

Hardwick Parish Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 16 October 2018
in the School at 7.30 pm

Present: 103 members of the public including District Cllr Tumi Hawkins and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

Cllr Tony Gill presided.

1. S/3440/18/OL – Planning application by Countryside Properties and the Taylor family for outline planning permission for a new mixed use village comprising approximately 3500 dwellings

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that its purpose was to inform the Parish Council when responding on the consultation. There would be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and put forward their views.

Cllr Gill reported that he and Cllr Joslin had attended a meeting with the developers, where the material on display had been presented. A plan was shown of the outline of the development which included 3500 houses and green spaces; two entrances/exits at the Caldecote roundabout and the Bourn Broadway; and a busway running along the northern edge of the development.

It emerged that not all residents had received the letter from SCDC informing them of the consultation. Cllr Gill asked all residents to convey their comments to the Planning Department by email or letter, giving material reasons for any objections. Those present were also invited to complete the response slips available, to assist the Parish Council in representing the village when responding. The planning reference and website address for SCDC were provided. The Parish Council urged residents to respond.

Questions and comments were invited.

A resident sought clarification on what constituted material objections and expressed concerns that the Cambourne and Papworth developments had already caused a significant increase in traffic, resulting in considerable hold-ups at peak times around the A428 and the M11. It was confirmed that the impact on traffic, and on village life, were material, but issues such as noise, house values and views were not. Some guidance was available on the SCDC website.

Another resident pointed out the positive aspects of the development, given the need for housing for an increasing population.

A question was asked about where the traffic would go and whether it would all be funnelled along St Neots Road. In response, it was expected that traffic wishing to access the A428 would either need to join at the double roundabout at Hardwick or continue along the A1303, or go left towards Cambourne.

Cllrs Gill and Joslin had asked the developers at the meeting why a junction could not be constructed to join the A428 from the site, but were informed that Highways England had said the junction would be too close to the Hardwick and Cambourne junctions. When they had queried this on the grounds that there were junctions close together on the A14 Cambridge bypass, and that when Cambourne was built, all-ways interchanges had been constructed at Hardwick and Cambourne using S106 money, the developers had reiterated what they had been told by Highways England. A

resident commented that it would be “insane” to allow that amount of traffic onto St Neots Road.

A resident pointed out that the last Local Plan had been rejected by the Inspector as unsustainable, leading to a plan for an express busway, but now the proposed busway was in doubt, leaving Bourn Airfield as part of the current Local Plan but with no infrastructure in place to support it. Cllr Gill outlined the background to the Local Plan which had been found sound by the Inspector, and was likely to go ahead in view of the need for housing. It was necessary to make the views of local residents known so that the outcome could work in their favour.

A resident commented that the development was already a done deal and would result in years of difficulties if no infrastructure was provided.

Concerns were expressed that developers could not afford to build affordable housing and young adults would be unable to get onto the housing ladder, as the proposed low cost housing and green spaces might be dropped from the plans.

Furthermore, as the main route in and out of Hardwick was already backed up at peak times, it would be necessary, in view of the traffic coming from Bourn Airfield and Loves Farm, to give people leaving the village right of way, perhaps by a mini roundabout.

It was noted that there would be some S106 money for alleviating problems, such as providing funds to prevent rat running through the village, providing roundabouts, etc. Residents observed that Hardwick would be competing with other villages for a share of S106 funding.

A resident asked whether they should be lobbying the Highways Agency independently for an additional junction. Cllr Gill had been told by the developers that they would be willing to support more junctions onto the A428. The Highways department had asked for an extension to the end of November to comment on the application. It was suggested that the local parish councils should get together to co-ordinate their responses.

Cllr Steve Jones, Convenor of the Coalition of Parish Councils and a Bourn Parish Councillor, confirmed the understanding that junctions too close together would break the Highways planning rules, but indicated a willingness to join with the Parish Council as too much traffic would be generated, which should go on to the Girton interchange.

A resident commented that infrastructure had wider implications than traffic alone, as this would include GP practices, dentist, schools, facilities for the elderly and leisure and social facilities. It was essential that infrastructure should be in place at the outset. The example of Cambourne, where infrastructure followed long after the building, was cited.

Residents asked whether any traffic analysis had been carried out. A considerable buffer of green land between Bourn Airfield and the other villages to provide separation was important to avoid them becoming a long corridor of development.

Cllr Jones responded that a survey had been carried out four years ago, but another was now needed. Destinations were found to be approximately 25% Cambridge, 25% South Cambridgeshire, 25% outside South Cambridgeshire and 25% to the north of Cambridge. Whilst some 40% of traffic travelled towards Cambridge, not all went into Cambridge itself. The proposal for a busway would not solve the issue as there would still be over 1800 car journeys coming out of the Bourn Airfield development.

A resident observed that the easier the road access provided, the more attractive the area would become to London commuters, etc. Cycleways should be promoted to ensure local people could move around and there should be less focus on roads. Cllr Gill outlined the Greenways initiative which would give more scope for cycling and walking.

A question was asked about why there were no bridleways proposed in the development, and that off-road access for leisure was necessary. Residents were again urged to make their views known to the planners.

A comment was made that whilst infrastructure such as access to the A428 was fundamental, the plans should be scrutinised further for aspects they omitted.

It was observed that the concept seemed to be for a dormitory village, with only a tiny amount of space devoted to employment. The sustainability of the development was queried, as the number of people who would work there and the number of jobs to be created was not known.

A resident commented that the A428, M11 and new junction were beyond the control of the village but it could make St Neots Road unattractive for traffic to use. He cited recent moves by other villages to reduce the speed limits to 20 mph and urged the Parish Council to press for traffic improvements. The resident sought agreement from those present and a show of hands indicated support for his proposal.

Cllr Gill explained that S106 money was available for traffic improvements but without this, it would be necessary for the CCC Highways department to provide funding. It could not be demanded as a precondition of the development, as this was not in Hardwick parish. The process was outlined, whereby the Parish Council would inform SCDC of its requirements but SCDC would negotiate the S106 agreement with the developers according to specific rules and regulations. Funds for such projects either had to come from SCDC negotiating the S106 agreement or the Parish Council raising the funds itself from CCC or SCDC. For example, the Parish Council had attempted over several years to obtain funds for work at Cahills Corner without success and had had to pay itself for the work done.

A resident asked whether the District Councillor or local MP could also be lobbied. It was noted that the SCDC Planning Portfolio holder was present at this meeting.

Another resident observed that there were two options available for road transport, either to improve it or make it difficult for others. He expressed concerns that children would have to cross the road to get to Comberton Village College and therefore pedestrian crossings were needed. People needed housing and the village should seek to manage the situation and pursue what could be achieved and lived with.

Clarification was sought regarding the timescale for the application and when building might commence. It was hoped that the outline permission would be granted by 31 December, and if granted the Reserved Matters would take until 2019-2020 to be approved. All Reserved Matters such as parking and open areas had to be agreed with the planners before commencement of the work, possibly in 2021. Homes would be built at a rate of approximately 150 per year, taking about 24 years for completion of 3500 houses.

A question was asked about how the developers might be encouraged to promote local improvements and employment, such as by requiring a percentage of local labour to be used on the development. The resident argued that many issues needed to be agreed at the outset.

District Cllr Tumi Hawkins, Planning Portfolio holder, introduced herself and explained that Bourn Airfield was a policy in the Local Plan. As the plan had been found sound, the Bourn Airfield development would go ahead. She urged residents to send in their comments and suggestions, so that the District Council could obtain the best specification it could from the developers. Details would be determined by the Supplementary Planning Document on which work was just beginning. There will be a consultation on the draft in due course, when it will be possible to comment on green spaces, landscaping, bridleways and footpaths. The emphasis was presently on input on what would be built, but the Inspector had said that all objections made could be mitigated, and ideas were needed on how the effects of the development could be mitigated. The County had not considered that all the traffic would emerge onto the Childerley roundabout as hitherto all focus had been on the busway. Cllr Hawkins assured residents that good ideas for mitigation would be considered, and urged everyone to work together to try to achieve improvements to the situation and make it the best it could be.

Those present were asked whether they were in favour of an independent access from Bourn Airfield onto the A428. A show of hands showed that the vast majority of attendees were in favour of this suggestion.

Residents were urged to respond and express their views.

2. **Closure of meeting**

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.38 pm.

SignedChairmandate.
