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Balsall Parish Council Meeting

Approved Minutes of Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 7pm in the Westlake Room, The Village Hall, Station Road, Balsall Common CV7 7FF

Minutes

Present: Councillor Mark Tattum (Chairman), Councillor Will Heard, Councillor Marie-Louise Marsden, Councillor Lionel King, Councillor Christina O'Sullivan, Councillor Richard Lloyd, Councillor Helen Dean, and 10 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Sheila Cooper and Councillor Judy Lea.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Helen Dean declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 and withdrew from the vote.

3. Public Forum

Matters raised by members of the public were addressed by the Council and included in the Council's response statement as appropriate.

4. Proposal to make the following response to Question 1 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

1. Do you believe that there are exceptional circumstances that would justify the Council using an alternative approach, if so what are the exceptional circumstances and what should the alternative approach be?

Q1. Summary Response

- Balsall parish has exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach.
- The draft Balsall Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan contains Community Aspiration CA 1: 'Development on allocated Solihull Local Plan housing sites that will utilise the same construction routes as HS2 contractors should be avoided at the same time as HS2 construction because of the potential disruption to existing residents caused by avoidable increased congestion.'
- This consideration affects Frog Lane and Windmill Lane sites.

Resolved to submit a response to the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Q1 as above.

5. Proposal to make the following response to Question 2 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

2. Do you agree with the methodology of the site selection process, if not why not and what alternative/amendment would you suggest?

Q2. Summary Response

- The effect of the site selection process on the settlement of Balsall Common and Balsall parish have not been taken into account and therefore cannot be supported. The cumulative impact of the process should be considered rather than an accumulation of 'appropriate' sites without regard to combined effect.
- SMBC should consider how the settlement is to be expanded by developing a strategic plan taking into account the locations best suited for new residents and new infrastructure. The process should not be driven by choosing ('cherry picking') the most desirable sites to achieve housing numbers for the Borough though availability, ease or readiness but from a strategic settlement expansion plan.
- In considering this 'settlement first' approach, your paragraph 97 to amend the Green Belt boundary would support the maintenance of the existing Green Belt boundary to the southwest of Balsall Common and so negate erosion of that boundary by the greenfield development proposed.

Resolved to submit a response to the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Q2 as above.

6. Proposal to make the following response to Question 3 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

3. Do you agree with the infrastructure requirements identified for Balsall Common, if not why not; or do you believe there are any other matters that should be included?

Q3. Summary Response

Infrastructure requirements derived from settlement (parish) evidence should include -

- Phasing of housing development to reduce combined construction impact with HS2
- Balsall Common village centre investment in retail, community space and parking
- Balsall Common village bypass to relieve congestion on the A452
- Parking pressure at the station addressed with additional provision
- New primary school and improved secondary school places provision
- Community and civic provision ideally at a central location
- Improvements to all transport modes (rail, cycle, bus, road vehicle)
- Health service provision to match increased population
- Crime reduction measures
- Housing suitable for older persons built within reach of the centre
- Driven by SMBC through assessment of future settlement need and potential in consultation with Balsall Parish Council

Resolved to amend the proposal to include the following:

- **'An infrastructure plan is needed to be produced step by step to meet the needs of the population prior to occupation. The emerging Balsall Parish NDP Policies are to be considered by SMBC in relation to all the areas of infrastructure requirements listed.'**
- **'and improved secondary school places provision' added to the schools bullet point and add NDP reference to Policy COM.2.**

Resolved to accept the proposal as amended.

7. Proposal to make the following response to Question 5 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

5. Do you believe that Site 2 Frog Lane should be included as allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

Q5. Summary Response

- Frog Lane should not be included as an allocated site.
- In a 'settlement first' approach, your paragraph 97 to amend the Green Belt boundary would support the maintenance of the existing Green Belt boundary to the southwest of Balsall Common and so negate erosion of that boundary by this single greenfield development proposed.
- Balsall Street East and Balsall Street should remain as the southern defensible boundary for Balsall Common maintaining the Green Belt boundary.
- Location is not highly accessible.
- It is a key local habitat with wildlife biodiversity adjacent to an important local green space.
- Medium density housing conflicts with the character of the existing area.
- Site is the furthest distance from the station and village centre amenities.
- This masterplan proposal for 115 dwellings with only one narrow winding access road to Balsall Street East will mean in the region of 230 vehicles adding to the existing congestion on this stretch of road during peak hours because of the proximity of the local schools.

Resolved to amend the proposal to include the following:

- **Development of this site would establish a precedent and potentially open up land adjacent to Balsall Street as far as Saracen Drive.**
- **Development of this site would equate to cherry picking smaller areas of green space and development should take regard of this and preserve these.**
- **It is preferential for this site to be used for sports facilities in addition to the existing Holly Lane playing fields. Frog Lane is one of the few lanes in the village.**
- **The junction of Holly Lane/Balsall Street East/Alder Lane is already a congestion hotspot creating a threat to highway safety. Buses currently have to use Balsall Street as 'single lane' due to parked cars during school times.**

Resolved to accept the proposal as amended.

8. Proposal to make the following response to Question 6 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

6. Do you believe that Site 3 Windmill Lane should be included as allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

Q6. Summary Response in relation to the proportion of the site in Balsall parish.

- The Parish Council acknowledge the strategic selection of this site however maintain reservations over its development for housing, namely:
 - The site has low accessibility
 - Residents are likely to require high levels of parking provision
 - Housing must be in keeping with local character
 - Mixed development with different types and sizes of houses
 - Opportunity for low carbon development
 - Protection of existing mature or important trees and hedgerows
 - Include at least 10 % bungalows or other suitable accommodation unless there are for downsizing by older residents
- The masterplan proposal of 225 dwellings on this site will mean in the region of 450 additional vehicles during peak hours accessing the already congested Kenilworth Road. HS2 construction heavy vehicles per day with the existing congestion of the Kenilworth Road caused by 80% of traffic being through traffic during peak periods means this development must be postponed until after HS2 construction is completed or/and the bypass is opened.

Resolved to amend the proposal to include the following:

- **Revise the eighth bullet point to 'Include at least 10 % bungalows or other suitable accommodation for downsizing by mobile older residents.'**
- **Revise the last bullet point to '... HS2 construction vehicles together with the existing congestion of the Kenilworth Road caused by 80% of traffic being through traffic during peak periods,'**

- **The emerging Balsall Parish NDP Policies are to be considered by SMBC in considering the masterplan and detail for this site, in particular Policy BE. 5 Design Review Panels. Resolved to accept the proposal as amended.**

9. Proposal to make the following response to Question 8 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

8. Do you believe that Site 22 Trevallion Stud should be included as allocated site, if not why not? Do you have any comments on the draft concept masterplan for the site?

Q8. Summary Response

- Trevallion Stud should be included as an allocated site.
- Brownfield land for housing is favoured however a large proportion is not PDL
- Residents are likely to require high levels of parking provision
- Mixed development with different types and sizes of houses
- Opportunity for low carbon development
- The site contains and is bounded by important natural features, the protection of existing mature or important trees and hedgerows is vital to the aspect and character of this approach to the village
- Site can provide market accessible and affordable homes for younger age residents
- Development requires suitable measures to reduce noise exposure from aircraft
- The developers draft concept masterplan is not acceptable. It shows a substantial loss of trees, leaving those mature specimens in new gardens not protected by sufficient space. There is no well-defined open space or blue infrastructure. There is no indication of an ecology study influencing the proposals. It appears to be an estate layout of medium density not integrated with adjacent low density housing which forms the existing character of the area.
- include at least 10 % bungalows or other suitable accommodation for downsizing by older residents

Resolved to amend the proposal to include the following:

- **Add 'mobile' ahead of 'older' to the last bullet point**
- **Add 'biodiversity' ahead of 'study' in the ninth bullet point**
- **SMBC to have regard to the emerging Balsall Parish NDP Policy NE. 5**
- **Balsall Parish Council will commission an in depth ecology study of the site and would expect this to be taken into account.**

Resolved to accept the proposal as amended.

10. Proposal to make the following response to Question 40.41.42.43 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation:

40. Would the above approach of requiring affordable housing contributions of 40% of total square meterage or habitable rooms/floorspace incentivise developers to build more smaller market housing?

41. If so, what is the most effective approach? Is it to calculate affordable housing as: (a) 40% of bedroom numbers, (b) 40% of habitable rooms, or (c) 40% of habitable square meterage?

42. What is the best way of measuring developable space for this purpose: bedroom numbers, habitable rooms or habitable floorspace?

43. What other measures would incentivise developers to build more smaller market housing?

Resolved to agree the following response to Q40-43:

- **This potential policy proposal to use a percentage of square metre floorspace, percentage of bedrooms or percentage of habitable rooms could lead to undesirable unintended consequences.**
- **Such a scheme should not be used without evidence from such an approach already in use achieving an improvement in provision of affordable housing.**
- **SMBC to have regard to the emerging Balsall Parish NDP Policy H. 7.**

- 11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting:
Wednesday 20 March 2019, 7.00pm in the Westlake Room, Village Hall, 112 Station
Road, Balsall Common CV7 7FF**

SIGNED Mark Tattum (Chairman) DATE