

Minutes of the meeting of Hungerford 2036 project team held on Wednesday 5th May 2021 virtually on Zoom at 11.00am

Present – Chris Scorey, Tony Drewer-Trump (Co-chair), Cllr John Downe (Co-chair), Ellie Yakar-Wells (Cllr), Town Clerk, Cllr Helen Simpson (Mayor), Chris Bowden (Navigus Planning), James Iles (JI), Paul McCann, Nick Rootes, Owain Keeley

Apologies: Cllr Richard Hudson, Denise Gaines, Steve Bickell, Cllr Claire Winsor

The Clerk advised the meeting was being recorded. The minutes will be made public and should be read in conjunction with power point slides.

Introductions took place. James Iles from Pro-vision acts as the planning consultant for Cala Homes, Paul McCann is from Cala Homes, Nick Rootes is the representative for the trustees/landowners and Owain Keeley is the landscaper adviser from EDP. The purpose of the meeting is to present details on HUN12 and HUN14 sites.

JI shared his screen to show a power point presentation for HUN14 for land east of Salisbury Road and talked through the meeting plan shown in slide 2. He then referred to a graphic showing all the potential planning sites in Hungerford (refer to slide 3) and advised there are limited development opportunities within the settlement boundary. AECOM back in 2019 concluded there is a severe lack of suitably affordable housing. JI advised it is one of their objectives to deliver this.

Slide 4 ‘Site Context’ shows the location of the site, which is immediately south of the new Bewley site. The land is 9 acres of undeveloped agricultural land with a buffer on the southern and west boundaries and is ‘under option’ with Cala.

Slide 5 ‘Accessibility and Connections’. The outcome of Highways’ assessment in the HELAA was there is no need to create an additional site access for HUN14 or for a change to the existing roundabout. Bus stops are within a comfortable walking distance from the site and a good relationship with the secondary school means there may be a site access agreed onto the school grounds. Walking times to the primary school and town centre are approx. 12mins, and 15mins to the station. Connections to public transport are good.

Slide 6 ‘Local footpaths’ Hung/31/2 would flow into the site.

Slide 7 ‘HELAA Highways’ have not identified any issues with traffic generation, and this complies with their terms that it would not result in a severe impact on the highway.

Slide 8 ‘Landscape Sensitivity Assessment’. JI referred back to the Kirkham Landscape assessment completed in 2011 which identified further development potential to the west and east.

Slide 9 ‘HELAA Landscape’ states a landscape capacity assessment would be required to see if concerns, that development on the site would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB, could be overcome. EDP are now working on a detailed landscape assessment and looking at mitigations of development impact. and this will be provided to us by the end of May.

Slide 10 ‘Visual Impact Assessment’ Impact on important viewpoints are being considered. The southern boundary landscape buffer helps to contain views. Pro-vision advised they will look at other viewpoints from the west along the Shalbourne valley.

Slide 11 ‘Delivering HTC aspirations’ Items on the slide were read through.

Slide 12 ‘Constraints and Opportunities’ The site is in a Zone 1 flood risk area. It is not in a conservation area and there are no listed buildings although the Beacon Farm setting is important. JI will send us an archaeological update report by the end of the month. The low ecological interest assumption made is subject to further studies. There are trees present on the southern and western boundary. The PROW through the site needs to be protected.

Slide 13 ‘Development Opportunities’ They will maintain a low density suitable to the town edge of 18-25 dph with between 56 and 77 units proposed on the 0.5 hectares of open space.

Slide 14 'Concept Master Plans' Site access is via an undulating road with a range of detached, semi-detached and short terraces. There is a local area of play and capacity for 20 allotments x 4 poles each, with allotment parking, away from shading. Space is provided for 5 or 6 self builds in the south east corner. The plan shows 56 dwellings but there is capacity for more. The figure of 55 houses allocated to Hungerford from WBC isn't fixed at the moment. AECOM say there is a need for 27 dwellings per annum and there is a shortfall of affordable, including rented, shared ownership and lower cost housing. Over the plan period this would be 486 dwellings up to 2036. (NB The AECOM work was conducted based on information in the WBC Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted in 2012. Since then WBC have published their Emerging Draft Local Plan which will supersede WBC's earlier plan. At the time of its completion, the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan will be required to be in conformance with the revised Local Plan requirements).

It was questioned if the public open space in the west could be moved so the play area is in one place. JI advised it is only a concept plan, so design is flexible. Issues to consider/avoid are overlooking, shading and creating a tunnel of houses. He confirmed there is no second highways access planned to link up with the north development. The footpath shown is a logical route to the school.

Slide 15 'Graphic- of footway' There will be an all-weather surface for the existing footpath that goes through the site. There would be an avenue to provide plenty of space and this would make an attractive feature.

Slide 16 'Cala commits to sustainable future' Cala's commitment to the climate change agenda is to exceed the government target. Details are shown on the slide.

Slide 17 'Renewable Energy Technologies' Air source heat pumps are the main technology being used; drawing heat from air extractors to get a renewable source of heat. There is the potential for solar voltaics. There are clever solar pv tiles that look like roofing and have minimal glaring. Dwellings are south facing so there is the benefit from passive solar gain.

Slide 18 'Greenspace and net gain' There is space for wild meadow planting, picnic areas and greenspaces and the opportunity for biodiversity net gain with careful landscaping, as it is currently an agricultural field. There is not a great deal of need for SUDS on this site but if there is a need, water attenuation is multipurpose and forms recreation.

Slide 19 'Graphic- new builds' South Oxfordshire designs were shown (Abingdon and Didcot). They are happy to talk about the format of housing. They have only just adopted a new sustainability standard and those designs shown were not to the new standard.

Slide 20 'Summary and conclusions' This slide was read through. It was confirmed there was no intention to deliver below 40% affordable housing. The plan provides 55-65 new homes. The yellow/green area is 0.5 hectares of open space and the allotments are in addition to this.

JI shared his screen to show a power point presentation for HUN12, land west of Salisbury Road. The pattern of slides shown forms a similar format to the previous presentation.

Slide 3 'Site Context' Again an undeveloped agricultural field, a single field parcel bounded with structural landscaping on south and west. This is a slightly larger site at 11 acres (4.4 hectares) and same ownership with Rootes trustees with an option with Cala. As HUN14 does, HUN12 sits outside the settlement boundary. The development would potentially sandwich the waterworks building to the north.

Slide 4 'Site options and local housing need' The same AECOM evidence was quoted again that was mentioned for HUN14 (slide 14). They stressed that the number of 55 dwellings addresses the landscape consideration but not the housing need and there needs to be a balance.

Slide 5 'Accessibility and connections' There is the existing roundabout onto Kennedy meadow and an option to put a new arm on the roundabout. There are bus stops on Salisbury road. Similar walking and cycling times to HUN14, just under 15 mins to primary school and town centre and a bit longer to the station. If there was a new route through Bewley or through HUN14 in the future, then there would be more direct routes to the secondary school.

Slide 6 'Local footpaths' There is at present no link to the footpath to the west.

Slide 7 'HELAA Highways' The slide was read through.

Slide 8 'WBC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment'. Reference was again made to the Kirkham assessment of 2011 for the previous WBC plan. Back then, the north section of HUN12 is shown as potentially developable but going south was considered inappropriate.

Slide 9 'WBC Landscape sensitivity assessment'. This is an extract from the new assessment that EDP are doing. It picks out the key elements of previous studies. It was pointed out the site is rated as 'medium' sensitivity.

Slide 10 'HELAA Landscape' The slide was read through. WBC flagged up further ecological surveys would be required, and a policy change would be needed for the settlement boundary for both sites.

Slide 11 'Landscape appraisal' This is another extract from the assessment EDP are doing. A detailed report will be provided to us by the end of the month. It is a fairly level site provided you don't go below the 130m contour where the ground falls away. Visual impact is mainly from the west and the Shalbourne valley PROW. There is the potential to enhance the west landscape buffer.

Slide 12 'Visual impact assessment' Another extract from the emerging EDP assessment. The key viewpoints are shown. The zone of visual influence is shown in yellow. There is limited visual impact from the south providing you don't go below the 130m contour.

Slide 13 'Constraints and opportunities' It is in the AONB but not in a conservation area, is well drained and the importance of Beacon Farm is noted.

Slide 14 'Development Opportunity' The development will be kept north of the 130m contour, with housing density of 28 to 30 per hectare (slightly higher than HUN14) which would produce 70 homes. Density could be lowered a bit to achieve 60 homes. The area developable is 2.6 hectares – shown in beige. The green area would not be developed. There may be an easement from the north to the south from the waterworks to the farm which they have to avoid developing over. There is an opportunity to have a green run from north to south through the site.

Slide 15 'Delivering HTC aspirations' The slide was read through. Enhancement to the gateway is particularly important for HUN12 from the south. Our attention was drawn to the opportunity to link up the footpath HUNG/46/1 to HUN12 as the land is owned by the same landowner (Rootes).

Slide 16 'Masterplan' Single access into the site is from a fourth arm on the roundabout. Allotments will be on the LHS on entry where shading will be reduced. The plan suggests high quality landscaping for the entrance gateway, and we may wish to move the Hungerford sign to there. A LEAP (local equipped area of play) for older children is included helping to keep the space green south of the 130m contour. There is an opportunity to have more housing directly north of the LEAP. The number of plots shown is 75 including approx. 5 self-build. The footpath would need access over the river so would require steps and a wooden crossing. 30 of the homes would be affordable.

Slide 17 'Graphic- of gateway' Shows idea for landscaped area with a feature house. Allotments would be behind the hedge shown.

Slide 18 'Cala commits to sustainable future' This is the same as mentioned above for HUN14.

Slide 19 'Renewable energy technologies' HUN12 is south west facing so solar is an opportunity.

Slide 20 'Greenspace and net gain' There is space for a picnic area and parks. Wild grass planting and structural hedging are options.

Slide 21 'Graphics- new builds' Same slide as before of Didcot.

Slide 22 'Summary and conclusions' Slide was read out. Slightly larger site than HUN14. Single storey dwellings on the south western boundary may be a way to limit visual impact.

Slide 23 'Q&A'

Questions from H2036

How are you linking to Smitham Bridge? Connection could be linked from the site, via a footpath to HUN/46/1 the Standen Path.

Are ground source community heating systems a possibility? Cala currently are looking at air source heat pumps and they are working effectively.

It was clarified that any additional material should be with H2036 by the end of May. H2036's timetable is linked to WBC's. We do not wish to complete our NDP work before there is a solid local plan in place, so not to be challenged. WBC are working towards end 2022/early 2023. Site work has taken a while and H2036 hope physical public consultation will take place during the summer.

Questions from James Iles

Is there any survey going on for self-build and what is the demand? It is a latent requirement, and the demand will be linked to the availability. The WBC survey doesn't seem to be available on-line and we could obtain an update on this.

Community solar schemes are in early stages of being looked at as there is land available. Community forestry or other initiatives could be explored? The more attractions there are associated with the developments will help the level of acceptability by the public.

Meeting closed 12.30pm