

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Of a meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 3 August 2023 from 7.00 - 9.02 pm

Present:

Councillors:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Chair)

Sara Bedford (In place of Chris Lloyd)

Oliver Cooper

Steve Drury

Rue Grewal

Philip Hearn

David Major (In place of Matthew Bedford)

Chris Mitchell

Sarah Nelmes

Paul Rainbow (In place of Phil Williams)

Also in Attendance:

Councillors Narinder Sian and Jon Tankard and Croxley Green Parish Council

Officers in Attendance:

Marko Kalik

Judy Smith

Sarah Haythorpe

LPSC13/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Phil Williams, Matthew Bedford and Chris Lloyd with the substitutes being Councillors Paul Rainbow, David Major and Sara Bedford. An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Stephen Cox.

LPSC14/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Local Plan sub-committee meetings held on 13 June 2023 and 10 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

LPSC15/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

None.

LPSC16/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

LPSC17/23 LOCAL PLAN - URBAN BROWNFIELD AND LOW TO MODERATE GREEN BELT HARM SITES, EXCLUDING STRATEGIC SITES

The Chair advised that the sub-committee would be considering the urban brownfield sites and low to moderate Green Belt harm sites but not the strategic sites.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation reported that the recommendations were to progress all the urban brownfield sites and low to moderate harm Green Belt sites, to agree the sites and to recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the next round of Regulation 18 consultation. The approach taken was agreed at the Local Plan sub-committee meetings. We are trying to guide development away from the areas of most harm to the Green Belt and focus on low to moderate harm sites in the Green Belt. The meeting on 24 August would review the larger strategic sites which fall into higher areas of harm and whether the benefits of those sites on sustainability and infrastructure outweigh the higher harm to the Green Belt.

There were a number of sites that fell into lower harm which were larger sites, one being the site off Shepherds Lane, Mill End and the other the lower part of the site in Maple Cross which would come to the sub-committee with the strategic sites. Members were advised of the risks associated with the approach being taken and having a number significantly lower than the Government standard method target. There is a risk that when we go to examination with the Inspector, they may not find this acceptable and could ask us to find more Green Belt sites. An example was provided where following government consultation and at the examination stage a LA was asked to remove their Green Belt sites and the Inspector advised that the consultation is just that and they were judging them against the same criteria as before and needed to include Green Belt sites. In identifying the risks there was a chance that the Government could change policy, but we are not sure when that might be.

All the sites were agreed for the previous Regulation 18 consultation and were found to be suitable. The sub-committee should look at anything which had come up recently which provided an obstacle which cannot be resolved.

There was an error with regard to site H9 – 33 Baldwins Lane – included in the urban brownfield sites. It was meant to say 0.09 hectares for the site size, but it said 0.9 hectares, so the housing number was too large for the actual size of the site and the number of dwellings had been reduced from around 50 dwellings to 10. This meant the brownfield site figure had reduced to under 1,000. No new brownfield sites had been promoted by any of the owners.

On the Red Cross site in Croxley Green there had been a section of text removed. Officers advised they would be looking at the community facility to be part of the building to be developed. Some of the maps had been updated – CFS65 and CFS3 for the presentation to be provided tonight.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35(b) a member of the Joint Resident Association spoke in support of the process being taken. On the Red Cross site in Croxley Green and the library car park could the site be removed. On North Cott Lane, Bedmond had concerns the site would not be deliverable due to access issues. On Lower House, Station Road, Kings Langley accepted the brownfield element of the site for development, but it should be limited to only this part of the site and exclude the car park area which is subject to enforcement action. On Kebbell House, Carpenders Park in light of recent flooding can it be made clear that development required material flood mitigation to be put in place before any development. On land at Chorleywood station there must be a condition that any development includes replacement parking. This would also apply at Croxley station. On Vivian Gardens, Oxhey Hall, the gardens behind the two existing dwellings, do they meet the guidelines of the brownfield land definition.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation agreed to check on the car parks. On the land at Chorleywood station, we would be pushing for full parking provision. Transport for London (TfL) had stated they do not think it is feasible, but discussions are ongoing. With regard to Kebbell House we would require flood mitigation. The

northern part of the site in the highest flood zone would not have any built development and there would need to be a buffer from that area. On Vivian Gardens in the NPPF glossary it does state that garden land is included as brownfield land.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35(a) a member of Croxley Green Parish Council spoke on the Red Cross centre and the Metropolitan Line Croxley Rail Link. They spoke on the leases on the building and car park. They believed the site was too small to accommodate the costs of demolition and rebuilding to provide a useful community space but welcomed the opportunity to discuss its future use. Requested the Red Cross site be withdrawn. Believed the number of dwellings to be delivered for 33 Baldwins Lane and Cinnamon House could not be accommodated. Had concerns on building on these sites with regard to the rail link.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation advised that on the Red Cross building in the previous consultation we were looking at an indicative figure of six dwellings. The figures are indicative, and it is not the exact figure which could come at the planning application stage. Any planning application would be assessed on the LA's planning policies in place at the time when the planning application was submitted.

Questions were raised on the Brownfield sites as follows:

Q Sought clarification on the dwellings at Kebbell House

A That would have been based on the assessment work and by what had been proposed when they came into the Local Plan process which is separate to the planning application process.

Q site CFS16 – Chorleywood Station car park - concerns about the deliverability, the access to the car park via a single-track road, with either side being Chorleywood Common and the grassland either side being protected. This is a local nature reserve, so any widening of the access road is not feasible. Referenced site NSS5 which had been rejected on similar grounds near West Hyde. There is a Parish path across the site which is used by residents and had to be maintained. Could it be made into a formal public footpath. To access the path, you need to use some steps leading up from Lower Road and step free access is needed to be provided as a condition. The Neighbourhood Plan provides that buildings can only be three storeys and the site is within sight of two Conservation Areas and should be enforced in the Local Plan. The station provides a vital source of transport to get into London and the parking provision needed to be maintained.

A For all the sites coming forward we would expect them to be 100% policy compliant with our emerging Local Plan policies. In terms of improving the steps we can talk to the developer who may be willing to fund that directly as pedestrian access. We would need to have some discussions with Herts County Council (HCC) and TfL regarding the access and if it were unsurmountable it would have to come out or dwelling numbers be reduced. We can keep the site in at this stage for the Regulation 18 while we are gathering information but will need to make a decision at the Regulation 19 stage. The Chair advised that HCC had supported the inclusion of the site.

Q if the Chorleywood station site was developed, we need to ensure the provision of parking, and this must be reflected in our policies. We should resist any reduction in parking that may be proposed by TfL. We must protect the Conservation Area and the views.

A On parking provision this would be written into the policy. We do need to get TfL to agree to that and discussions are ongoing. In terms of the Conservation Area there are important views and there would be some restrictions on height so we may need to relook at the dwelling capacity, but it was about trying to get the balance between harm and it being in a sustainable location. It would be for TfL to advise if they can meet our conditions.

We should not be taking out the brownfield sites at this stage as the more we take out the more Green Belt sites we have to consider and urged not to take out any sites at this stage.

Councillor Chris Mitchell moved an amendment that the Red Cross site in Croxley Green be removed from the draft plan at this stage and if in the future it is possible to build a community facility and flats there then it comes back as a windfall site, seconded by Councillor Oliver Cooper.

A Member said the Red Cross site should be included and if we find we are not able to do something we then take it out. The situation with the library car park needs to be sorted out with HCC. Do we know how many other halls there are in Croxley Green already and are they oversubscribed regularly? They would not like to see any impact on the halls in the district. In the Regulation 18 it does say there will be community space and believed a long-term new building was achievable if we have some residential accommodation there to be 100% affordable which there is demand for in Croxley Green. The Chair advised that the Council had been clear it wishes to retain a community facility, but it would not be identical to what is there now. Plans are being worked on by officers and are being shared with the Parish Council re the Red Cross site. There had been an objection to the provision of community space on the site as direct competition to other sites and venues in the area. Officers recommended keeping the site in the plan and if it is not feasible to do what is being suggested then it could be dropped. This is a sustainable site for development at the heart of Croxley Green and needed to be included. We need to keep Brownfield sites in as long as possible until it is proved they are not able to go forward.

At the planning application stage there would need to be a demonstrable need for the community asset. A number of brownfield sites had been removed and around 400 units were no longer deliverable or being promoted. There does need to be clarification on the red line around the site and asked officers to reflect on this before going out for consultation.

A Member asked for clarification on Appendix 7, the statutory consultee response summaries, as there was no response from HCC. The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation would check this but was not aware they had made any comments.

On being put to the sub-committee the proposed amendment to remove the Red Criss site was declared LOST by the Chair the voting be 4 For, 6 Against and 0 Abstentions.

Q On the British Legion site in Rickmansworth (H18) the reprovision of the community facility should be provided on site and not elsewhere although there is a facility opposite which they wished to declare an interest in as a member of the organisation which runs it.

A: Batchworth Community Council in their response to the consultation had not requested the retaining of the facility. It would be left to our planning policies on community assets for providing the facilities and where was the best location.

Q On the Croxley Green station site can we include we have a preference or request some form of doctor's surgery/medical centre.

A: not sure we can at this stage on this size of the site, but we can talk to the developer about it. The officer was not sure if it would be possible to include a note that there is an under provision of health facilities in Croxley Green and would need to think about that. Officers could look to provided data on health gaps and see if it could apply to school provision.

Councillor Philip Hearn moved an amendment that the Chorleywood Station Car park (CFS16) be removed from the Brownfield sites, seconded by Councillor Oliver Cooper.

On being put to the sub-committee the proposed amendment was declared LOST by the Chair the voting be 4 For, 6 Against and 0 Abstentions.

Q on Stockers Farm Road (H22) having a condition on biodiversity net gain is less meaningful now and asked whether we can limit the site to just the built-up area and not into the wildlife site.

A with biodiversity net gain becoming law we would require it on all sites and in the process would not have included any wildlife site. Officers would be happy to redraw the boundary.

Councillor Oliver Cooper proposed that the red line be redrawn for site H22, duly seconded.

On being put to the sub-committee the proposed amendment was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being by general assent.

Lower Harm Green Belt sites

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation presented details on the consideration of Green Belt harm and sustainability and our approach on the low to moderate harm sites. Details were provided on our sustainability appraisals and the scoring system. 12 sites had met the criteria and a few other sites which had been held back for the next meeting.

Q what was the rationale for some brownfield sites being included here and not previously.

A these are brownfield sites which are within the Green Belt while the others are brownfield sites in the urban area. They are in higher harm areas but as they are brownfield sites, we want to develop them where possible as it will have less of an impact on the Green Belt because they are already developed to some extent. The first area being looked at was Bedmond and the area not shaded green is the proposed inset area of Bedmond village following the Green Belt review. It had been consulted on that this area would be taken out of the Green Belt as this area did not contribute to the Green Belt as it was too densely built up.

On 56 The High Street site there had been some confusion. The site was being promoted by the owner and is still available and deliverable. If the owners decided to remove the site, they can put in representation. We have considered the cumulative impact of development in Bedmond, and this site and the North Cott East Lane site were considered the best sites. Three other sites in Bedmond had been removed and just these two sites were being promoted to the next stage of the consultation. The red line does need to be redrawn to demonstrate which part of the site is of lower harm. Officers were happy to redraw the boundary prior to the next meeting. There is a dwelling on the site and there is potential for that dwelling to be removed to create better access.

Land adjacent to Fraser Crescent and Woodside Road - the plan had been updated and the field between Fraser Crescent and Woodside Road was already allocated as a school site from the 2011 Local Plan. HCC had indicated if there were further developments in the Abbots Langley there would be a school provided. Could the plan indicate this? Further discussion is taking place with HCC and due to the accumulative effect of development they would be looking at another school but had not developed the school from the previous Local Plan. Local Councillors had tried to defend the site, but the Inspector had agreed the site was not a vital part of the Green Belt and allowed it to go ahead as it provided the school site HCC said it needed. The access to Fraser Crescent had been designed to accommodate this.

Land North of Bucknalls Lane – clarification required for any public consultation as it suggests access from Bucknalls Lane but there is road access from the A405. The site has pedestrian access from Bucknalls Lane, but the narrow strip is not suitable for vehicular access but would allow access pedestrian access and thus to Garston Park and potentially Coates Way school without having to drive. The neighbouring site had already been developed. The site is currently derelict and has not been in public use for over 4 years and thus offers no benefit to the Green Belt and should go out to public consultation.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation advised that the dwelling capacity had been reduced to allow for an increased buffer into the site due to the increase to the waste centre.

There had been a suggestion that the Mansion House site (CFS56) and the Love Lane site (CFS21) could come forward together to resolve any access issues, but Members should be guarded against having one big site. The Data Centre site off Bedmond Road would not come forward as it is no longer promoted by the site owners.

Officers were not suggesting any changes to the Flower House site -2-3 Station Road or the red line. There had been the area of unlawful development on the car park with the Inspector deeming it unlawful, but this was being viewed through a planning application which is different to the plan process. We would be looking to change the red line and that part of the site would no longer be in the Green Belt. Officers were suggesting the whole site come forward for 19 dwellings but to take account of the flood risks and the buffer required for flood zone 3b.

Could the boundary be redrawn on the western boundary and bring it back from the river towards the road. Noted that the site next door already goes quite far back into the Green Belt for the storage of motor vehicles and understood it had extant permission. This would need to be checked to see how far it goes back. The adjacent site had already been urbanised. Officers could look at this, but the boundary of the Green Belt can be looked at coming into Regulation 19. There was no proposal to redraw the red line, but the buffer zone would not be developable land.

The Langleybury House site was already in the Local Plan. Noted that the heritage asset was at risk of being lost without its repurposing.

Mill Place - recommended to include but there would need to be a buffer area to take into consideration the A41 on the other side. Any development would have to be down the middle of the site. It is a Brownfield site but should not be building at height and access is a concern onto the A41.

Q Cinammond House – not going to get in the MLX or its successor. Could a Green Belt strip be retained between Croxley Green and the river/canal.

A At this time we are not looking at where the Green Belt boundary would be that will be considered when we consider which sites we want to come forward and look at where was a defensible Green Belt boundary would be.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, duly seconded, that the Local Plan Sub Committee:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Note the contents of the summary slides • Consider the sites as set out in the summary slides against the criteria set out in this report and slides.
- Agree the urban brownfield sites and sites within areas of low to moderate Green Belt harm as set out in this report and slides.
- Recommend to Policy & Resources Committee the sites to be included in the Regulation 18 consultation on lower housing numbers.

That the following adjustments be made as agreed by the sub-committee:

- that the Baldwins Lane site be corrected to 0.9 hectares, so the housing number and the number of dwellings be reduced from around 50 dwellings to 10 dwellings.
- That on the North Cott East Lane that the red line is redrawn to demonstrate which part of the site is of lower harm. Officers to redraw the boundary prior to the next meeting and circulate details to the sub-committee but comes back to the sub-committee for ratification.
- That the red line for the Stockers Farm Road site (H22) be redrawn.
- Red Cross site – that there is clarification on the red line around the site and officers reflect on this before going out for consultation if this site is included and it is made clear where the red line is.
- That officers clarify the position on the library car park in Croxley Green.

Councillor Oliver Cooper proposed an amendment that the following sites be removed:

CFS3 – Fraser Court and Woodside Road

CFS4 – Warren Court

CFS65 – Land north of Bucknalls Lane

CFS6 – Land at Mansion House Equestrian Centre

PSC21 – Land at Love Lane

To limit ACFS8b – Flower House, 2-3 Station Road to a reduced part of the site and not include the unlawful car park area and the red line be amended accordingly.

The amendment on being to the sub-committee were declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 3 For, 6 Against and 1 Abstention.

On being put to the sub-committee the original motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 6 For, 3 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

- Noted the contents of this report.
- Noted the contents of the summary slides.
- Considered the sites as set out in the summary slides against the criteria set out in this report and slides.

RECOMMEND:

- Agreed the urban brownfield sites and sites within areas of low to moderate Green Belt harm as set out in this report and slides.
- Recommended to Policy & Resources Committee the sites to be included in the Regulation 18 consultation on lower housing numbers.

That the following adjustments be made as agreed by the sub-committee:

that the Baldwins Lane site be corrected to 0.9 hectares, so the housing number and the number of dwellings be reduced from around 50 dwellings to 10 dwellings.

That on the North Cott East Lane that the red line is redrawn to demonstrate which part of the site is of lower harm. Officers to redraw the boundary prior to the next meeting and circulate details to the sub-committee but comes back to the sub-committee for ratification.

That the red line for the Stockers Farm Road site (H22) be redrawn.

Red Cross site – that there is clarification on the red line around the site and officers reflect on this before going out for consultation if this site is included and it is made clear where the red line is.

That officers clarify the position on the library car park in Croxley Green.

CHAIR