BPC Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4th. April, 2017
7.15 p.m. in the Diamond Jubilee Hall

Voting Members present:
David Grinham, Chairman, Cllr. Colin Mercer, Vice-Chairman (CM), Cllr. Lesley Bowler (LB), Cllr. Ron Clark, Cllr. Sue Grinham (SG), Hugh Dixon (HD), Cllr. Jeff Jones, Bob Nimmo (BN), Stephen Wildin (SW).
Non-voting Members present: Gerald Bradley (GB)
Guest: Tony Charles, Porchester Planning Consultancy

1. Apologies: Cllr. John Gorham, Derek Oswald.

2. Draft Housing Topic Paper (HTP)

The purpose of the meeting was to consider the first draft of the HTP with the assistance of its author, Tony Charles (TC). TC guided us through the paper, explaining his method and emphasising important points while answering questions from the group throughout.

2. i Evidence Base (e.b)

The HTP is a vital part of the e.b and must be thoroughly and soundly constructed. The government has generally approached Neighbourhood Plans with a light touch, the requirements being less onerous than for Local Plans. However, there have been legal challenges and recently an NP was thrown out because the e.b was inadequate.

There must be a strongly constructed e.b for each chapter, and a document library for each heading (e.g. Housing) must be published on line – failure to manage this properly is one of the criticisms that arise regarding NPs.

2. ii Introduction (Section 1)

This sets out the content and purpose of the HTP. The last section lays down what will be Botley Parish Council's approach to the provision of future housing in the Botley area, and this is for the group to discuss and agree. Housing is the most compelling issue, said TC, and it is the key to the whole Plan.

2. iii National Planning Policies (Section 3)

This section makes reference only to those parts of National Planning Policy that are relevant to our NP. A key one is 3.5 where the NPPF requires the local authority to have at least a five year land supply for assessed housing needs. If this is not in place then NPPF para. 49 states that relevant housing supply policies are not up to date and therefore there is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". This then leads to Planning by

Appeal when the Inspector will decide in each case how much weight to give to local housing policies.

2. iv Development Plan Context (Section 4)

Although the EBC LP 2011 – 2029 was found unsound it has not been withdrawn, but abandoned, and therefore still remains material. The Inspector made no criticism of the strategic sites meaning that the rest of the Plan was unchallenged and so must now be taken into consideration. Draft policies are relevant, whether from the old LP or as part of the new approach. TC said they should be considered as indicating the Planning Authority's "direction of travel".

Sites that have planning permission are Commitments. For example, Boorley Park is now included in the 5 yr. land supply and will remain so throughout the development period. It will not, therefore, appear in Issues and Options.

EBC has put forward four Options, of which two are relevant to Botley.

- Option A – Extension to Settlements. This includes land to the N and W of Botley, where BO1, Boorley Park is already under construction. BO2 and HE1 are included.
- Option F – Extending Hedge End to the NE and Botley to the N. This includes BO2 and part of BO1 and HE1.

TC agreed that the element of control that Botley has over the local development plan is fairly negligible. However, EBC has once again committed strongly to the Local Gaps Policy in Issues and Options, following from its inclusion in the LP 2011 – 2029.

The implications for the BPCNP (4.38) are that BO2 and the Botley by-pass should be considered as Strategic Matters and likely to be included in the emerging 2011 – 2036 LP.

2. v Housing numbers

The 2011-29 LP was thrown out because of inadequate housing allotments and they were partly based on incorrect projections from PUSH. Therefore EBC is having to do more work on the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN), through an appointed consultancy.

TC thinks that Option C in the SHMA is the most likely to survive the LP examination. This would allow for 745 dwellings per year, or 18,625 in the planning period to 2036. An increase of a third in the requirement will clearly need more land and he feels that Botley is certain to be allocated more housing in the emerging LP. In that case, it would be better to support a planned development such as BO2, than to have a less sustainable site inflicted on the Parish.

So he again advised that a policy of not supporting development at BO2, but also not objecting, subject to substantial benefits accruing for the community, would be a strong

position to hold. The NP needs to be Made as soon as possible so that any "must haves" will then carry full weight.

This position is summed up in Conclusions 14.13 leading to the final position that Botley should not be required to take any more housing, other than small windfall sites and BO2 if necessary, in the plan period to 2036. All of that time will be needed to absorb the large amount of development around Botley that is already agreed.

In response to a question from CM, TC said that we cannot ask for a higher percentage of affordable housing in any new development to make up for the reduced 30% agreed at BP. However, we could negotiate with developers for a higher proportion in place of other benefits. (Affordable housing now has to be provided completely free to Housing Associations etc. but it is the landowners who actually pay.)

A policy on Housing Mix could go into the Plan, if well supported by research and appropriate evidence.

2.vi SLAA (8.0)

TC has used all the Group's work on this, with a few points of his own added.

The Chairman asked why there was "soft wording" in the points relating to development at BO2. TC said that, in truth, Botley will have little control over the HCC strategy for the Borough.

SG said that the by-pass will only move one air quality problem area to another e.g. Woodhouse Lane and the Maypole roundabout. TC commented that there will be some improvement as traffic emissions will disperse more easily on an open road than in the enclosed High Street.

The Chairman felt strongly that any new traffic management scheme should be comprehensive for the whole Parish. TC saw his point but said that the improvement plan for the High Street is an important plank in the NP and shows a constructive approach. It is a definite object that can be seen to be achievable, perhaps in only a few years. However, we could put in a secondary policy objective, saying that BPC will seek to work with the County and Borough to achieve a traffic plan for all of Botley. This would clearly demonstrate that we are cognisant that other parts of the parish must not be ignored.

CM pointed out that there were suggestions for other parish roads to be looked into and the management plan for the High St. would include various measures to discourage through traffic. TC agreed that there were many tools to achieve this.

The Chairman suggested that the way forward here is to:

- Add to the work already done by CM and HD on Traffic

- In due course take note of and be involved in the HCC consultation on the by-pass.
- Proceed with Community Consultation on this and all other Plan matters.

CM has received confirmation that the planning application for the by-pass will go forward on May 22nd.

TC then summed up by saying that it is up to the Group to decide on strategy. If we wish, for instance, to be tougher on BO2 we must say so. This is only the first draft and is open to any objection –

e.g. Do we think that TC's whole approach is right?
Is the BO2 approach right?
Are there other preferable approaches?

If we want changes, we should just send him the wording. Once the HTP is agreed the Housing Chapter will flow from it quite easily.

SG asked where consultation sat in the Plan. TC replied that it is fundamentally important and we will be required to demonstrate that it has been fully carried out throughout the Plan programme. Consultation procedure should be open and give encouragement to the public to feed in ideas and information. The Chairman said that an effective communications plan is being worked on.

TC advised that the HTP is not for public viewing at the moment. After it has been thoroughly reviewed and a final draft produced the Advisory Committee should take it to the Parish Council and ask for permission to take it forward to Consultation. (Discuss in private section of BPC's agenda.)

2.vii Other points

- The Secretary asked if TC's advice of December still stood, i.e. that we should try to get the Plan ready by the autumn of this year by putting meat into the Housing and Heritage chapters (and now including Traffic) and doing a skeleton of other sections. TC said that it did stand and said that he should perhaps give us more guidance on this. "Yes please" was the response from everyone.

- We can make our Plan ahead of the Local Plan being in place, but Planning by Appeal will still continue. However, developers will have to take the NP into account.

- LB asked if we should go for funding to support the Plan. CM said that there is an item on the next PC agenda to process a grant.

The Chairman then gave our grateful thanks to Tony Charles for giving up his time to join us and for being the source of excellent advice and strategic thinking.

3. Any other business

Communications Plan

The Chairman said that work was in progress to put together a programme for effective communications. (GB, LB?)
The Secretary reported that Derek Oswald had asked to be included in this working party.

Stephen Wildin offered to produce a project management plan and this was accepted with thanks.

4. Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 19th. April, at 7.15
Committee Room.

Rosemary Nimmo
Secretary 13.04.17

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