

NOTES OF MEETING

East Herts Local Plan Delivery Study Leach/Ptarmigan (Ware 3) Meeting with EHDC and Peter Brett Associates Wednesday, 8 October at Wallfields, 3:00pm

In Attendance:

EHDC:	Kay Mead	(KM)
	Martin Paine	(MP)
Atlas:	Rob Smith	(RS)
PBA:	Stuart Cook	(SC)
	Shilpa Rasaiah	(SR)
	Elliot Page	(EP)
Leach/ Ptarmigan and their Team:	Jim Hatch	(JH)
	Chris Santer	(CS)
	Hugo Kirby	(HK)
	Steven Barker	(SB)
	Steven Kosky	(SK)
	Rupert Lyons	(RL)
	Stuart Morse	(SM)
Clare San Martin	(CM)	

Welcome from EHDC, followed by introductions from persons present.

Presentation

Leach/Ptarmigan introduced a power point presentation, being a simplified version of their formal Local Plan submissions of July 2014, tailored to address the specific questions/structure of this forum. A3 print outs of the slides were distributed to EHDC, Atlas and PBA for ease of reference.

CS, CM and HK talked for circa 30 minutes referring to the visuals, answering occasional questions for clarity. From 3.25pm there followed an informal question and answer session and discussions loosely based on the six point agenda, as circulated on 17 September (attached).

Discussion

EP referred to the link road and assumed its role was for access and relief and asked whether there would be either nil detriment or benefits to Ware town centre occasioned by the development.

SM advised that modelling parameters had been agreed with EHDC and HCC (to include existing "rat-running") and that a benefit was expected from the forthcoming strategic model.

KM queried timescales.

SM advised that the 'existing' model would be agreed in the next couple of weeks, with the 'with development' scenario hopefully following in a matter of weeks thereafter.

KM raised the issue of existing peak hour flows through Ware, which HK advised could be intercepted to provide relief.

RL advised that several 'no ransom' points with existing estate roads had been identified, which would help linkages and permeability to connect the new community with the existing town

EP queried deliverability and referred to the 'dog-leg' in the middle of the link road.

RL advised that the link was designed as a street and would pick up existing routes and public transport links, in particular Fanhams Hall Road, which forms the dog-leg more or less in the middle of the whole site.

EP/RS queried this area and what was deliverable in highways terms.

RL advised that this had already been carefully studied, including a topographical survey of Fanhams Hall Road between the north and east areas of the proposed strategic site. He confirmed that an improved road could be accommodated, without recourse to third party land outside the promoters' joint control.

It would not be possible to construct a foot/cycle on both sides of the street in this area, but a further independent pedestrian/cycle link was proposed to bypass this part of the street and run via Dark Lane and land controlled by the promoters and also providing direct linkage into the housing estates on the north/eastern edge of Ware, ie feeding south from and independent of the street and reflecting an obvious desire line.

MP questioned the regard paid to the wider area, ie A10 and A414 corridors and in particular HCC's interest in the cumulative impact of any of the major sites on the A414 in Hertford.

EP emphasised a need for the parties to cooperate and coordinate in order to present agreed evidence to the Local Plan Examination and RL observed that it would help if the County Council were to drive the highways overview.

EP suggested that public transport links were locked into the scheme to reduce the traffic flow through the town. It would be helpful if traffic flow, as a result of the development, could be shown to have a neutral impact.

SR observed that a clearer understanding of the potential betterment being provided by public transport and what effect this would have on modal shift would be useful.

SM observed that the A10 Ware junction was part of the highways model.

EP asked whether Network Rail had been consulted and RL advised that they would be. KM advised that Network Rail was due to consult on the Anglia Route Study on 20 October¹ should the consortium wish to respond around such issues as increased passenger numbers that could be generated by the development. EP urged to keep talking and that they were here to help and plug the gaps.

RS observed that the promoter's costings had gone further than most, but wondered whether all interventions had been listed. RL advised that more drill down was required which would rely upon the outcome of the modelling and RS asked for more detail on what the money would cover.

SC asked about viability in general and whether there were any identified abnormal costs in terms of, for example, the landscape, topography and ground conditions. ALL confirmed that there was nothing unusual or untoward in any respect.

KM reminded that existing minerals needed to be addressed in terms of sterilisation/viability and possible cost/sustainability benefits of using reserves in situ as part of the development. HCC has flagged this up and it needs to be addressed.

¹ Post Meeting Note - this consultation has been deferred and is now expected to be launched towards the end of October/beginning of November.

SR asked about Thames Water. ALL advised that this was factored in.

SR also asked about Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) sites and whether this had been costed in terms of values, suggesting a 10-15% decrease in values of immediately adjacent housing.

KM advised that a G&T report was going to Committee on 22 October and that it would be online in a day or so. In brief, it reported a need for twelve pitches by 2031 (seven in the first five years of the Local Plan) and five plots for show people by 2031 (one in the first five years). This will be dealt with in the District Plan and most of the strategic sites are identified as potential locations. This needs to be factored into costings so that implications would be known if the Broad Location were ultimately to be selected as a future Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Show People's site allocation as part of the overall development. SB queried how and it was agreed to study the report and at this stage guesstimate a likely impact of accommodating a G&T site(s) in the area, because PBA has to include this in its assessments.

MP raised detail considerations relating to build cost such as water efficiency, renewable energy and the assumptions made and a discussion ensued about minimum Building Regulations standards vis a vis aspirations and emerging Local Plan policies; not all being consistent.

SC advised that build costs were based on current Building Regulations minima and for affordable housing, RSL best practice. SR advised that PBA would go through all the emerging Local Plan policies and revert if there was anything therein which should be addressed regarding build costs. CS advised when questioned that the assumed average density was c30-31dph.

MP questioned what assumptions had been made regarding affordable provision. ALL agreed up to a maximum of 40% with a 75/25 split in accordance with policy.

SK asked about flexibility and MP advised that of course that was currently both national and local policy and guidance. HK observed that lower percentages may be appropriate for the earlier phases, if there was consensus that other infrastructure was vital to prime the development.

KM observed that WARE3 featured a very wide housing range (200-3,000) and wondered whether anything between the two extremes had been modelled. HK advised that for example 2,000 was tight and was the minimum needed for the secondary school (26 million for a 6 form entry) and the road and sewer was needed for any significant increase in houses.

KM observed that, as Ware lies within the overall Hertford and Ware Schools planning area for secondary provision, the secondary school could be required to meet the needs of Hertford as well as Ware and, therefore, may involve funding via contributions from sites in addition to WARE3. This may help viability at a sub 3,000 housing figure, but it was premature to speculate in the absence of input from the highways modelling.

KM asked why, compared to the land promoted via the SLAA, the land currently being promoted had shrunk in the east and bulged on the top. HK advised that the land previously proposed in the SLAA did not take all the available land, but the proposals were guided by preferences of the landowners and the landscape/topography appraisal, which had underpinned the master planning by JTP (CM).

RS also noted the "reshaping", the "white bits" and asked whether the Nuns Triangle was "in the pot or not". ALL advised that the white bits included excluded option land, third parties and other uses. HK confirmed that they were not for the promoters to promote. RS considered that PBA should include the white bits, but PBA replied that they were not looking at land capacity, rather the viability of what was being promoted.

KM observed that there may be a question mark about the Nuns Triangle, but it could possibly be a 'high end' business park if need were justified at that location. KM queried the "*housing notation*" on the master plan but JH/SB advised that it was mixed use on the master plan, with a gateway business park. KM was concerned about lack of a footpath on the A1170, Wodson Park sports complex being opposite and A10 road noise militating against housing. SR thought this was all far too detailed for this stage in the debate.

RS concurred that this forum was to consider first principles and costings and values based on industry norms and "*colours were not being nailed to masts*".

MP asked if there was any other business (there was none), thanked everyone who had attended and asked the promoters to draft a note of meeting which would be reported to members and added to the public document trail. The meeting closed at 4:40pm.