

South of Hertford (HERT5) Project Group Meeting
Monday 9th June 2014, 13:00-14:00
East Herts Council Offices, Wallfields, Hertford SG13 8EQ

Attendees:

Kay Mead (KM)	East Herts Council – Planning Policy Team
Claire Sime (CS)	East Herts Council – Planning Policy Team
George Pavey (GP)	East Herts Council – Planning Policy Team
David Burt (DB)	Herts County Council – Highways
Paul Chappell (PC)	Herts County Council – Highways
Neil French (NF)	Herts County Council – Passenger Transport
Andrea Gilmour (AG)	Herts County Council – Property
Bethan Clemence (BC)	Herts County Council – Primary Schools
Julia Krause (JK)	Deloitte
James Williams (JW)	Deloitte

Apologies:

Julie Greaves (JG)	Herts County Council – Minerals and Waste
Richard Reeve (RR)	Thames Water

Meeting Notes

1. KM welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained that this meeting was a follow up to the original briefing session in April and was intended to be used to discuss outstanding issues regarding site HERT5 within the group. It would deal with both sites specific matters and, where appropriate, wider strategic issues.

Briefing Session Recap

2. KM gave a recap of the site promoter briefing session, which had been held in April, where it had been explained that meetings would take place with key stakeholders to discuss any pertinent issues and ensure that the Council would be confident going forward in the process that its proposed site allocations would be deliverable in accordance with the policies in the Plan.

Review of Draft District Plan Policy

3. KM provided copies of Draft District Plan Policy HERT5 to aid discussions during the meeting and informed those present that the Preferred Options consultation had concluded on 22nd May. The Planning Policy Team was currently beginning to assess the comments and would be formulating responses to them, which would be reported to the District Planning Executive Panel in due course.

4. A brief overview of Draft District Plan Policy HERT5 was provided, detailing the main areas of discussion for the meeting, which mainly centred on matters relating to education and transport.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5. KM explained that work had been commissioned by the Council for two separate firms of consultants to carry out work relating to meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The first study, to be considered at the next District Planning Executive Panel (17th July 2014), concerns the level of need arising in the district and this is being followed by a site scoping study to ensure that enough pitches and plots would be available to meet that identified need throughout the plan period. The meeting was informed that the consultants (Peter Brett Associates) who are currently carrying out the Identification of Potential Sites Study are to examine all proposed Allocated Sites and Broad Locations within the District Plan and therefore promoters should expect that contact might be made regarding this issue and seeking access to their sites.
6. JW confirmed that JK is the relevant contact. She will contact the school estate manager directly.

Delivery Study Inputs

7. Attendees were provided with a copy of the District Plan Delivery Study diagram, which had been part of the presentation to the meeting in April. This outlined the process which the Council intended following to ensure that it would be confident that any sites allocated in the Plan would be deliverable. An email had been sent by Martin Paine (MP) on 23rd May reminding site promoters that the Council is in the process of commissioning consultants to undertake a delivery study over the summer.

Delivery Study Inputs

8. KM explained that site promoters are being requested to provide inputs to this study by the deadline of the end of July. If any issues arise regarding the requested information, then contact should be made directly with MP (martin.paine@eastherts.gov.uk). It was appreciated that some of the information requested may have already been supplied in responses to the District Plan Preferred Options consultation, but it was important that the consultants working on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan would have the information in the same format from all sites. MP would be able to advise further on the level of detail needed in the study if required.

Site Investigation Sheets

9. KM explained that at the meeting held in April, it had been anticipated that Site Investigation Sheets would be produced to highlight outstanding issues for each site. However, it is likely that much of this work would be duplicated or superseded by information submitted for the Delivery Study. Therefore, the Site Investigation Sheets are not likely to be provided within the short term both because of this and due to resource constraints within Planning Policy team.

Transport

10. DB and PC explained that the main concern of the highway authority in respect of road users is the effect on the A414 corridor, both from this individual development area and from other locations in the town. HCC is currently in the process of having consultants finalise a study to investigate the capability of improving the capacity of the A414 westbound, in particular looking at the potential of providing more lanes and improvements to roundabouts. All the HCC modelling work to date has been carried out using the current figures available. DB confirmed that a meeting had been arranged to confirm a future programme of work. However, the funding available will only allow for one more run with updated input figures in respect of future anticipated development levels. KM expressed the importance of clarifying any housing numbers as it was noted that the response to the draft District submitted by Deloitte proposed an additional 30 dwellings to that stated in the Draft District Plan.
11. JW confirmed that to date limited work on transport access had been undertaken but that Deloitte were looking to appoint Mott MacDonald to assist in this respect and wanted to confirm the full scope of what would be required prior to instructing them. KM confirmed that PC should be contacted directly to agree the scope of what information is required (including potential for both mitigation and sustainable transport measures).
12. KM drew attention to the particular transport constraints in the Mangrove Road area and highlighted the importance on understanding the proposals for expansion of Simon Balle School (see paragraph 17 below).
13. NF explained the position in relation to sustainable transport. The A414 is a particular barrier to movement across the town. In respect of passenger transport, it is not anticipated that it will be possible to provide direct bus access into the site or the area generally beyond the school related services. Opportunities around walking, cycling and car clubs will therefore need to be explored. The Hertford & Ware Transport Plan should be referred to in this respect (<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/tranpan/tcatp/handwutp.pdf/>).

14. With regard to rail services NF explained that potential to expand Hertford East is limited. In terms of Hertford North Station, Crossrail 2 is being promoted but is currently constrained by the track being reduced to a single track in the Ware area. Consequently the network is heavily congested with limited capacity to expand.
15. JW asked if there was a standard formula to the calculation of contributions. PC explained the two strand approach set out in the planning obligations toolkit (<http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/hcc/resandperf/hertsprop/planningobs/>). PC noted that this is the current document used; however, it is likely to be subject to a review.

Education

16. BC explained that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory role in the provision of school places and that, in assessing the likely pupil generation from development, 500 to 850 dwellings would yield one Form of Entry (FE) of 30 pupils. The same calculation applies to both Primary and Secondary Schools.
17. BC described the stress currently being placed on schools within Hertford. In terms of primary school places, there is currently significant pressure for places and this demand is likely to shortly follow on to Secondary schools (anticipated in about 18 months' time). To accommodate the primary issue in particular, it is being proposed that Simon Balle School should be expanded (pending planning permission etc.). It is expected that an application to make the school an 'all through' facility, to take children from the age of 4/5 to 16+ and sixth form, would be submitted in the next couple of months with an anticipated opening date of September 2015.
18. One of the most significant issues being raised is the impact on the transport network, in particular in the Mangrove Road area. HCC's transport consultants (Stomor) have suggested 'in' and 'out' access/egress points to the school, therefore alleviating the issue of queuing on the road and also the potential for a mini roundabout at the Mangrove Road/Hagsdell junction.
19. AG confirmed that contributions towards educational provision would be expected from developers. The amount will be calculated using HCC's planning obligations toolkit, together with any bespoke modelling taking into account the type and mix of development proposed.

Waste Water

20. RR from Thames Water was unavailable to attend the meeting. However, KM was able to confirm that there are known issues in the town. It will therefore be very important that RR's views on the proposed higher level

of development are sought. KM suggested that RR should be contacted directly in this respect.

Post Meeting Note: After the meeting RR provided the following information regarding sewerage issues:

- a) The site would drain to Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works (STW) which currently serves a population catchment of over 400,000 people in the wider area.
- b) The Water Cycle Study that was undertaken in 2008/9 forecast growth and the consequential impact on Rye Meads STW; however, the growth was not realised due to the downturn in housing development. The predicted capacity limitation dates within the study will effectively move forward; however, on-going works to change the way the sewage is treated have provided a further period of relief to between 2021 and 2026. After that time it is likely that additional capacity provision will need to be made. Additional tanks could be provided without any extension of the Treatment Works site and without any encroachment into the adjacent SSSI. However, it is important to note that the overall impact and treatment requirement cannot be fully predicted at this time as the cumulative effects of development from all the adjacent local authority areas also served by Rye Meads is not fully defined.

Masterplanning

21. The importance of Masterplanning was discussed, including an indicative layout and type and size of dwellings. KM explained the importance of the treed area, to ensure that the green finger is not impacted on by development. JW confirmed that public access to this land would be retained in perpetuity.
22. JW queried the proposed density, suggesting that up to 80 dwellings could in fact be accommodated. PC reiterated that the next transport model run would only test 50 dwellings. If an additional model run is required to test a higher number of dwellings then then this would need to be funded by the landowner/developer.
23. JW confirmed that the landowner would fund any work required at this stage, prior to a developer coming on board.
24. JW asked if we were able to assist with land contamination or archaeology. KM advised that Alison Tinniswood at HCC should be contacted directly for assistance on archaeology. In respect of contaminated land, while KM was not aware of any generally known contamination issues, the Council's Environmental Health department would be a good starting point in understanding if there were either any currently identified matters, or what investigative works could potentially be required.

Next Steps

25. It was agreed that any actions agreed above would be carried out and that further meetings could be scheduled in due course to cover specific matters, as appropriate. Attendees to these meetings would be invited as required, rather than all being requested to attend.

The meeting closed at 14:00.