

Minutes of the meeting of Hungerford 2036 project team held on Wednesday 23rd March 2022 at 7pm in the Croft Hall, Hungerford

Present – Cllr John Downe (JD) (Co-chair), Tony Drewer-Trump (TDT) (Co-chair), Chris Scorey (CS), Denise Gaines, Cllr Richard Hudson, Cllr Helen Simpson, Cllr Keith Carlson, Cllr Claire Winser, Town Clerk and Chris Bowden Navigus Planning)

1. **Note apologies** – Cllr Ellie Yakar-Wells
2. **Site assessments and Allocation. Discussion led by Chris Bowden, Navigus Consultants**

Chris advised it is rare for a plan to be voted down at referendum although common to have a difference of opinion. At the formal consultation stage (regulation 14) we will have an opportunity to adapt the plan if needed. He recommended revisiting our objectives and looking at the best way to achieve these, (*JD advised the criteria for the sites has been derived from H2036 aims and objectives*). Sites aren't the sole reason for the plan but if the community or H2036 do not allocate sites they will be allocated through West Berks Council (WBC) or through speculative applications from developers. We need to minimise the negative and maximise the positives. The housing number of 55 is a minimum number. The NPPF tells you to build in a buffer. Flexibility is needed. What happens if one site doesn't come forward or comes forward with a smaller number of houses.

It was questioned if we allow for more houses can WBC impose them. Chris advised that it doesn't work like that and no, it would be us taking it forward through our NDP and plenty of NDPs allocate more housing to achieve their objectives.

CS stated the main issue was the question of either minimising encroachment on greenfield land and supplying the minimum housing numbers *or* providing a good supply of housing for the community. Last time HTC supported HUN07 and was against high density housing at Salisbury Road however the situation has changed with the development taking place at Salisbury Road.

Do we think 55 houses is enough over the next 15 years? How far do we go to address future needs? The Housing Needs Assessment written by AECOM suggested 486 houses over the plan period but was formulated from an historic and discredited past WBC assumption. We have two favoured sites, Do we allocate HUN14 or both as HUN07 alone does not provide enough houses to meet the requirement.

RH stated that there is an -unusually low-density number at Salisbury Road. Discussions took place around the following questions. Should we argue for it to be increased from the current 19 to a higher density. Would it be making the most use of the land? A lower density is likely to result in larger houses and not lower priced market houses. We may wish to consider flats. Concern was voiced over setting a precedent of high density for the future.

There are other considerations. Current problems include a lack of doctors and dentists, which is a national issue. School pupil numbers are down due to low birth rates and other factors. We need allotments and play areas and self-build opportunities.

Chris B- advised we can always go back to developers and ask for changes, and we can have our own policy to say what type of mix of housing we want. Mix is mentioned in the emerging local plan and we can use this to our advantage as WBC are obtaining evidence to back up their suggested housing split. We should get away from the word density as different layouts may have the same density but feel less dense.

What if developers say it is not viable? The layout will have been tested so will not be speculative. The numbers of different housing mixes were compared for the recent development of 100 houses at Salisbury Road, from what was in the new emerging draft WBC plan to what was actually delivered.

Market housing

In the plan	5 x 1 bed	17 x 2 bed	25 x 3 bed	13 x 4+ bed	Total 60
Delivered	0	0	16 x 3 bed	33 x 4 bed 11 x 5 bed	Total 60

Affordable housing

In the plan	8 x 1 bed	15 x 2 bed	13 x 3 bed	4 x 4 bed	Total 40
Delivered	4 x 1 bed	17 x 2 bed	19 x 3 bed	0 x 4 bed	Total 40

Applying this mix to the 60 houses in the HUN14 site would deliver the following. This is an example of what the mix could be. :-

Market	3 x 1 bed	10 x 2 bed	15 x 3 bed	8 x 4 bed	Total 36
Affordable	5 x 1 bed	9 x 2 bed	8 x 3 bed	2 x 4 bed	Total 24

CB stated that normally a range of percentages for each house size would be included in policies rather than absolute numbers. Discussion took place around the following questions. Will we complain if we set the mix and get a higher number of houses? No but there should be a limit. Do we deliver both sites to achieve our objectives?

Chris advised WBC will need to review their plan in 5 years. We should put the housing mix in our policy which would apply to any development not just these sites. He added it is easier to drop a site than add it later.

It was suggested that we speak to the developers regarding the housing mix we require and see what they offer.

The merits of allocating one site or two were discussed with differing opinions being expressed. It was decided that those opinions should be relayed to HTC for debate and decision on which alternative to pursue.

ACTION: Pass on H2036 committee member's opinions to HTC

ACTION: Go back to both promoters when appropriate regarding site allocation policies and conditions

3. Next meeting date - TBC

Meeting ended 9.10pm