

## Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee Minutes

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019

7.30pm at the White Hart Community Pub, Godstow Road

**Present:** John Bleach (JB), Christopher Hardman (CH) (Chairman), Cllr Liz Wade (LW) , Cllr Paul Buckley (PB) , Mary Brown (MB), Steve Roberts (SteveR), Tony Dale (TD) , Simon Ryde (SimonR), David Stone (DS), Richard Lawrence-Wilson (RLW)

**Apologies:** Catherine Kaye, Cllr Steve Goddard

### 1. Previous minutes

Some amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on November 15<sup>th</sup> were agreed:

Minute 2: PB said that his comment on the uncertainty about a statutory public consultation had related to traffic calming in Godstow Road as well as the zebra crossing in Lower Wolvercote.

Minute 5 (air quality): delete final sentence (no legal obligations re air quality report).

Minute 6 (Oxford North): PB asked for the final sentence to be deleted (it said, wrongly, that he felt that the link road will eventually happen).

### 2. Matters arising from previous minutes

**Action: LW** to check whether WNF is currently a statutory consultee (in any context). If not, will it become one once the Plan is made? Who are other statutory consultees for our ward (e.g. WCC)?

### 3. Preparation for the Referendum

Sadie and CH had both chased City Council officers but there was no confirmation of the date for the referendum. Given the General Election and holidays confirmation may not come until mid-January. Agreed that the timeline chart (thanks SteveR) should be filled out in detail, assuming the date will be May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020.

**Action: JB and CH** to draft a flyer in time for discussion at the next meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January. It will go in the Easter Flying Goose, to be distributed from 18<sup>th</sup> March. It will be based on the Summertown flyer, in addition to the date etc. it must include a map showing boundaries and/or a list of streets in the Wolvercote NP area.

**Action: LW** to find out what publicity the City Council will be giving, and when, to the ward boundary changes and how they will administer the referendum alongside local elections, as the two votes will involve different areas. CIL money will be another key issue in the referendum (see next minute).

**Action: all** CH pointed out that volunteers will be needed in March to stuff 3,000 envelopes.

### 4. CIL

PB reported on Summertown NF AGM. SNF have been refining a document on CIL. PB had a hard copy, their process looked quite laborious. He will circulate a copy on email if/when available. SNF projects are currently capped at £10k which means they do not have to go to the Council for approval. Discussion of CIL showed that our knowledge of the process for calculation and allocation of CIL money, and for consultation on and approval of projects to be funded from it, is very patchy and incomplete. It is essential to clarify the whole CIL system before the referendum campaign begins, otherwise WNF will be unable to answer fair and obvious questions from the electorate. Large sums of public money are involved and mixed messages, some contradictory, have come from the Council.

**Action: LW** to find out what is the process of consultation for CIL spends in the ward (a) before the plan is made - officers had suggested just councillors, and (b) after the plan is made - when their suggestion was that the NF (not councillors) would be responsible for ward consultation before they put forward a scheme. What constitutes adequate consultation?

The current CIL issue is the traffic-calming ('cushions') proposal for Godstow Road and moving the pedestrian crossing. An 'informal consultation' has been mentioned but no definition of this was known. MB (for WCC) and steering committee members felt that both NF and WCC should be consulted. Will there have to be a ward consultation before CIL is released? Will this specific project be funded totally or partially by CIL?

**Action:** *LW* to check these points with Lorraine Freeman, and also whether the CIL money she applied for to cover the design costs for the traffic-calming has been paid to County, and to advise MB and CH.

During discussion a feeling developed that the fundamental questions about how CIL works, and the role of the WNF in its deployment, need to be escalated pronto to a more senior level, in view of their key importance in the referendum and the relatively short time before referendum publicity needs to start.

**Action:** *LW and PB* to seek a meeting with Tim Sadler, to be attended by *CH*.

## 5. Oxford North

As expected the application has been called in and the Planning Committee will consider it on 16<sup>th</sup> December. This will involve a new set of Councillors, some of whom have no previous knowledge of the development. Presentations to them will be needed and in particular the points about the postponed and unfunded loop road and the altered road through the site will need to be reiterated.

**Action:** *CH* to submit new written representations on behalf of the NF.

**Action:** *PB and LW* to speak at the meeting.

## 6. Wolvercote Mill development: surgery unit and community building

During a lengthy discussion, serious unanswered questions were raised on both of these.

Regarding the surgery unit SR pointed out that Cala Homes only have to make 'reasonable efforts', not 'best endeavours' to let the surgery as a surgery. Nothing is said about tenure, rent or management arrangements. He was critical of the looseness of the requirement that had been specified by the City Council. Cala could end up letting the surgery for a commercial purpose, having made little effort to market it to GP practices. MB had met the current GP, who is enthusiastic, but does not appear to be supported by the CCG (clinical commissioning group) who have a longstanding plan for a major, all-purpose health centre at Ewart Place in Summertown and do not favour satellite surgeries. This plan has been around for some years, it was not known if there is yet a timescale for it or any current activity.

Some similar issues apply to the community building. There is no evidence on whether or not a need can be demonstrated. No existing organisation is seeking or felt to be willing to take responsibility for it. The conditions attached to the planning permission need to be examined carefully, to clarify how they might be put into action when WNF becomes a legal entity.

**Action:** *LW* to ask council officers about the conditions.

*In the end, the danger is that neither a surgery nor a viable community space will result and after a couple of years both will end up becoming commercial or residential spaces either sold or let by Cala, with all community benefit being lost. One fallback idea was to recognise the likelihood of this outcome, and seek a lump sum straight away, in lieu of either or both, that could be used to generate an income for community purposes, or could be spent over a period of time on community projects.*

**Action:** *SimonR* said he would ask a commercial agent what the spaces might be used for commercially.

## 7. Cherwell Local Plan

Suzanne McIvor will attend the consultative meeting for WNF. She should be briefed that it is a fact checking meeting and not an opportunity to put forward views or objections. The key question will be, whether the changes justify taking over green belt land and, if so, where is the mitigation? *LW* is visiting the North Oxford Golf Course to look at what trees will be lost if a denser housing scheme goes ahead.

## 8. Any other business

*JB* presented the list of "proposed community projects" that had been identified by attendees at the WNF AGM. He said it was really a list of topics, from amongst which some projects might be identified.

**Action:** *JB* to revise the list, grouping and merging where there were common themes whilst removing the columns headed 'source' and 'number of votes'. This should help to draw out some projects. There should be no priority order at this stage, other than placing the items which relate to neighbourhood plan policies above those that do not.

## 9. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020, 7.30pm at White Hart community pub.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm