**FNDP Steering Group** Minutes of meeting (via video link) 26-03-21, 9.00am

Present: David Cornish (chair) Roland Cundy Graham Jukes

Andy Pearce Roger Marshallsay

Allan Gibson Pauline Grainger

AGENDA

DC called this meeting to discuss the issues raised in the Project Management Group/Steering Group meeting held on 23rd March 2021 at which 3 members of WBC were in attendance.

That meeting was held to discuss the responses to the Reg 14 Consultation and other processes required to take the FNDP to the next stage.

DC was looking for reactions to the meeting and an agreed course of action. Since that meeting he has spoken with various Parish Councillors about ongoing costs and the implications of WBC’s request to include a housing allocation with the FNDP.

DISCUSSION

All members of the group were frustrated (but not surprised) by the outcome of meeting on the 23rd and various opinions and options were debated. There was disappointment that WBC had given no warning on a housing allocation in all the meetings previously held with them and that this outcome felt like

bureaucracy v. democracy. There was a major concern as to how a decision to now include a housing allocation in the plan would be viewed by the residents of the parish. The idea of a NDP was to give empowerment to local communities, although it was accepted it was limited and constrained by national policies and frameworks.

Various points made:

* Plan can’t conflict with strategic authority
* Plan subject to politics of system
* WBC needs to protect its housing development numbers to protect from speculative development
* Voice of an NDP is irrelevant
* Agreeing to housing allocation could lead to plan becoming a developers’ charter
* Planning laws have changed in favour of development on green field with no support for urban housing
* Our draft plan is strong and permits development in limited circumstances; we are not against development and in fact support three sites in the plan
* Within Finchampstead our housing needs are met by Finchwood Park and the redevelopment of Gorse; nothing has changed in that respect
* Housing needs are met as a borough rather than by individual Parishes meeting their own need
* Consider including a few very small sites
* Further “unnecessary” housing ie outside the needs of parish is against what was set out in vision statement
* It was made clear at meeting of 23rd March WBC will not pass plan if an additional housing allocation is not included in revised plan
* Be pragmatic and put in additional housing on brownfield sites on the basis of WBC backing and protecting our desired green spaces and gaps
* If we give up a site would this not lead to a deluge of developers wanting to build on other sites;
* If we change course without a fight this would send out wrong message
* Defiance won’t deliver the desired outcome
* Communicating a change in direction to residents will be challenging
* Can’t change goal posts midway through a game
* Carry on with plan and amend according to consultation submissions where appropriate and then re submit to WBC; the revised plan would then reflect residents’ wishes as determined by Reg 14 consultation
* WBC will reject if no housing allocation but similarly public could well reject if housing allocation forced on them
* The NDP is a tool for preventing development in unwanted areas as a whole rather than fighting each individual application if there was no plan in place; the NDP provides blanket protection
* We have a clear mandate from residents about future development - permit development in limited circumstances
* We have come this far so giving up NDP should not be an option; Parish would want plan to continue
* Should work with WBC to get plan through
* It was accepted WBC is in a difficult position but we have prepared plan in good faith with backing of residents so should not deviate now

The final decision, by a substantial majority, was to amend the plan according to the responses from the

Reg 14 consultation and then re submit to WBC.

There was a concern over funding to engage LA (Bell Cornwell) to help with responses, as it was felt this could be a lengthy process involving a substantial amount of work. However looking at funds available

* £2000 agreed by parish for 21/22
* A further £1500 approx from Locality
* An agreed over spend of £3000 by the parish

it was decided to go ahead and speak with LA.

Actions to achieve decision:

* Send LA complete dossier of submissions (DC) and ask for quote (AG) for advice on responding
* Meet with LA (AG/DC) to discuss responses to professional submissions and an overall view
* Broad discussion with PMG
* Process responses to submissions taking on board advice from WBC - ie systematic approach grouping together responses to policies rather than individual responses to individual consultees (DC/AG/RM)

and in parallel

* Revisit call for sites with Parish/ housing group

Meeting closed 10.16 am

Signed as a true record of the meeting: ………………………………………… Date:…………………………