

**PARISH LIAISON
TUESDAY, 22ND JANUARY, 2013**

Present:-

Councillor Gerald Smith (in the Chair) and representatives of the following Parish and Town Councils:-

Anston	Councillors J. Dalton, C. Jepson and S. Thornton and Mr. M. Gazur (Parish Clerk)
Aston-cum-Aughton	Councillor L. Pitchley and Mr. A. Hodkin (Parish Clerk)
Catcliffe	Councillors D. Hughes and B. Jolly
Dinnington	Councillors Barker, McIvor and J. P. Wardle and Mrs. K. Amies (Parish Clerk)
Maltby	Councillor C. Beaumont
Ravenfield	Councillors N. Pearson, D. Rowley and C. H. Ward and Mr. A. V. Scholes (Parish Clerk)
Thrybergh	Councillor D. Bates
Wickersley	Councillor S. E. Ellis
Woodsetts	Councillors J. E. Sherratt and R. Swann

Also in attendance:- Karl Battersby (Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services) and Andy Duncan (Planning Policy Manager)

23. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24. THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE ROTHERHAM LOCAL PLAN

The Planning Policy Manager presented information about the progress of the Rotherham Local Plan, highlighting the following issues:-

(a) Local Plan information

- : long term planning for the future prosperity of the area;
- : the decent homes initiative;
- : protection of the environment;
- : 'deciding our own destiny' and setting a local target for house building;
- : the increase in the price of housing and also house sales reducing because of the state of the economy;
- : more people are now on the Borough Council's housing waiting list;
- : a local study of the Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common area has revealed a limited supply of housing and social housing;
- : the Local Plan Core Strategy will cover the next 15 years;
- : development is to take place in the Rotherham urban area (Bassingthorpe Farm site at Greasbrough);
- : significant development is also happening at Waverley;
- : some growth of housing development will take place in principal settlements, eg: Dinnington, Wath-upon-Deerne, Brampton Bierlow,

Bramley and Wickersley;

: the Sites and Policies document will specify sites for development, the policies will inform future decisions on applications for planning permission and will include information about conservation areas and sites of special scientific interest;

(b) Consultation about the Local Plan

: consultation will take place with Elected Members, Parish Councils, Area Assemblies, the general public and the local media;

: there will be improved pre-publicity about consultation events, including the use of email messages and letters sent to consultees;

: there will be the use of web-based consultation;

: stakeholder seminars will take place, as well as workshops and public drop-in sessions; there will be various meetings, perhaps jointly with several Parish Councils in one area;

: the Borough Council was asking how best to engage with Parish Councils in considering the Local Plan

(c) Progress to be made during 2013

: consultation about the Core Strategy and the focused changes which have been made to the document;

: consultation about the Sites and Policies document;

: submission of the Core Strategy to HM Government, after which there will be the public examination of the document, probably during the Summer 2013;

: adoption of the Core Strategy later in the year;

: consultation at the time of publication of the Sites and Policies document.

25. QUESTIONS

After the presentation, discussion took place on the following issues raised by the Parish Councils' representatives:-

(a) (Dinnington) The Dinnington Green Belt Group has engaged in dialogue with the Borough Council's Planning Service, in the past and now question whether in fact any material change is being made to the Core Strategy and to the strategic housing land availability assessment; there is a shortage of social housing in the Anston and Dinnington area and emphasis ought to be placed on the provision of social housing for Rotherham people, rather than for people from elsewhere; is it the case that any land taken from the existing green belt is more likely to be used for larger, executive-style housing, than for social housing?

In response, it was acknowledged that there has been a constructive dialogue between the Borough Council and the Dinnington Green Belt Group. Ultimately, local planning authorities will be allowed to establish their own targets for future housing development. Rotherham and

Sheffield are closely linked in terms of the economy and the housing market. Private house builders are required, via their planning permissions, to provide a minimum amount of affordable housing. The focused changes have revealed that, whilst some 1,300 houses are to be built in the Anston and Dinnington area, over a period of 15 years, the net increase resulting from the Core Strategy focused changes will be 40 additional houses, a factor which is regarded as having a minimal impact.

(b) (Dinnington) An issue concerning the environment and the availability of cultural and recreational facilities.

In response, assessments are always made of the environmental impact of new development; of the impact upon agricultural land; the nearness of housing to transport corridors; however, the planning process is not an exact science and is always a balance between the impact on the environment and providing homes and jobs in the best locations.

(c) (Wickersley) A request made for specific detail about future house building in the Bramley, Ravenfield and Wickersley area, which is very attractive to prospective developers. In reply, it was emphasised that the expected Borough-wide distribution of new housing would not be altered simply to accommodate high demand in specific districts. The requested information will be provided.

(d) (Wickersley) A reference to the community infrastructure levy (CIL), which will replace the current 'community gain' achieved by the use of Section 106 agreements as part of planning permissions. How will Parish Councils be able to benefit from the new levy ? Would the levy be channelled into areas by means of the Borough Council Area Assemblies, or will use be made of the local knowledge of Parish Councils?

In response, it is anticipated that this issue will be included in future public consultation exercises, as the Core Strategy must be in place before the CIL system is introduced. Early experience of the levy (eg: Newark and Sherwood District Council) has shown that the system has not provided significant amounts of money, because of the current recession.

(e) (Wickersley) Will there be a strategic focus to the consultation about specific sites, during the Spring 2013? Previously, it has appeared to be a haphazard method, examining some sites which are not obviously attached to a particular community.

In reply, it was noted that the previous consultation, especially on specific sites in Dinnington, had not engendered a very positive response. In 2013, a smaller range of sites will be the subject of the consultation process, which will also include issues such as transportation planning, biodiversity etc. It is expected that local knowledge and the views of the public will be very informative to the whole process. However, it is inevitable that the process will stimulate some forceful reactions.

(f) (Wickersley) Attendance at consultation meetings? The Planning Service will respond to reasonable and manageable demand, in terms of attendance at Parish Council meetings, public meetings etc. It will be helpful if some Parish Councils are willing to group together in one joint meeting, so as to make best use of the Council's limited staffing resources.

(g) (Anston) A criticism of the Core Strategy changes as they affect Anston and Dinnington, making reference to recent development in Laughton Common, the White City and elsewhere in Dinnington and Monksbridge.

In response, it is acknowledged that there has been a shortfall in new house building in the Rotherham Borough area, in recent years. Repeating an earlier reply, the net increase resulting from the Core Strategy focused changes will be 40 additional houses in the Anston and Dinnington area, which is regarded as having a minimal impact. In order to make up that shortfall, there will inevitably be some development on existing green belt land.

(h) (Anston) Parish Councillors have continual contact with the public. Therefore, it will be very helpful to receive more up-to-date information about the contents of the Local Plan.

Response – meetings such as this one are useful in disseminating information.

(i) (Ravenfield) A concern about the changes to the figures for future house building. The impact of new development appears to be much greater in Parish areas. Is there a deliberate policy to develop green belt land?

In response, reference was made to the large development in the urban area of Waverley. The Core Strategy has a principal objective to be clear about the release of any green belt land.

(j) (Anston) Has the projected figure for new housing at Waverley reduced?

Response – No. The number of houses for Waverley is fixed as it has planning permission. As the numbers for other areas have increased slightly, the percentage of growth for Waverley as part of the overall Borough-wide target has reduced.

(k) (Ravenfield) Awaiting sight of the maps and proposals for specific sites. There is concern that Ravenfield may be swamped by significant future development, depending upon the contents of the sites and policies document.

Response – debate about specific sites will happen later in 2013. No

views have yet been formed about specific sites and there will be discussions with local people. The Borough Council does receive some pressure from individual landowners who may aspire to sell land for development.

(l) (Anston) An issue about the use of green belt land and a question about the quantity of green belt land around the Anston area.

Reply - the need to preserve green belt land is acknowledged; the Local Plan will be used to earmark 'safeguarded land', whereby sites within the green belt are to be protected; on approval of the Local Plan, the green belt allocation of land will remain unaltered for the 15 years life of the Plan; safeguarded land would only be considered for release after a full review of the Local Plan.

(m) (Wickersley) Will land be released from the green belt if targets for new housing are not achieved ? When would 'safeguarded' green belt land be used for development ?

In response, it was noted that 'safeguarded' green belt land is to be held in reserve. Any release and reallocation of such land for development will require a review of the Core Strategy and a public consultation exercise. If the current economic recession persists for several more years, it is unlikely that any green belt land will have to be released in that time, because of the reduced amount of new house building taking place.

(n) (Anston) How is a site brought forward for development, because some sites may be deemed unsuitable for specific types of development?

Response – a process of examining draft proposals for site development; sometimes landowners will apply pressure to have their land assessed for development; a developer will submit an application for planning permission; the Planning Service also identifies suitable sites. There is necessarily an element of estimation. The Planning Inspectorate must also be satisfied that a site is capable of accommodating new development.

(o) (Dinnington) Housing issues also include large dwellings which are under-occupied. Is there a process whereby such housing could be released for use by large families?

Response – the Borough Council is examining this issue as part of its housing strategy and in response to the policies of the coalition Government (eg: the 'bedroom tax'). The Borough Council's own housing waiting list continues to grow, although the figures relating to under-occupancy of housing are less certain.

(p) (Dinnington) Reference to the issue of social housing policy and the Borough Council's local lettings policy.

Reply – the Borough Council has good relationships with social landlords. Every endeavour is made to supply the local demand for a range of suitable housing. People do migrate between areas.

(q) (Dinnington) Suggestion that clear guidelines should be introduced for the allocation of social housing to tenants, in a way that meets the needs of local people. Such a process has been successful in Treeton, but less so at Laughton Common where people arrived from many other areas.

(r) (Catcliffe) Is it possible for the type of development at Waverley (some 4,000 houses) to alter, perhaps as a consequence of coalition Government policy ?

Response – a developer is able to resubmit an application to vary a Section 106 agreement; the coalition Government is committed to provide affordable housing, although such policy is subject to change.

(s) (Anston) A landowner is able to veto a developer's plans to build houses ?

Reply - If a landowner is unwilling to sell land, no development will take place. It is not the intention of the Borough Council to undertake the compulsory purchase of land in order to meet targets for housing provision.

(t) (Dinnington) An issue about the possible use of land formerly allocated as 'white' land in the now outdated unitary development plan.

Response – There would first of all be an emphasis upon the use of allocated land, rather than green belt land or safeguarded land.

(u) (Anston) A plea that the forthcoming public consultation may be as extensive and informative as possible.

In response, the Borough Council representatives stated that the intention of the Local Plan is to distribute housing development across the whole Borough area in a sensible and shared way. There will always objections expressed in the "not in my back yard" argument. The speculative planning applications ought to be avoided. The Borough Council intends to consult effectively, prepare a Local Plan and try and help the development process.

Parish Councils asked to be provided with a copy of the presentation slides used at this meeting.

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Parish Council representatives raised the following issues:-

(1) Dinnington Road/Worksop Road, Woodsetts

During the current period of inclement weather, a heavy goods vehicle had experienced difficulty travelling through the village of Woodsetts. Subsequently, the Streetpride Service had ensured that there was sufficient gritting of this length of highway.

(2) A57 Highway Improvement Scheme

The requirement for road diversions, during the time of this highway improvement scheme, was causing some difficulty in the neighbouring parishes of Anston, Dinnington and Woodsetts and was made worse by the recent snowfall. The Borough Council was asked to investigate the specific difficulties caused by the movement of heavy goods vehicles along (i) New Road, Dinnington; (ii) Penny Piece Lane, North Anston; and (iii) the B6060 Ryton Road, North Anston.

(3) Winter maintenance of highways

The meeting placed on record its appreciation of the work of the Streetpride Service in gritting the roads around the Borough, during the recent period of snowfall and in responding promptly to difficult areas and to requests from the public.

27. CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Smith thanked the Parish Councils' representatives for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.35 p.m.