

Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

4th March 2021

By Zoom

Present: Steering group - Christine Cooper (CC), Steven Gledhill (SteG), Pauline Cullis (PauC), David Parson (DP), Tim Mynott (TM), Alastair Lack (AL – partially attended). Amy Burnett (AB, DinT).

Apologies: None.

Actions highlighted in **bold**.

Minutes of the last meeting

These were approved and can be uploaded onto the Parish website.

Wiltshire Council Local Plan consultation

In February, CC attended the rural and Salisbury area Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review consultation events. WC anticipate the Draft Plan to be submitted end of 2021 and adopted by 2023. NB: the proposals put forward during the consultation are for discussion and are not deemed final.

In these events, Wiltshire Council reiterated the importance of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) as an important community-led planning tool. Of particular note, it is anticipated that Wiltshire Council will need to increase the number of dwellings to be built in Wiltshire and will allocate targets for Large Villages (such as Coombe Bissett, NB: Homington is classified as a small village where development is extremely limited). For Coombe Bissett and Homington, this number is for 25 dwellings between 2015-2036, six of which have already been built. Therefore, 19 is currently the anticipated number required going forward, although yet to be ratified. The NDP had stipulated a locally-led target of 13-15 dwellings for the Plan period, based on a review of evidence gathered to support the Plan's policies and local context. The Parish Council also has a preference for a smaller number of dwelling on proposed allocated sites whereas AECOM were proposing a higher density, which the NDP Steering Group felt was inappropriate for a rural village setting.

If the housing target is increased (which is likely), the Wiltshire Council Neighbourhood Plan Link Officer said that the Steering Group had possible options on housing targets: it could increase the numbers of dwellings on allocated sites, have a higher proportion of local housing need delivered through infill or increase the number of sites with a lower housing number on each site.

The Steering Group agreed that all suitable and potentially suitable sites are included in the Draft Plan submitted for an SEA screening so that various options can be considered. Thus, the Draft Plan can include different options as required by the increased demand in housing proposed by the current Wiltshire Council proposal.

Housing size (bedrooms)

The evidence base gathered for the Draft Plan has shown there is a need for smaller properties to enable young families to move to the area or for older persons to downsize. 38% of respondents to the questionnaire had 4-bedrooms and 17% had 5-bedroom+ properties. Following on from the work carried out by AECOM and the evidence gathered in the Community Questionnaire on housing need, the Draft Plan currently recommends that 4-bed+ dwellings should not be built over the Plan period.

CC proposed that a housing policy of 3-beds and less should be for allocated sites only and 4-bedroom properties could be allowed on windfall sites, as it may be unrealistic to not expect 4-bedrooms to be built up to 2036. SG pointed out that 4-bedroom properties could also accommodate working from home and DP suggested that trends seem to be towards increased bedroom numbers over the past half a decade. The group agreed that the sites should accommodate 3-bedrooms or less on allocated sites but not for windfall sites. **SG to update Plan to this effect and ensure Plan policy wording reflects the balance between having localised restrictions to address a current imbalance towards larger properties in the housing stock while also allowing an evolution of properties with varying bedroom sizes to accommodate different needs over the Plan period, including working from home.**

Additional planning applications:

The Chalk Pit

A planning application has been submitted for six dwellings on the site (NB: the deadline extended until 12th April). CC declared a conflict of interest in relation to the Chalk Pit site as she lives close to the site; as such, SG led the discussion on this topic.

The NDP has sought to review all possible sites to be screened in for site assessment according to AECOM's criteria (e.g. including sites of five dwellings or more and which should be available, achievable and deliverable). At the time the sites were compiled for the site assessment process, the landowner of the Chalk Pit did not make any formal indication that they wanted the site to be put forward. It has later emerged that the landowner was in discussion with Wiltshire Council for a three dwelling development (which wouldn't have met the threshold for assessment). The size of the plot is also smaller than that which would have triggered an inclusion as a possible site, additionally, the site's topography restricts development; as such it is likely that AECOM would not have considered the site to be achievable within the site assessment process.

Currently, the developer wishes to develop the site for more than five dwelling threshold proposed by AECOM for screening in sites to be assessed. If the proposal is approved by Wiltshire Council then the

Plan policies and background narrative would need to be re-evaluated and the Housing Need Topic Paper updated.

If the development is not approved, then it would indicate it is not a suitable/achievable site. If the planning application is rejected, the developer may challenge it at appeal or they may rework the application and address the reasons why it was rejected; i.e. the design could be amended and therefore become a suitable or potentially suitable site, depending on the site's impact on the environment, the wider landscape and the other criteria against which sites were reviewed..

If the application was rejected, the Parish Council could write to the landowner and ask them if they want to consider it as a potential site to be screened in the Draft Plan according to the same criteria in the site assessment process. If they answer affirmatively, then the Plan would need to appropriately consider its strengths and weaknesses; AECOM has said they cannot retrospectively change the site assessment work. One other option is to apply the same criteria as an addendum to the site assessment work and then approach the community on the single issue of whether they support the site in the Plan. It could also be consulted on during Reg 14, should Wiltshire Council support its inclusion.

The group decided to approach Wiltshire Council to ask for their advice on the matter. In the meantime, the group could analyse the site as to whether the site is appropriate to put forward according to the criteria used by AECOM. **AB (as an independent advisor) could do an initial assessment to outline constraint and achievability, if Wiltshire Council suggests this is an appropriate way forward; relevant information could be provided from the application decision.**

SG and CC to review windfall/infill policies to ensure they cover different eventualities of future sites.

SG to send an email to the Wiltshire Council Link Officer and ask their view on the way forward.

Land Adjacent to Footes House

There has been an additional planning application submitted for a garden infill site adjacent to Footes House for a 4-bed property, which is being considered by the Parish Council.

Affordable Housing

CC sought clarification from the group that AECOM's suggestion of an overwhelming delivery of rented (intermediate) Affordable Housing properties should not be pursued, and whether other forms of Affordable Housing may be more appropriate. The group agreed and therefore the Plan will not seek to determine which types of Affordable Housing should be delivered (in line with the current WC Core Strategy) but will ensure that Affordable Housing is an expectation of any site development.

Next steps

TC and AL to proofread Plan.

Next meeting

None set as yet.