

Partnership Group Meeting: HERT2 Mead Lane Area, Hertford

East Herts Council Offices, Wallfields, Hertford SG13 8EQ

11:00 Thursday 24th July 2014

Meeting Notes

Attendees Present:

Bethan Clemence, Hertfordshire County Council, Education (BC)
Andrea Gilmour, Hertfordshire County Council, Property (AG)
Mark Wilson, Vincent & Goring (MW)
Ben Quarrie, National Grid Property (BQ)
Richard Reeve, Thames Water (RR)
Robert Blair, Arup (on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, Highways) (RB)
Kay Mead, East Herts Council (KM)
Chris Butcher, East Herts Council (CB)

Apologies:

Neil French, Hertfordshire County Council

Notes

Briefing Session Recap

- 1.1 KM opened the meeting and detailed that this meeting was a follow up to the original briefing session in April and was primarily intended to be used to discuss outstanding issues regarding site HERT2. It would deal with both sites specific matters and, where appropriate, wider strategic issues. KM further explained that attendees should be aware that all minutes from meetings of this nature are presented to District Planning Executive Panel and subsequently published on the Council's website in the interests of transparency. Therefore, they will become public documents. She also introduced CB to the group and explained that he will be assisting on proposals for the Mead Lane area.

Review of Draft District Plan Policy

- 1.2 KM referred to Policy HERT2 in the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document and indicated that it is a very short policy due to it referring to the provisions of the draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework (UDF). The UDF is now being progressed by CB and it is hoped that it could be adopted by the end of the year. There is a need to identify whether it is necessary to make any major changes to the draft document in light of consultation responses

received, in which case a further period of public consultation would be required. However, it is currently anticipated that this would be unlikely.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 1.3 The meeting was informed that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment was presented to the District Planning Executive Panel on 17th July 2014. The purpose of the document is to identify the level of need for new Gypsies and Travellers' pitches and Travelling Showpeople's plots in the District up to 2031.
- 1.4 Peter Brett Associates have been commissioned to undertake site scoping work and are assessing the potential of broad locations and sites identified in the District Plan Preferred Options document to deliver provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. However, the consultants will not be assessing site HERT2, partly due to contaminated land issues, but mainly because considerable work and public consultation has been carried out on the UDF which sets the parameters for development without the inclusion of such uses.

Delivery Study Inputs

- 1.5 MW indicated that Vincent & Gorbing had yet to submit any information to the Council in support of the Delivery Study but anticipated doing so by the end of July deadline. KM stated that any queries regarding the study should be directed to Martin Paine.

Site Investigation Sheets

- 1.6 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, with the potential exception of the Broad Locations, 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.

Working with Other Site Promoters

- 1.7 BQ stated that discussions had been held with Norbury Fencing regarding the potential to bring their land and National Grid land forward together in order to facilitate a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. However, following these discussions, it had been decided to promote the sites separately. KM indicated that the Council would see it as beneficial for the sites to come forward together. MW stated that he would continue to liaise with Norbury Fencing in order to try to come to an agreement. BQ and MW will submit a

statement to the Council in due course outlining the current position. MW agreed to forward contact details for Mr Norbury to KM.

- 1.8 KM advised that the Redrow site has been granted planning permission subject to S106 at Development Management Committee. The development will comprise 107 dwellings and a retail unit along with the provision of a link road between Mill Road and Mead Lane. The link road is required to allow the re-development of the rest of the HERT2 site.

Schools

- 1.9 BC stated that she is part of the Schools Planning Team within Hertfordshire County Council, which has responsibility to ensure that adequate school places are provided. She advised that there is a growing demand for both primary and secondary places in the town, but that demand for primary places is particularly strong. To meet growing needs, Simon Balle School has applied for permission to become an all through school from September 2015, which would cater for pupils aged 4 to 18. It would allow two forms of entry at primary level. It is unlikely that this proposal would subsequently lead to spaces becoming available at Wheatcroft or Abel Smith schools for pupils from the Mead Lane area, due to existing demand in those areas. In answering a question raised about the likelihood of the expansion of Simon Balle gaining permission, AG stated that should the application be refused, other schools in Hertford could be considered for single form of entry expansion but that, as they are on the edge of town, they would therefore create greater trip generation and exacerbate existing congestion issues.
- 1.10 AG indicated that for all developments in Hertford the County Council would be seeking S106 contributions for both primary and secondary education as well as other services listed in the HCC toolkit and that this has been reflected in the HCC response to the Preferred Options consultation. Alex Stevens at HCC would be able to provide further details on the requirements of the toolkit if needed.

Transport

- 1.11 RB stated that the site is in a sustainable location near to the town centre and Hertford East railway station. The primary constraint in terms of vehicular access is the single point of access into Mead Lane from Mill Road. There is also a junction capacity issue at both the junction of Mill Road/Ware Road and the Bluecoats roundabout on the A414.
- 1.12 RB further advised that the issue of emergency access needs to be considered as at present if Mill Road was blocked then emergency vehicles wouldn't be able to access the site.

- 1.13 Consideration also needs to be given to car parking provision and the potential impact on the wider area. KM advised that adjacent developments had made financial contributions towards the creation of a car club. RB also stated that the configuration of the Railway Street/Mill Road junction should be considered. At present traffic queues from the junction and stretches along Mead Lane at peak times. Improvements to the street scape in the area are also required.
- 1.14 The Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan (2010) considers many of these issues and suggests a range of potential options for dealing with them. However, it needs to be recognised that there may potentially now be more suitable and effective solutions available compared to when the UTP was adopted.
- 1.15 KM stated that the figure of 300 dwellings contained in the emerging Local Plan policy emanated from work originally undertaken as part of the UTP. The figure reflects the fact that the existing employment space on site needs to be maintained and not be jeopardised by the proximity of new residential development. This should be supplemented by new increased employment provision, which would also form a suitable buffer to avoid conflict between new residential and existing employment uses, some of which are non-neighbourly in nature. RB advised that Hertfordshire Highways are content with the level of residential development proposed, provided it remains within the levels detailed in the UTP.
- 1.16 RB confirmed that, in order for development to proceed, Marshgate Drive and Mead Lane would need to be better connected and that proposals should allow for bus access via a loop through the site. KM indicated that Neil French from HCC had previously held discussions with bus operators as part of the development of the UDF. It is likely that any service accessing the site would be provided as an extension to an existing route. Bus stops would also need to be provided on site to serve the expanded route. KM also indicated that a financial contribution is often required to support new or expanded bus routes until such a time as they become commercially viable. RB confirmed that a travel plan and a transport assessment would be required as part of any future planning application.
- 1.17 KM stated that both East Herts and Hertfordshire County Councils are supportive of bringing forward development on the site to regenerate the area. Once the finalised Mead Lane UDF has been adopted by the Council, it would no longer be necessary to wait until the District Plan is adopted as the finalised UDF and currently adopted Local Plan saved Policy HE5 would provide the policy basis for considering a planning application. . Public consultation on proposed amendments to the Draft District Plan will need to be undertaken, which will comprise a revised policy on Gypsies and Travellers

and Travelling Showpeople and other outstanding issues in late 2014 or early 2015 prior to Pre-Submission consultation. Should further consultation on the draft Mead Lane UDF be required as a result of any material changes to the document, it would be held at the same time.

- 1.18 In terms of the draft UDF, KM indicated that the widening of Marshgate Drive and provision of car club spaces are particularly important issues for the proposed development. RB explained that a new step free bridge was planned which will cross the River Lea and provide a better connection to Mill Road from Hartham Common. It is expected that the bridge will be completed in 2016 or 2017.
- 1.19 RB suggested that any correspondence or queries relating to transport issues should be sent in the first instance to Paul Chappell at HCC with RB, KM and CB copied in.

Waste Water

- 1.20 RR indicated that Thames Water (TW) see the brownfield nature of the site as beneficial. It is hoped that the development will lead to a reduced flow of surface water into the foul sewer network.
- 1.21 RR explained that 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.
- 1.22 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, ongoing 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.
- 1.23 RR continued by discussing site specifics and explained that there was not anticipated to be any problems associated with foul drainage as the trunk sewer is located close to the site and there were local connections leading to it. TW would reserve the right to request an impact study to confirm if any suggested point of connection would be suitable.
- 1.24 In terms of Surface Water issues, RR detailed that SUDs are generally seen as the focus. Contamination on the site could have an impact in respect of

discharging to the river, but that the process of development may actually result in an improvement on existing conditions. A foul water sewer drainage solution should be viewed as a last option.

Wildlife Sites

1.25 KM advised that the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are currently assessing all existing wildlife sites as well as potential new sites. It is not likely that this will result in any problems for the HERT2 site although the Trust may get in touch if any issues arise. KM said that site studies on proposed allocated sites and broad locations were being undertaken by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, subject to a prioritised programme. Surveys would be undertaken where there were designated wildlife sites on or in the vicinity of proposed development locations or if there was knowledge of potential specific local matters. For the HERT2 site no surveys would be conducted this year, but it is likely that they would be completed in 2015 if any were considered necessary by the Trust, in which case contact would be made in due course.

River

1.26 KM indicated that, when the first draft of the Mead Lane UDF was prepared, discussions had been held with British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust). They wanted to ensure that any new development would not impede the towpath and if possible, that the towpath be widened and made more accessible. Paul Maison at the Trust would be the best initial point of contact for discussing issues regarding the river frontage and ecology.

Minerals

1.27 KM advised that HCC is requiring developers to investigate whether there would be the potential for any minerals deposits on sites. If minerals were found it is unlikely that this would preclude development but there could be a requirement to make use of any such deposits as part of the development. Julie Greaves at HCC should be approached in this respect. BQ recognised that comprehensive remediation studies need to be prepared and that these would identify the presence of any minerals.

Site Remediation

1.28 BQ stated that remediation schemes had taken place previously but that further work may be required for residential use. This will be looked at further when developers are brought on board.

Masterplanning concepts and other issues

- 1.29 KM noted that discussions on development proposals for the site have previously taken place with Tim Hagyard of the East Herts Development Management Team. While he was unable to attend the meeting, due to other commitments, he is still involved with the site. MW indicated that as much information as possible will be sent to East Herts in order to inform the emerging District Plan. BQ stated that the detailed design of the development would be discussed with developers later on but that Tim Hagyard's previous comments would be carefully considered.

Other Matters

- 1.30 MW noted that part of the site is within a flood risk area and that discussions would need to be held with the Environment Agency. KM stated for information that the development of the former TXU site included basement parking as a flood mitigation measure. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which is published on the Council's website, should be referred to in bringing forward development proposals.
- 1.31 BQ indicated that National Grid Property anticipate that, subject to marketing, development could potentially start on site in early 2016. The Council will be kept informed regarding marketing of the site.
- 1.32 KM explained that, in its response to the Preferred Options consultation, HCC has indicated that it would be unable to give support to the development of any sites in Hertford at present due to the cumulative impact of the total amount of development proposed and existing congestion issues on the A414 through the town. A study looking at this issue is currently being prepared by HCC. However the principle of development at Mead Lane has already been identified within the Hertford and Ware UTP and this document had been adopted by both District and County Councils. The issue of development in this location may therefore be less of a concern for HCC as long as the criteria within the UTP were met.

Next Steps

- 1.33 KM stated that the next step in the process was for a response to be made to the Delivery Study Inputs requested by Martin Paine by the end of July.
- 1.34 Any future meetings in respect of the proposed allocation in the District Plan would be held on a needs arising basis and may not involve all attendees that were present at the current meeting.
- 1.35 KM thanked all present for attending the meeting.