

MAJOR HOUSING CONSULTATIVE GROUP

**Minutes of the 1st meeting held on
Tuesday 24th March 2015, 2pm - 4pm**

**in the committee suite, BCKLWN Council Offices
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

Present: Cllr Nick Daubney, Leader of the Council - Chairman
Cllr Alistair Beales, Regeneration Portfolio Holder
Cllr David Collis, Norfolk County Council
Cllr Andy Tyler, North Lynn Ward, BCKLWN
Cllr Laurence Scott, Gaywood North Bank Ward, BCKLWN
Ray Harding (RH) – Chief Executive, BCKLWN
Dale Gagen (DG) – Corporate Projects Officer, BCKLWN
Justin Coote (JC) – Lovell Partnerships Ltd
Nicole La Ronde (NLR) – LaRonde Wright, Planning Consultants
Fergus Bootman (FB) – LanRonde Wright, Planning Consultants
John Hiskett (JH) – Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Quentin Brogdale (QB) – Resident Engineer, Norfolk County Council
Roger Partridge (RP) – Sports Development Manager, Alive Leisure
Michael Coote (MC) – Marsh Lane Residents' Association
Stuart Hall (SH) – Lynnsport Area Residents' Association
Joy Franklin (JF) – Sedges Residents' representative
Les Thurlow (LT) – North End/North Lynn Neighbourhood Partnership
MJ Ray (MJR) – Bicycle Users Group (BUG)/Sustrans Rep
Charles Lankfer (CL) – Pelicans Hockey Club

Sue Dickinson – minute taker, BCKLWN

1. Welcome and Purpose of the Group

Cllr Daubney welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He explained that the Council had taken the decision to provide housing in the area of Lynnsport, and would be proceeding with those plans. However, they wanted to take on board the views of local people to make those plans as sensible as possible. This would be an important group for bringing those views forward.

He asked everyone to recognise that many different opinions would be represented and it would not be possible to satisfy everyone, but he hoped it would be possible to respect each other's opinions.

Everyone then introduced themselves and the organisation they represented.

2. Terms of Reference

DG explained that the proposed terms of reference, which had been circulated with the agenda, were based on those used for the consultation groups formed for the NORA and waterfront developments. It was proposed that the group should meet prior to each planning application being made, so that views could be expressed and incorporated. This would follow pre-application discussions with statutory consultees, who had agreed to consider the proposals prior to the submission of planning applications in this case.

The membership of the group aimed to include all those with an interest in the area, including residents, sporting groups, wildlife interests etc, but was not fixed. Other members could be asked to join either for the duration of the consultations, or for particular meetings or issues, as considered appropriate.

Cllr Beales referred to the proposal to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the area. He explained that the Borough Council has a duty to assist with the preparation of these plans and is happy to do so, but the process could take at least 12-18 months, so it could not be the means by which local people were consulted on the current and imminent proposals. This consultation group was therefore the best means of engaging with the major housing proposals, as they came forward.

MJ Ray wished it to be noted that he represented the Bicycle Users Group (BUG) and other cycling interests, but could not represent the wider sporting community.

He also asked that when any confidential information is shared with the group, that it is clearly marked as such. This was agreed.

Cllr Tyler welcomed the flexibility in the terms of reference and the ability to bring in additional expert advice when required.

The Terms of Reference were agreed without amendment.

3. Proposed new road from Edward Benefer Way to Lynnsport

Design

With the aid of the plans, DG explained the proposals for the new road, which would run from a new traffic light junction at the corner of Hamburg Way and Edward Benefer Way, following the line of the existing cycle track, to join up with Greenpark Avenue at Lynnsport. A number of junctions along its length would give access to new and existing housing developments.

The first junction would be a mini roundabout giving access into Spenser Road. The next would be a new access road into the proposed new housing development at Marsh Lane, which would give priority to cyclists. A second mini roundabout would give access into Reid Way and Front Way, then there would be new access into the proposed new housing sites at Lynnsport 3 and Lynnsport 1, again with priority for cyclists.

The open drainage ditch along the length of the route would be replaced with a culvert, and a new crossing point built over the Bawsey Drain near the bend on Front Way. The road would also provide access to a new Internal Drainage Board (IDB) pumping station which would improve the flooding protection for the area and the whole of King's Lynn.

Existing hedges along the length of the road would be retained, except where they had to be removed to create access roads. Discussions were taking place with the bus company to move bus stops and reroute services to improve the bus service around the area. One pond (which had been fenced off for several years) would be filled in and replaced with drainage crates under the car park, to attenuate the flood risk.

Access to Lynnsport itself would be improved with pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access kept separate as far as possible. The existing car park, which was in poor condition, would be redesigned, the number of spaces more than doubled, and disabled access improved. The footpath along the edge of the running track would be rebuilt and would link with other, currently fragmented, sections of footpath, ensuring they were all in good condition for the next 15-20 years.

Drainage

SH asked about the moated area at the back of Lynnsport. DG said there were currently 2 pumps, one for surface water and one for sewage. The sewage one would move onto the housing area and would become Anglian Water's responsibility. The surface water one would pump water to the new crates under the car park.

SH also asked why the crossing over Bawsey drain, from the LS1 site into the now omitted LS2 development area, was still shown on the plans. DG confirmed that this was an oversight when the plans were revised to omit LS2, but an amended version omitting this crossing had now been submitted for planning.

JF also had concerns about surface water drainage and felt the consultation process should have started earlier.

Traffic

LT set out his concerns about traffic flows. He feared the proposals would result in serious congestion at some of the junctions on the new road, resulting in Columbia Way becoming a rat run. He suggested that making the new road part of a one-way system round Lady Jane Grey Road/Reid Way/Front Way (the current bus route) would help prevent this.

DG said this had been considered by NCC highways department, but they felt the two-way road would be preferable. However, once built, it would be monitored and it was designed to be easily changed in the future, if it proved problematic. LT felt that the one-way system should be tried first, as it was more likely to be successful. At Cllr Beales' suggestion, it was agreed that DG should obtain the data used by NCC in proposing a two-way road, and a site visit should take place with LT and a

representative from county highways department, to see the area in question and gain a better understanding of his concerns.

Cllr Collis queried how priority for cyclists at the junctions would be established. QB said this would be with road markings and the cycleway would be raised to give it emphasis. If pedestrians were also to be given priority, this would require a raised zebra crossing, with lights for evenings. Cllr Collis asked that this be considered too.

MJ Ray commented that cyclist priority junctions had been installed on the Sandringham Path and in West Winch, where white lines continue across the road. He suggested a zebra crossing with the cycleway alongside might be appropriate. QB said the design was not yet finalised, but with a 3m wide path, it could not be a combined one.

MC asked about traffic calming, making it clear that the residents did not want speed bumps, but would prefer chicanes.

He also asked when the 7.5ton weight restriction for the North Lynn estate could be put in place. DG said the traffic order would be applied for along with the TROs required for the new road.

MC asked if a connecting road from LS1 to Aconite Road would be built. DG said that proposals for LS1 were only indicative at present, but it was proposed to connect LS1 to Aconite Road at one point, but not to join up the full horseshoe. There was no proposal for one-way traffic here.

MC also asked about connecting roads through Marsh Lane, as traffic wanting to turn left onto Wootton Road can sometimes be held up for some time behind one car waiting to turn right. Although this would require the loss of a tree on the corner, he felt there could be merit in widening the exit to release left turning traffic. DG said that the new Marsh Lane development would give traffic another exit from the existing housing estate, which might relieve pressure on this junction. The new road would result in people using different routes and it was impossible to predict all the implications. Monitoring would take place for a full year after implementation, and changes could be made if necessary.

Cllr Tyler commented that it was good to see the parking issues were being addressed in the proposals.

Children's play area

JF raised concerns about the safety of the new children's play area. She felt it was too close to the road and being on a raised area of land, children would run down the slope towards the traffic. DG said that the parking area would be between the play area and the road which will be a 20mph limit at this point. However, a barrier could be provided if necessary to address the issue. Cllr Beales supported this suggestion.

Cllr Tyler said that local residents had also raised concerns with him about children's safety and asked that flexibility be retained to keep options open if problems arise.

Current state of Planning

The planning application for the road was due to be considered by the planning committee on 30th March.

Timetable

If planning permission was granted at the end of March, a start on site was expected by the end of June 2015.

4. Marsh Lane: Presentation of proposed planning application

Design

FB presented the proposals for development on the Marsh Lane site which La Ronde Wright were bringing forward on behalf of the borough council and Lovell's.

The Marsh Lane site was about 5ha. and included land which had previously been used as smallholdings and orchard. There was no current vehicular access, with pedestrian access only via cul-de-sacs. It was allocated for new housing in the 1998 Local Plan.

The current proposal was for 130 houses, including 20 affordable homes. Of those 20 properties, 70% would be for general needs and 30% for shared ownership. The site would include 3 areas of public open space totaling 0.73ha, including the retention of the orchard and a new children's play area. Comments from statutory consultees had already been taken into account. The properties would be mainly 2-storey, a mix of 2-bed, 3-bed and 4-bed houses in a mixture of terraces, semi-detached and detached properties, many with porches. There would also be a few apartments. Materials would be a traditional mix of red brick, pantiles and some render. Existing trees would be retained as far as possible, and some new ones planted.

A new East-West access road from the new link road would give access into the site, joining to a new North-South road into the existing part of Marsh Lane. A new N-S cycleway also formed part of the proposals.

Bungalows

MC said that in his experience 'indicative' plans were always worrying as it was rare to get what you thought you were getting. He was concerned that no bungalows were proposed which were suitable for elderly people to move into, releasing their larger 3 and 4-bed houses onto the market. He stressed that flats were not suitable for the elderly and regretted the omission of bungalows from the plans. Whilst he understood the flood regulations now prevented single storey dwellings, he had never known rain to cause flooding in the 52 years he had lived there, and wondered if there was any scope to waive the requirement.

JF commented that there were already bungalows in the area and a single storey extension had recently been permitted to enable a disabled occupant to stay in his home.

DG commented that the Environment Agency now stipulated that all dwellings had to have an upper floor refuge and the property with the extension must already have had an upper floor.

Cllr Beales commented that the proposals for Marsh Lane were already well advanced but the point was well made and could be considered for the other development sites.

Drainage

JF questioned the foul drain running through the Marsh Lane site. She said the existing 375mm foul sewer was deemed incapable of coping with additional properties when only 95 were proposed, and there should be no building within 3 m of this, or within 8m of the pumping station. She asked if this had been taken into account as the situation at Dairy Way, where the stench of sewage was sometimes appalling, had to be avoided.

DG confirmed that the relative bodies were involved in the design, which would ensure the foul sewers were strengthened and access points would be incorporated. It was not always just the size of the pipes which caused problems, sometimes it was pinch-points further in the system, so strengthening works would not necessarily all be on site. He commented that the same approach was being taken with the electrics, where early talks were resulting in improvements to the whole system with a new ring main planned for the area.

MC asked if invert levels had been looked at and JC confirmed that this would all form part of the detailed drainage design.

Contamination

JF referred to emails she had sent to Cllr Beales in early February raising concerns about the contamination of the land, in particular the risk of anthrax being present on the site.

It was explained that there had not been animals on the site for more than 20 years, so the likelihood of finding anthrax was very low. There had never been a case of it from a building site, even from sites such as tanneries. A desk-top survey had been carried out to accompany the planning application. This had researched previous land uses and pesticides used etc, to identify the risks to look for, the main one being heavy metals from the railway line which once ran through the area. However, the council would be taking no risks and ground sensing radar would also be used to check for any remaining contamination. Environmental Health officers would advise on what was necessary and the protection required for anyone working on the site.

Cycle crossings

MJR raised 2 concerns about the cycle crossing at Reid Way and along the south edge of the Marsh Lane site, where there were new pedestrian accesses proposed. DG said it was not proposed to reroute the cycleway to the south edge of the site. MJR was asked to mark up his concerns on a plan and return them to DG for further discussion.

Wildlife

JH commented that the retention of the orchard was very good news, but it could be improved with green corridors to other green spaces. A green infrastructure plan for the whole of the Lynnsport area was needed. He was aware that a high level green infrastructure strategy had been drawn up a few years ago, but a more local plan was needed linking Lynnsport with the Gaywood river and the rest of the town, and retaining as many mature trees as possible.

It was pointed out that the existing hedge along the cyclepath was largely being retained and trees along the road towards Edward Benefer Way were under consideration, subject to any restrictions for access to the new drain. Also it was hoped that a thick, old hedge to the west and north of Lynnsport could be retained, but it was acknowledged that more could be done.

DG proposed a separate meeting with wildlife and ecology advisers to consider how to improve the wildlife provision across the whole area.

SH and Cllr Tyler both welcomed this proposal. SH said that local people enjoy seeing wildlife on their doorstep, even if some species, such as muntjac deer, can also be a pest. If there was a plan showing how the green space was being conserved, the wildlife protected and setting out ways in which people could get involved, this would help to change perceptions and gain support for the project.

Timetable

The planning application was expected to be submitted in May with a 13 week decision period, including 3 weeks' consultation. A start on site was therefore expected in September 2015.

5. Future phases

A project timetable was circulated showing the anticipated dates for submitting planning applications, decisions and starts on site for Marsh Lane, Lynnsport 1, 3, 4 and 5. After Marsh Lane, Lynnsport 3 would be the next planning application, due for submission in July 2015.

Overall, by April 2016, all sites would have been submitted for planning, and the aim was to complete all construction by October 2020.

It was agreed that the consultative group should meet prior to each planning application, with further fringe meetings as necessary, to consider the various

different interests and concerns. There would also be formal consultation as part of each planning application, with an opportunity for those without computer access to see the plans on display at Lynnsport.

Cllr Beales responded to a concern that sometimes developments begin, but are not completed and the additional benefits are not delivered. He said that in this case, the road and the additional sporting provision would be delivered first. With a £60m+ project, it was important to get it right, but once planning permissions were granted, the intention was to press on quickly.

JF said that a lot of bad feeling could have been avoided if people had known in advance that the scrub clearance was about to begin, rather than the machinery starting up at 7am. Cllr Beales apologised for this and agreed that residents would be better informed in advance of future works.

It was also acknowledged that this clearance work now needed to be followed up with litter picking. It had not been clear whether this should fall to the operatives at Lynnsport or to the street cleaners, but it would be tackled soon.

LT asked how many houses were proposed for the area altogether, and what provision had been made for additional health services, particularly GPs, as surgeries were closing and people were waiting 5-6 weeks for a doctor's appointment. About 400 houses were proposed in total and Cllr Daubney said that intense negotiations were on-going with the NHS. This was not an issue which this meeting could address, but the demographic of likely residents would be raised with the CCG in due course.

Cllr Tyler asked when potential purchasers would be able to view and reserve the Marsh Lane properties. Lovell's said that a show complex would be ready by May 2016, if the planning timetable was achieved.

MC raised concerns about construction traffic, given the amount of mud on the roads during the construction of Dairy Way, and asked for clear contact details to be displayed on site for responsible persons to contact if there were problems.

JC said that Lovell's were affiliated to the Considerate Constructors scheme. The site manager and his tel. no would be made available and there would be afternoon drop-in sessions and 'builder days' to engage the community. Site access arrangements, wheelwash facilities and working hours would be controlled by the planning permission and would be adhered to.

DG pointed out that, with the council as the developer, there were additional ways to raise any concerns, through officers and Councillors.

6. Any Other Business

DG gave a summary of progress with other initiatives.

- The planning application for the new hockey pitches and the tennis courts would be submitted shortly.

- Discussions were ongoing with the Wildlife Trust about the nature reserve and volunteers were being recruited. The council was helping in any way it could.
- It was not now necessary to relocate the football pitches, but a report to cabinet would go forward in June on the proposal from Norfolk FA for a football academy.
- Plans were progressing well for the relocation of the miniature railway.

7. Date of next meeting

Cllr Daubney thanked everyone for attending and contributing to what he felt was a very worthwhile discussion.

The next meeting would be held in late May or early June. Dates would be circulated nearer the time.

Agreed Actions:

- Site visit to take place with LT and county highways to discuss congestions concerns
- Meeting to take place with wildlife groups to improve wildlife provision across the whole area.
- MJR to mark concerns re crossing points on Marsh Lane site on plans and return to DG for further discussion. (Note: Plans have been emailed to MJR for this purpose)