

Minutes of the Parish Meeting of Fairfield Parish Council held in Fairfield Community Hall on Thursday 25th January 2018 at 7:30 pm

Councillors present: C Bidwell (Chairman), B E Dack, P Daffarn, A M Hunt and S J Jones

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk)

Also present: Ward Member Councillor S Dixon, Victoria Charlesson (Blandy and Blandy) and seventy six members of the public.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N P Hanks (conflict of interest) and T Milliken (holiday)

2 Disclosures of Interest and Dispensation requests

- 2.1 Councillor Hanks has previously advised that his company is involved with Axiom Developments Limited so he is not able to discuss or be involved in any future proposals from them.
- 2.2 Councillor Bidwell declared a personal interest for all other parish councillors for Fairfield as all residents of Fairfield
- 2.3 No other disclosures of interest and no requests for dispensation were received.

3 Welcome

- 3.1 Councillor Bidwell welcomed everyone and introduced Ward Member Councillor Dixon who is a Ward Member but not a Planning Officer so is here to listen to concerns and answer questions wherever possible, Councillor Barrie Dack who has taken the lead for FPC on the Local Plan and Victoria Charlesson from Blandy and Blandy (FPC's solicitors). Councillor Bidwell advised residents that at the end of the meeting he would ask if they support what FPC is doing.

4 Presentations on the Local Plan

- 4.1 Councillor Dixon gave a brief synopsis of the plan and showed a map of 'Policy SA3: East of Arlesey' with the proposed allocations marked in a red area. Within this red area there is in the region of 2,000 homes, a country park, health care facility, new community facilities, educational facilities and provision of leisure facilities.

He encouraged residents to attend the drop-in session at Arlesey Village Hall on Tuesday 30th January 2018 between 3.00 pm and 7.30 pm. Residents have until 22nd February 2018 to have their say and they can do this via the CBC or by post.

He advised residents to make constructive comments when responding and to concentrate on what is in the plan and not speculation. He has told the portfolio holder that preventing coalescence must be effective. (Coalescence is the process of growing together to form one thing).

4.2 Councillor Dack advised that FPC had seen a developers' proposed plans with a relief road being suggested within 100m from the Fairfield boundary and the developer had advised that they could put money upfront so the relief road can be build first. However, Councillor Dack acknowledged that no road was shown within the red area of the Local Plan.

Councillor Dack raised the question why is the area owned by Linden Homes not included in the red area and remains white. FPC has previously enquired about purchasing this land to protect it from ever being built on as it would be ideal for leisure activities but nothing had been heard since the Local Plan was issued.

FPC acknowledges it can't stop the Local Plan going ahead in some form as there is a desperate need for homes. However, there needs to be a clear green boundary formed between Fairfield and Arlesey to prevent any coalescence between the two communities.

To assist FPC with its report for submission for the Local Plan consultation, FPC has engaged CSA Environment as the Strategic Landscaper and Blandy and Blandy for legal advice.

Councillor Dack reiterated the details about the drop-in session on Tuesday 30th January and also encouraged all residents to respond to the consultations as the planning inspector wants to see the opinion of as many people as possible and not just from the parish council. It is very important that residents make their comments whether they agree or disagree with the plan. FPC website has details of the plan and links to the CBC website where the full plan can be downloaded with details of how to comment to the consultation.

4.3 Residents were then given the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Q. Are FPC objections to whole of the Local Plan or just part of it?

A. FPC has concerns about part of it, in particular preventing any coalescence.

Q. Is there any guidelines on what is acceptable distance between two places?

A. No, as it is always based on individual cases. There is no definition as it is what is effective and acceptable.

Q. Has there been any talk between NHDC and CBC as the North Hertfordshire Plan includes proposals near to the Bedfordshire border?

A. CBC has a duty to speak to all areas on the borders and concerns have been raised regarding the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Q. Who owns the area in the red area?

A. CBC, two farmers and the Church of England Commissioners.

Q. Fairfield was promised a new retail unit and medical hub on the new development opposite but nothing has materialised.

A. FPC pushed for a surgery but local surgeries made it clear there were not enough doctors. With regards to the shop, it took four years into the development of Fairfield before Tesco agreed to take the vacant unit Dickens Boulevard. So it may take some time for a shop to be agreed on the new development. It is imperative though that the unit stays as a retail unit and FPC will continue to keep asking for a shop.

Q. Do Arlesey want a green space between them and Fairfield?

A. Arlesey Town Council has split views on the whole proposals. Some are in favour and others against.

Q. What is the school provision for all the new houses?

A. There is a new lower school being built on the new development in Fairfield. Pix Brook Academy will open next year and will take children from aged 9 to 16. Etonbury School now takes children for the same age group. New schools are included in the proposal for the new Arlesey development.

Q. Are there any laws to protect the wildlife?

A. FPC will be asking the Strategic Landscaper to be looking at this.

- Q. What leisure facilities will be provided for these 2,000 extra houses?
A. Policy EE13: Outdoor sport, leisure and open space covers this. On the East of Arlesey proposal one of the principles of development is the provision of leisure facilities, including indoor sport and leisure facilities, in accordance with Policy HQ3; and outdoor sport, leisure and open space, in accordance with Policies EE12, including pavilions and allotments.
- Q. Can Fairfield have a Gastro Pub?
A. There was a proposal for a pub on the new development but that required the purchase of four houses.
- Q. Residents are asked to be scientific and factual when responding but how can they be when CBC is not where the road will be?
A. Residents must just comment on what is included in the Local Plan.
- Q. There is currently a blocked road (West Drive) that connects Fairfield and Arlesey. Is there any protection to stop that road being reopened?
A. Unlikely to change West Drive from its current footpath and bridleway status as Eliot Way is not wide enough to take full traffic. A507 is a potential problem and ways to increase the flow of the traffic on this road will need to be investigated.
- Q. It has been mentioned that if there is no infrastructure the plan will not happen but there is no doctor surgery and no school, the A507 is already a problem and there is problem with the water and sewerage so how can the plan proceed.
A. All valid points so should be included in response to the consultation.
- Q. Did the owners of the Blue Lagoon have several planning applications refused?
A. Yes, CBC has refused former planning applications.
- Q. Should Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield be making a joint response to the Local Plan?
A. This has been considered but as each community has different needs and issues it was felt that separate responses should be made.
- Q. There is a central government policy to build more houses which local councils have to implement. Will the infrastructure be there before the homes or will we have to wait 10/15 years for the roads to become a problem, schools to be full and insufficient doctors?
A. FPC agree more infrastructure is needed and once again encouraged residents to comment on this.
- Q. Can FPC do a template as sometimes people don't know how to object?
A. It is not advisable, as when people have different responses they are more effective. It is important that residents make their own comments.
- Q. FPC has employed a Landscape Developer. Is there any scope to also employ a traffic specialist?
A. FPC will look into this.

- 4.4 When asked if they agreed with the actions FPC has taken and will be taking, residents showed approval and no further comments or objections were offered.
- 4.5 Residents were thanked for attending and were reminded to attend the drop-in at Arlesey Village Hall and encouraged once again to make their comments on the Local Plan.

5 Date of next meeting

- 5.1 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 1st February 2018 at 7.00 pm for planning and 7.30 pm for all other matters.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm