

## THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **South Oxhey Steering Committee** held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday 18 January 2016 from 7.30pm to 8.50pm.

Present: Councillors Ann Shaw OBE (Chairman), Matthew Bedford, Stephen Cox, Ty Harris, Len Tippen and Martin Trevett.

Councillor Joan King - Herts County Council  
Councillor Pam King - Watford Rural Parish Council.

Officers in attendance:

Geof Muggerridge - Director of Community & Environmental Services  
Alan Head - Head of Major Projects  
Mike Simpson - Committee & Web Officer

Also in attendance: Councillors Angela Killick, Marie-Louise Nolan, Alison Scarth and Andrew Scarth.

### **SO05/15 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the South Oxhey Steering Committee held on 14 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **SO06/15 PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a presentation on the South Oxhey Initiative from the Head of Major Projects, which was divided into three sections; Recent Events, Milestones and Issues.

The Head of Major Projects talked through the recent developments, and said that the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) surgeries in early December were attended by approximately 35 retailers and 22 residential leaseholders along with a number of officers from Three Rivers District Council and Deloitte. These meetings started the process to deliver vacant possession of units, and while some retailers wished to continue trading from different premises, others would either relocate from the area or cease trading. As a result, the final development would contain fewer retail outlets.

The aim was to present the plans for the redevelopment to the Planning Committee for approval on 17 March 2016, and if approved, to Full Council on 22 March for CPO resolution confirmation. The Head of Major Projects and lawyers would present details of what was required of the CPO.

The Chairman asked where the CPO inquiry, scheduled for early 2017, would take place. The Head of Major Projects replied that details of the inquiry were not yet confirmed, but ideally it would take place at the Parish Council offices on a date set by the Planning Inspectorate.

It was reiterated that 96 units were included in the scheme for social housing. County Councillor Joan King expressed concern that so-called affordable housing – properties priced at 80% of the market rate – would be out of reach to many residents. Councillor Matthew Bedford replied that the Council was committed to its target for affordable housing and would try to maintain affordability of the properties in question. The Head of Major Projects stated that every social tenant would be offered alternative accommodation.

A Member asked if the Council had an obligation to provide housing for private lessees. It was stated that there was no obligation on the Council's part, and such tenants were advised to put their names on the housing register. They would not be subject to priority, regardless of whether they had children at local schools, and reference was made by the Chairman to the shortage of housing stock within the district.

Many residents of South Oxhey had voiced concerns over the deadline of 24 January 2016 to ask questions or raise concerns about the planning application. The Director of Community & Environmental Services stated that comments received after the deadline would still be read and noted. Residents were unaware of how the plans were made public, and an officer responded that arrangements would be made available at Oxhey Library and the Parish Council Offices. Details of the plans were also to be displayed for inspection in the window of a shop in The Parade.

The following matters were identified as 'issues' by the Head of Major Projects:

- Vacant possession negotiations; There were approximately 200 interests, each of which must be negotiated by Three Rivers sequentially.
- CPO arguments and formal processes; The Council must ensure correct processes were followed.
- Project Board implementation; It was proposed that a smaller number of Councillors would comprise a Project Board, the make-up of which was to be decided by the Policy & Resources (P&R) Committee.
- Establish a local 'Community Board'; To appoint a group of local District and Parish Councillors and local residents to be tasked with agreeing a level of project details e.g. traffic. The Board's initial activity would primarily involve the satellite site, and would evolve with time. The remit of the Board was not budgetary, and would aim to resolve daily issues with the developer rather than make long-term decisions without referral to the P&R committee. The value of ongoing dialogue and communication could not be overestimated.
- Retail Strategy; The number of shops would reduce to around half of the existing number. The strategy was to look at the needs of the residents against which shops will be taken back under vacant possession and when. The Chairman asked whether the Council can be sure that there will be sufficient food shops to service the affected areas during the development. The Head of Major Projects replied that every effort would be made to ensure a balance with the community's needs.

The proposed new shops along Station Approach would allow a greater range of outlets. The return to the Council of the former Barclays Bank building in Station Approach was likely to take place in March/April.

- Thames Water progress; Little progress had been made by Thames Water in establishing sewerage capacity in the area for in excess of 300 extra residential units. Thames Water was to address the matter of drainage/run-off, and flow meters were to be installed but to date had not. The Council was now in direct dialogue with the MD of Thames Water, and the process was moving forward. The Chairman asked whether the

issue of sewerage would have been covered by the Developer's Planning application. The Director of Community & Environmental Services responded that it was, but unfortunately there was no guarantee of resolution.

- Former housing office usage; The building formerly used as an office by Thrive Homes was now empty, the incumbents having relocated to the company's Head Office. Negotiations had taken place with Countryside Properties with regard to its use as a site office, and it was also possible the building would be used to accommodate commercial tenants in need of temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED:-

That the information provided be noted.

#### **SO07/15 MEETING SCHEDULE**

Date of next meeting:  
Monday 7 March 2016

#### **SO08/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**CHAIRMAN**