

AIREBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORUM



Minutes for the Neighbourhood Planning Team Meeting

Tuesday 27th November 2018

At The Aireborough Place Space 7.30 pm

1. Apologies,

Richard Webster, Theresa O'Brien. 26 members were present.

In June, Frank la Corte resigned from the Steering Committee due to family commitments and Mark Rollinson co-opted to the committee until the AGM next year. Jennifer Kirkby welcomed all those attending

2. Purpose of the Meeting

JK explained that, and following a lot of illnesses within the steering committee during the early part of the year, and the need to work on individual themes in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum had opened the Aireborough Place Space (urban room) to engage with forum members and residents on the different aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Place Space was open weekly from May until the end of October as a drop-in to keep people updated and hear views. It was also used for forum project meetings.

The Big Catch-Up tonight is to feedback progress made to the Forum as a whole as we are getting to the time when decisions need to be made. To enable this, the Forum will be returning to our bi-monthly meetings in 2019. We also need to review the role of the Place Space, which many people said they liked, as it gave them the opportunity for more detailed discussions and working together in smaller groups.

3. Progress of the Aireborough Neighbourhood Plan

End 2017 - Our evidence base is complete and has been exhibited and discussed in the Place Space from May - October and on the website. All of the evidence has been gathered in conjunction with residents and supported by professionals.

Start of 2018 we started to look at potential policies for each NDP theme in the vision. We have looked at the evidence and at policies in other NDPs such as Otley. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, and need to understand what neighbours are doing so as not to clash.

In April we asked the Academy of Urbanism to come and give their professional view on our evidence with a view to looking forward to 2050 and how Aireborough should develop. We asked for their ideas about the problems facing our community such as traffic congestion, natural capital, air pollution and putting the right houses in the right places. Taking account of Aireborough's housing allocation, the AoU were of the opinion that instead of allocating land for smaller development sites in Green Belt on the edges

of the urban area a better option would be to make the most of existing spaces within the urban environment and then look at a garden village approach for housing needs numbers up to 2050. Locations were suggested. The 'new village' would be belted in by Green Belt in the form of a country park, effectively putting a corset round the development preventing further sprawl. This also linked to work being done by Yorkshire Water on a Masterplan for the Springs Wood/Esholt area. It would make sense to collaborate on these ideas and we have had discussions on doing that.

In Spring to Summer we worked on key themes with groups.

- (a) Green Infrastructure,
- (b) Habitat Corridors where a team of amateur ecologists identifying the fact that Leeds Habitat Network was fragmented, drew up a map showing a proposed extended habitat network within Aireborough, which would provide stepping stones for species mobility and healthy population
- (c) An Aireborough cycle track identifying a safe route for cycling in and around the area, linking with the Sustrans track. It was suggested that developers could make a contribution towards this as part of their S106 responsibility.
- (d) A community area at Guiseley Wells
- (e) Leaflets promoting a Guiseley Gap walk linking with the North West Leeds Country Park.
- (f) Air pollution tests were carried out on the A65. The ANDF were asked to take part in an experimental pollution study. The results showed that all of the points where pollution testers were positioned in Aireborough were well over the acceptable limit. We have been offered more testers to place round the area and it was suggested that these be positioned lower down as pollution is worse at walking level. We have been ignored for years by LCC when we have brought to their attention traffic congestion and now air pollution and it was the general opinion of the meeting that a policy should be put into the NP regarding air pollution. It was pointed out that LCC's clean air zone did not extend further than the ring road. It was also suggested that gas central heating boilers were a contributory factor to air pollution.
- (g) We consulted with Yorkshire Water with regard to a Masterplan for Esholt involving a housing development, an innovation park and a country park on the site of the sewage treatment works. There is a possibility that we might be able to work on this as a joint Masterplan as it borders our area and would use much of our infrastructure.

In June to August we were very busy with the SAP hearings and work towards getting the best result for the Coach Road Allotments including devising a relevant scheme based on the SAP requirements and type of housing needed in Aireborough. Several forum members gave evidence at the hearings.

This autumn - We have had two meetings in Leeds with Leeds officers to work on Green Infrastructure policies and Urban Design policies.

4. Progress on the inspection of Leeds' Site Allocation Plan (SAP)

In 2017 Leeds revised their SAP in the light of falling housing requirements. This was examined by planning inspectors for housing requirements in July/August 2018.

(Employment, Retail and Green Space were examined in October 2017.) A number of forum members attended and spoke at the hearings. Although the 70,000 target has since been reduced to 52,000 the hearings for the SAP were inspected on the higher figure as it was quoted in Leeds Core Strategy which will not be revised and inspected until later this year. The inspector found that the revised SAP was unlawful and instead suggested Leeds made Major Modifications to the original May 2017 submission SAP for sites required up to 2023. These modifications were submitted by LCC at the start of November 2018 for the inspectors to look at. The inspectors are likely to put forward their own modifications. And there is likely to be a further public consultation on the modifications around February 2019. The forum is of the opinion that the Green Belt sites of Wills Gill, Hollins Hill and The Ings are likely to remain in the SAP, but LCC will have to justify why there are exceptional circumstances for these particular sites to be used before 2023.

A key issue is that Leeds has been divided into Housing Market Characteristic Areas of which Aireborough is one. Each HMCA has to take a percentage of Leeds target. (Ours is 3%). The HMCA targets have not been tested by an Inspector. The Core Strategy Inspector said it would be done at the time of the SAP, but the SAP Inspectors said they were not able to do this as the target was now in the adopted Core Strategy 2014.

Just to complicate the situation, the Core Strategy Review that reduces the housing figure to 52,000 and looks at HMCA housing targets is being inspected at hearings in February 2019; all these hearings take time available from the ANDF to get on with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Forum discussed the situation with the following SAP Green Belt sites. There was no disagreements expressed with the key points for each site and extra information was added to the issues e.g. traffic on Queensway, and Silverdale.

A The Ings

The Ings has been under threat of development for 25 years. In the 2013 SAP 295 houses were planned for the site. However the Ings Green Belt preservation group and the ANDF have argued that this site is less sustainable than many others in Leeds and fulfils Green Belt purpose. An inspector in 2000 refused to allocate this site for housing adding that it should never be built on because of its strong role in separating Menston and Guiseley - a key purpose of GB.

In addition the site is partially a flood plain, as determined by Leeds own independent flood report, and the NPPF says that building on flood plains should be avoided. The flood report advised that half the site was not to be developed and the numbers reduced from 295 to 160.

Leeds and the developer, Gallagher Estates, have agreed on a Statement of Common Ground (points on which both parties agree regarding the site) which the ANDF was not party to. In the Statement of Common Ground it was agreed that if the flooding was mitigated by altering the beck, widening or digging a relief channel then perhaps more land would be suitable and numbers increased.

It was also agreed that 160 houses would not significantly worsen traffic and congestion on the local highways. (What every development fails to take into account is the cumulative effect of the 'insignificant' traffic congestion.) They suggested a transport assessment and a travel plan, and agreed no improvements necessary to the A65 but a financial contribution be made to improve local junctions.

They agreed the Beck would be able to cope with surface water drainage from the development if it could be released slowly and that the western area of the site nearest the beck was not to be built on although the extent was still to be agreed.

B. Wills Gill

Initially only the Banksfield site was allocated and the Wills Gill Site added later to facilitate access. However subsequently Banksfield has been taken out and Wills Gill left in. Historic England has stipulated that a wide buffer should be maintained between the development and the Crofts and Tofts. However the proposed access road contravenes this.

During the last two weeks surveyors have been observed on the site and ground water monitors have been installed. It is quite possible that LCC and Avant Homes who have the option on the site will sign a Statement of Common Ground.

C. Hollins Hill

This site is designated Special Landscape, is Green Belt, part of the strategic green infrastructure and close to the Leeds Bradford border. It is a working farm contributing to the agricultural economy. All of these points were made to the Inspector by forum member Charlotte Hunter.

D. Silverdale Allotments

Silverdale Allotments are not Green Belt, they are privately owned with only some of the owners willing to sell. In the SAP this was allocated for 32 houses and allotments. Stonebridge, the developer, wanted 46 houses and no allotments. Leeds turned down their application, Stonebridge appealed and lost on the grounds that there are not enough allotments or green space in Aireborough. However it remains in the SAP for 32 houses plus allotments.

The ANDF has an alternative plan they would like to discuss with the owners and LCC planning as a possible solution. This would focus on independent living units and allotments. However the issue of access to Silverdale remained a stumbling block. **The Forum members agreed a solution was needed and that this was a reasonable plan to pursue. David Bowe suggested that a residents meeting take place soon to discuss the plan. This was agreed. .**

5. Local ANDF initiatives (the good news)

A) The Guiseley Gap Walk leaflet is at the printers. This will promote one of Aireborough's key geographical features 'The Guiseley Gap' and link to the NW Leeds Country Park as part of green infrastructure. **David Bowe suggested that we find a celebrity to accompany the first official treading of the walk. He will look into this.**

B) The Guiseley Wells Pocket Park

The developer of the old Springfield works in Guiseley, as part of their commitment to the community was supposed to have flagged the extended pavement area created as a result of pulling back the building line from the road. However the area was tarmaced and as a result was used as parking.

Last Easter, a public 'consultation' was undertaken with activities and the opportunity for residents to suggest what could be done to the area to make it useful and pleasant given that it was adjacent to the historic Guiseley Wells.

In conjunction with Guiseley in Bloom, Incredible Edible Aireborough, local residents and Codswallop, a design brief for the area was drawn up.

Encouragingly during the last couple of weeks the tarmac has been replaced with sandstone flags and the other interested parties are poised to do their improvements with seating, information board and planters.

One of the blank windows of the old building is earmarked for a mosaic depicting the essence of Aireborough.

It is hoped that the area could be used for a small market and small community gatherings.

6. Finances

We are a self financed organisation relying entirely on donations to keep the Forum going. At the moment our bank balance is £2724.

7. Place Space - Feedback and Future.

Due to time, this was postponed until the next meeting in February.

AOB

Clive Woods advertised a Civic Society talk at Rawdon Library on the end of The Great War and its effects locally and nationally

A donation of £5 was added to the funds.