favour)</i>	Note PC
48/23	Locality Funding 2023/2024	
	The Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme, run by Locality on behalf of The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), had commenced in April 2018. The DLUHC had advised that Locality funding was now available for the current year. The amount available was £10,000 plus Technical Reports. The group supported the preparation and submission of an application to Locality for the following support: Grant Funding: • Neighbourhood Questionnaire (development, printing and analysis) • Green Infrastructure Plan – Beds Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)	Note

	Technical Support Packages: • Housing Needs Assessment • Site Assessments • Design Code There was a potential future need for future technical packages for the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Highway Assessments. <u>RESOLVED:</u> That quotations be obtained from BRCC for the development, distribution and analysis of a Neighbourhood Questionnaire, and an updated quotation for a Green Infrastructure Plan, and that an application be submitted to Locality for grant funding and technical packages identified above. <i>(Proposed by: Gianluca Guerriero, Seconded by: Keith Smith, All in favour)</i>	Note PC
49/23	Neighbourhood Questionnaire	
	The meeting considered the methods to consult with residents in line with the Community Engagement Strategy. The response from the Broadsheet article, summarised at <u>Appendix A</u>, had been limited in terms of the number of responses, but it did identify a number of key issues and concerns that could help form the basis of the neighbourhood questionnaire. The meeting considered that a drop-in session could also be organised to coincide with the issue of the neighbourhood questionnaire. It was considered that the questionnaire should have an introduction with an update on the current plan, and explain the purpose of the review. Photographic illustrations could be used – it could, for example, help to explain to residents the benefits of a design code. The questionnaire should cover (1) Housing (Allocations and Design), (2) Village facilities, (3) Getting about and (4) Green Space. The Parish Clerk would contact BRCC about the development of the questionnaire and, to inform the process, forward details of the responses that had been received from the Broadsheet article and the issues and concerns that had been identified by the Steering Group at its meeting on 16 February 2023.	Note Note PC
50/23	Housing Growth: Site Allocations	
	Although there is no requirement in the Borough Local Plan 2040 for Bromham to accommodate any housing additional to the 500 houses allocated under the BNP 2030, the meeting discussed the need to have preferred options for further housing, as contingency, in the event of the Borough Local Plan 2040 not being approved or the Borough failing to deliver it quickly enough. Such circumstances would increase the risk of speculative planning applications for sites in Bromham.	Note

	By way of background, when preparing the current Bromham Neighbourhood Plan (BNP), the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group seriously considered identifying a reserve site, referenced as “Site 43” off Northampton Road, Bromham, but BBC advised against this approach at the time and it was not included.	Note
	Rainier Developments and Marrons Planning, who represent the landowner of Site 43, attended the Steering Group meeting on 16 February 2023 to outline proposals for the land at Northampton Road, Bromham. They were now actively promoting the site with a view to its inclusion in Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040, that was currently subject to examination, and technical studies they had undertaken had confirmed that a scheme in this location was deliverable.	Note
	Rainier Developments had indicated to the Steering Group in February 2023 that they might make a speculative application as there was a serious risk that the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 would fail. Rainier Developments had expressed a keenness to maintain an open dialogue with the Parish Council in relation to the development potential of the site and a preparedness to reconsider the scheme to accord with the needs and aspirations of the local community.	Note
	The meeting acknowledged that, if new housing were unavoidable, Site 43 would be the least-worst option, and could be developed in the future and, although there is no immediate pressure to allocate more housing, the allocation could enable much needed facilities. There could also be speculative applications for Bromham sites by other developers and so it was important to be clear about respective priorities in the event that Bromham was required to accommodate more housing than the 500 houses currently planned.	Note
	The meeting was of the view that the allocation of land for new housing should be very carefully considered as part of the Steering Group’s risk management in relation to speculative applications. Key factors to consider are as follows: 1. Borough Wide Land Supply Position: The level of risk that the 5-year land supply position at Borough level would be compromised in the future. The slow-down in house building, as a consequence of the economic situation, is impacting on delivery targets in the adopted Local Plan 2030. Bedford Borough Council is progressing the Local Plan 2040, which is currently undergoing examination. There is a good chance that this will be adopted in early 2024 and this should strengthen the housing delivery position with a number of new sites allocated. Some of these are being worked on and this should improve provision, with improvements to the land supply position. The position could, however, change. This is because Local Plan 2040 is predicated on 2 large new settlements of about 4,000 homes each (that are inherently show to deliver given infrastructure costs and viability). It also relies on some difficult-to-deliver town centre sites, many involving numerous landowners. It will be some time before the next Local Plan refresh, probably beyond 2030, with the consequent risk of speculative applications trying to take advantage of any failure to meet housing delivery targets. These targets are unlikely to be relaxed by a change of Government if that occurs in late 2024 or early 2025.	Note
		Note

	2. Infrastructure Needs: There is a definite need for infrastructure improvements in the Parish of Bromham, that could be delivered through site allocations, funded by new development in the village. The need for GP provision is probably the most important issue, although there are a number of other highway junction improvements that are required, and aspirations for a dedicated pedestrian/cycle bridge adjacent to Bromham Bridge. The relocation and reprovision of education in the village has also been referred to but would be cost prohibitive. The meeting expressed the importance of being prepared and members were adamant that any new development found to be necessary should be accompanied by acceptable gains for the village that are needs-based and not determined by a speculative developer. The re-fresh of the BNP provides an opportunity as any new development could, by effective negotiation, deliver housing to meet local housing needs (as determined by an updated housing needs survey) and essential infrastructure. Without negotiation, speculative development could deliver growth without real benefits that accord with need. It was suggested that, if an additional site was added, development could be phased. Martin Grant Homes (MGH) had attended the Steering Group meeting on 28 March 2023 and outlined that they were currently in the process of focusing future interests on strategic land promotion rather than housebuilding. MGH would continue its involvement, on some sites, act as master developer and to partner with local house builders. This could include the BNP allocated site at Northampton Road in Bromham, but this could not be guaranteed. No further update had been received from MGH. In relation to new development, the meeting highlighted the problem that existed with service management charges, in addition to Council Tax liability, that other villages were experiencing in new developments. It was considered this should be noted for negotiations moving forward so that a similar situation did not arise with new developments in Bromham. <u>RESOLVED:</u> (1) That Rainier Developments be updated on the progress made to date with determining village needs. (2) That Martin Grant Homes be requested to provide an update on the status of the site at Northampton Road development site in Bromham.	Note Note Note Note PC PC
51/23	Non-Designated Heritage Sites	
	John Bennett had spoken with Bedford Borough Council about the Non-Designated Heritage Sites. This section had not been included in the Borough Local Plan before, but it transpired that Bedford Borough Council had lost appeals because of this. There are in excess of 10,000 on the register and each application site would be checked against the register to see if there would be any harm to a heritage asset. There was no further action at this stage.	Note

52/23	Date of Next Meeting	
	Thursday 16 October 2023, commencing at 6.30pm Meeting closed 7.35pm	Note

SUMMARY OF CURRENT VILLAGE ISSUES FROM BROADSHEET ARTICLE**Housing**

Design of new development	1	Consider neighbouring properties, leave trees & hedgerows
Development should be appropriate	4	Build suitable houses for local people, including bungalows for downsizers
	1	Smaller development areas
CIL Funding use	1	Do we all agree how money is spent?

Getting About

Improve infrastructure	4	A428 dangerous junctions, concerns over Stagsden Road/A428 junction problem parking around Steven Eagell Garage
Improved bus service	2	Bus service non-existent, need connection to Milton Keynes

Green Spaces & Environment

1	Pigeons and other vermin, should have policy and cull
3	Improvement of Woodland areas
1	Hold on to Bromham Park
1	Protect Wildlife/Safe & Healthy areas

Village Facilities

Location of school	3	Position of school, parking problems
Provision of Bromham based GPs	5	Need to secure GP provision in the village and to allocate land for this purpose
Increased amenities required	8	Bins/dog bins, Recreation facilities, Recycling

Heritage

Bromham Mill development	5	Support for development, opportunity to learn dying crafts, Café should stay in mill building
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