

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2020, AT 7PM

Committee Members present:

S Buck, B Collier, A Cooper (Chairman), Mrs M Cooper, S Hayes, D Matthews, C Phelps, G Russell.

Also present:

Councillors Mrs A Clarey, B Saunders and J Talbot, Mrs K Elliott-Turner - Town Clerk, Kevin Heaney – ukland.com, Tom Francis – Woods Hardwick, George Beevor-Reid – Woods Hardwick, Russell Gray – Woods Hardwick and Kasia Banas – Chelgate Local, and 4 members of the public

49/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dhaliwal. Councillor Buck will be late to the meeting.

50/20 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

There were none. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

51/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Not at this point.

52/20 PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT “Etonbury Park”

Those present were reminded that any views expressed during discussions are those of individual councillors and do not necessarily represent the views of our Planning Committee and Council. A formal opinion on proposed plans will be given on receipt of the planning application.

Kevin Heaney of ukland.com outlined his proposals for the 53 acre site located between Arlesey Road and Hitchin Road. It will be an ‘eco-living’ focused project, in a sustainable location, and will incorporate a 25 acre park with an integrated woodland extension, new cycle links and walkways from Hitchin Road to Etonbury Wood and Arlesey Road. They are also proposing to deliver a potential retirement village with care. The 181 units will be low carbon, energy efficient – use of powerpacks which means avoiding use of electricity supply from the National Grid, use of low carbon building materials, and each dwelling will have a vehicle charging point. It is the ethos of ukland.com to provide sustainable developments with low carbon footprint.

Developments are prioritised with a minimum of 50% open space, providing large gardens and lots of open space in the development. By providing a 25 acre fully managed park and links to Etonbury Woods, by way of a linear park, they will ensure regard to biodiversity and enhancing the ecological habitat. The addition to Etonbury Wood will soften and enhance the boundary of the wood, and the addition of a car park will encourage further visits to the wood.

There are two play areas proposed for the development, one of which is a very large 1000m² play area by Waters End.

With regard to the flooding issues experienced in the town, they have proposed a flood mitigation design for the scheme.

Their key points for this development are:

- Building with the latest technology and materials
- Prioritising walking and cycling
- Encouraging use of electric vehicles
- Providing large open spaces and gardens to promote healthy living

Tom Francis, architect for Woods Hardwick, outlined specific points in the proposal. The large play area near Waters End will be a Neighbourhood Equipped Area (NEAP) for Play of about 1000m², which will encompass 11 to 13 forms of play, and a smaller size area Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) of about 450m² in the park nearer the Fox & Duck pub, which will encompass a smaller number of play equipment – similar to the play area currently being built as part of the Linden Homes/ukland.com development off Arlesey Road.

There are three areas of housing development within the site. In terms of connectivity, there will be an access onto Arlesey Road, through the Linden Homes development, with a potential bus route to link around the proposed development.

The 25 acre park is mainly to the south of Pix Brook, with potential connection through to Waters End, Hitchin Road to the retirement village area at two points. There are existing permissive routes which run to the rear of the development and through Etonbury Wood. There is a right of way from Hitchin Road through to Arlesey, and a future potential route and connection routes linking Etonbury Wood to Arlesey.

Within the parkland, there will be further informal pedestrian and cycle routes, connecting the permissive routes, with a crossing over Pix Brook, close to Etonbury Wood.

Safer routes to school for Pix Brook Academy and Etonbury Academy will be provided through the development to existing Stotfold.

The parkland will have ecological benefits – landscaping and wildflower meadows, etc.

Woods Hardwick have been working with Central Beds Council on flood assessments in the area of Pix Brook which runs through the proposal site, and ukland.com has appointed the same team of flood modellers as were used by Central Beds Council. Acknowledging the susceptibility of Pix Brook to flooding, the parkland has been set aside as mitigation, to deliberately allow the land to flood to relieve Stotfold, through a series of landscaped bunds. The road crossing will have a series of openings to allow water to flow through. There are two attenuation basins where the surface water from the site will be stored separately and outside of the flood mitigation zone, and will be released back into the Brook at a rate that has been agreed with the IDB and Central Beds Council.

Members asked questions or made comments and the following responses were given:

Questions/comments	Developer responses
<p>The amount of current development in Stotfold is putting severe pressure on the town's infrastructure – schools, surgery and road use levels and pedestrian and vehicle safety</p>	<p>They have liaised with Central Beds Council's Highways Officer throughout the design process and at three pre-application meetings. A transport assessment will be produced to support the planning application, and they have agreed the scope of that assessment. Once the assessment has been completed, any traffic impact found not to be acceptable, will require funding for appropriate mitigation measures. The size of this development does not require the provision of a new school, however there will be Section 106 contributions from this development to increase capacity in the existing school system, following an assessment of the pupil yield from a development of this size. This also applies to health services.</p>
<p>How many developments of this type, i.e. eco-friendly, has ukland.com delivered?</p>	<p>They are currently looking at six schemes in the UK, and in terms of eco-living they are involved in projects at the early stages, with none completed.</p>
<p>Would you be happy to put all the green land on the development into Fields in Trust?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Will you be using a management company for the development, to include management of the parkland on this site?</p>	<p>Yes, they will have a parkland management scheme, with the owners forming a committee to ensure that it is delivered and maintained and to a high standard, and ukland.com will be overseeing that for the first 5 to 10 years.</p>
<p>Will the 35% (at least) low carbon affordable housing being provided as part of the scheme be a mix of affordable and social housing?</p>	<p>The intention would be to comply with Central Beds Council tenure requirements, to include the variety of affordable tenures, such as shared ownership.</p>
<p>With regard to the potential retirement home, would that private purchase of apartments, or would some be rental?</p>	<p>It will be similar to the one in Caddington. It will be a mix of tenures, with some private and also affordable. As part of their application, they will insist that there is a discounted element available for local people. This facility will also provide a care element. The retirement operator they have been in talks with are also eco-living focused.</p>
<p>Culverts being provided under the road bridge must ensure that they do not cause branches or debris to catch on the bridge as this is what has caused significant flooding at</p>	<p>They have been working closely with the IDB and Central Beds Council to ensure that water is able to flow freely through the development. The main culvert will be as wide as the Brook, with additional large culverts either side to allow for managed flow of any flood waters.</p>

the Hitchin Road and Brook Street bridges.	
How much will this proposed development fit in with the emerging Central Beds Council Local Plan?	Ukland.com is not about building maximum density or profit focused, their projects are about eco-living and exemplar projects that people are proud to be part of.
In addition to the usual S106 requirements for education contributions, etc, what other gain do you see coming to Stotfold in terms of S106?	The heaviest weighting is to education, then healthcare, Biggleswade swimming pool. Discussions will be held with the S106 spending officers, but a query was raised over whether there is anything the Town Council feels S106 should be contributing towards.
We have aspirations towards provision of more recreational facilities, and we have provision in recent times towards football pitches, but we already have a lot of those and do not have any more land to put them on. We are trying to widen the facilities available to our residents. We would be looking at provision towards older children, as we have lots for very young children, but not much for teenagers or adults. There are S106 Officers in Central Beds Council who are aware of what we are looking for, in terms of recreation in other areas around the town.	
Concerns about width of roads to accommodate a proposed bus route along residential areas, with the potential for on-road parking disruption, and the number of parking spaces allocated to each property.	The road which goes through the linked Linden Homes site was built to accommodate larger vehicles such as buses and is to Central Beds Council's standard road width requirement of 6.5m. Visitor parking will be in lay-bys. For the main route through the side from the Linden Homes development, there are also verges, cycleway and a footpath on either side. There will be visitor bays, plus extra bays for certain users outside of those bays, on top of the Central Beds Council parking requirements allocated to each property.
Has thought been given to widening of roads into the section allocated for the retirement village, particularly as this may be an area with more requirement for emergency vehicles and would also be a very suitable area for	The retirement village will have its own electric mini-bus type vehicles to take their residents out to the shops, etc. Provision of a bus route to the retirement village would seem a sensible idea, and this is something to discuss with Central Beds Council. Their requirement was for the development to include a bus loop, but this could be put anywhere in the development. Detailed engineering plans would have to show tracked

<p>a bus route for those who aren't able to drive.</p>	<p>routes with a fire engine to ensure that the road infrastructure is wide enough.</p>
<p>Please explain the use of batteries rather than mains power supplies for dwellings</p>	<p>It is a powerpack that will go in the garage, run off photo-voltaic panels or special roof tiles, which stores energy in the powerpack for all the energy in the house. In the event that too much energy is used in the house, then it switches to the National Grid. The idea is to produce energy from your own home, which is stored in your home, and to run your own home, without using the National Grid.</p>
<p>Would you provide local amenities in the development, as all shops are at the other end of the town?</p>	<p>Yes, if it was wanted to be delivered. They have acquired the pub as a facility under option, and the proposal is to turn it into a more family friendly pub.</p>
<p>What other eco-living methods are you proposing, in addition to the powerpacks for each property? Such as exhaust air recirculation?</p>	<p>It is a changing world in terms of construction materials, so you can only acquire what is on the market at the time. They have a designated person looking at types of materials to provide as low carbon development as possible.</p>
<p>How are you going to heat the properties, now that by 2025 you cannot use gas boilers? Please explain more about the electric charging points for cars.</p>	<p>Tesla provide car park charging points, so they are working with them and other supplies to look at all options, as a charging point is an essential part of the project. From 2025 no more gas is allowed in any new build in the UK, but this may be brought forward to 2023. There are different options, including heat source pumps.</p>
<p>Concerns about where infant/primary school age children would go to school, as the existing schools can't expand further, in relation to physical expansion space. They are also located on the other side of the town.</p>	<p>This development is below the threshold requiring provision of a new lower/primary school, but as with the adjacent Linden Homes development, you would expect contributions to be made towards increasing capacity in the existing schools.</p>
<p>Confirmation that the current schools are full, and the nearest school – Roecroft Lower School, is going to go to Primary and reduce its intact number in 2023, resulting in less spaces than there are now – bearing in mind there are also other developments taking place in Stotfold, which have not yet generated pupils, but will do in the next year or so. The School Places Team at Central Beds Council don't always have good information on children numbers coming</p>	

through. All the Lower Schools in Stotfold will become Primaries in 2023. St Mary's Academy will have new buildings and they are currently planned, however St Mary's currently has 8 spaces available for any pupils that may be coming into Stotfold in the next academic year. There will be huge problems with lack of planning of numbers of pupils wanting to attend at primary level – reception to the age of 10.	
The doctor's surgery and pharmacy in the town are currently (even pre-Covid-19) finding it difficult to cope with the number of patients and prescriptions required – currently around 1,000 a week.	

The Chairman permitted a member of the public to raise the following queries:

Questions/comments	Developer responses
Is there a new roundabout going on the A507?	No, there will be no new roundabouts associated with this scheme
With the 181 dwellings, are there any site plans of the type of houses?	This is currently giving an idea of the outline of the development and where the dwellings would be. Details on house types would come if Outline consent was granted, but would include a mix of tenures, beds, self-build, etc as part of the Council's policy.
Are there any plans to develop the adjacent field to this site?	No, this is not part of the remit, and this land is owned by Central Beds Council
Are ukland.com joining the national aim to plant trees, by including tree planting in this development?	Yes, there will be an extension to the Etonbury Wood, plus trees planted throughout the development and in the parkland, including around the retirement village and the backs of properties on Hitchin Road. There are some existing significant sized trees alongside Pix Brook which will remain and be bolstered as part of the landscape design.
Can we have another meeting once more details are available?	We will be consulted throughout the process, and if requested to attend a meeting, they will be happy to attend.

It is anticipated that Outline permission could be granted before the summer, and Reserved Matters and working drawings completed within 9 months to a year. They could build out the whole project in three years, from working drawings.

53/20 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Nothing to report.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 8.28pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: