

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Developer Presentation of Rydon Homes to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group held on 23 April 2015 at 7.00 pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Present: Ian Credland (Chairman) (IC) Judith Foot (JF)
 Geoff Copley (GC) Frances Guadencio (FG)
 David Cumberland (DC) Virginia Pullan (VP)
 Adrian Batchelor (AB)

In Attendance: Dale Mayhew, Dowsett Mayhew; Chris Hough - Sigma Planning; Isobel Blavier-Bennett – Rydon (Design); Chris Sampson – Rydon (Planning); Sarah Heron – Rydon (Planning)

Action By

1. Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received from

Bill Hatton

2 Developer Presentation – Rydon Homes

IC – HPC have revised their protocol for meeting with developers as part of evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. Previously meetings were confidential and there was no public record. All developers have been contacted to provide the opportunity to re-present. 10min plus Qs. Minutes of meeting will be a public record.

CH – Friars Oak Field site is 10.5ha; north side of Hassocks. Hassocks is a Category 2 Settlement – so village should support housing to contribute to meet the needs of the district and possibly adjoining LPA areas. This is likely to need greenfield releases. There are constraints on land to south and east (National Park) and west (local gap). Whilst there are constraints to the north (strategic gap) including on the proposed site; Rydon believe this is less sensitive relative to other constraint designations. The MSDC SHLAA gives some support.

A total of 130 dwellings are proposed (of which 42 are Affordable Homes). There is a single access point. Open space is proposed to be offered to the Parish.

Two issues have been raised by consultation responses thus far: (i) network rail crossing – through tunnel for walkers and cyclists; and (ii) flooding - discussion with EA is ongoing – previously it was proposed to divert the watercourse, but now it is likely it will be maintained along its existing route. No buildings are proposed within the floodplain.

Stonepound AQMA – Rydon are currently awaiting the outcome of the Gleeson appeal – they believe that if there is scheme is deemed acceptable in terms of impact on the AQMA, then Rydon proposal will also be acceptable.

Rydon are opposing the Local Green Space designation proposal.

IB – The site is well contained by hedgerows and woodland. Access is the via the existing route onto London Road – but this will be upgraded. Access leads to a village green – as a gateway. There are 3 fields to be developed; the 04th to be left as natural landscaping for informal recreation.

The scheme seeks to maintain good spacing to properties on Shepherds Walk; to avoid undue impact and overlooking.

The field parcels are to be developed with different character – to respond to the surroundings. There will be medium density in central part; reducing to low density to the east and west; with extremely low density to the north..

The scheme includes ‘squares’ – to identify character.

Key design criteria is to keep and enhance hedgerows; and to create a pedestrian walking route around the site margins. Also proposing other walks along hedgerows to connect to rest of site; and at the north end running west to connect to London Road, to create a circular walk.

There are few existing trees, and these will be included within green spaces.

Public realm will have a main tree lined avenue; designed to reduce vehicle speed and have an informal character.

Green spaces and corridors will comprise wildlife corridors.

IC – Where the children will go to school?

CH - will go to local schools – the developer will make financial contribution and then it is up to WSCC to decide exactly where the additional places will be provided.

IC – WSCC response to the application is that the local schools are full.

CH – Virtually every school is full – so the response is normal. If WSCC considered there was capacity they would not be able to seek financial contributions from the developer. The monies paid via a S106 Agreement will add school place capacity – it is not for Rydon to know where or how this will happen.

School need is worked out by WSCC and this is the same issue that would arise with any other housing development within Hassocks.

IC – Do Rydon intend to build out site?

CH – That is a commercial decision – at the moment the intention is to build out – but that cannot be guaranteed.

IC – Can you explain more about access. Previously you advised the PC that the EA supported the scheme, but now they object on basis you cant divert or restrict the

watercourse.

CH – As the scheme evolves the additional detail is added. The original scheme outline was acceptable by the EA, but in light of the additional detail they have declined to support the proposed diversion. The detail is being reworked on the basis of retaining the existing watercourse route. The issue is not about securing agreement to the design of the culvert. Hope this will happen within the next few weeks.

IC –Is there a safety concern with use of the level crossing.

CH – Does not believe there is a safety concern. Rydon have met with Network Rail and they advise the crossing is safe – it is there responsibility.

However, they consider with increased usage the crossing becomes less safe – Rydon do not understand this conclusion. They are looking at the Network Rail safety assessment model. Surveys and calculations of recreational walking is being undertaken, as Rydon believe the primary use of the crossing is by ramblers. They believe that for non-recreational walkers there is a better alternative route. This will be promoted to existing and new resident. Rydon believe the alternative route will be a rational choice by residents. Therefore the only increased usage of the level crossing is likely to be ramblers.

IB – footpath to south and to south-west will be emphasised and promoted. This route is wholly on firm ground and level; whilst the alternative route over the railway line also crosses a stream.

IB - The public open space will be offered to parish; together with a commuted sum for maintenance?

CH – The cost of maintenance is calculated by reference to an agreed Management Plan in perpetuity (ie 99 years) – This approach has been agreed with HPC with the scheme North of Little Park Farm.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.30pm.

Date_____ Chairman_____