

ROSS-ON-WYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITES STRATEGY MEETING: HEREFORD: 21/10/2016

Present: Richard Ball, Samantha Banks, Jeff Bishop, Kevin Bishop, Naomi Calvert, Peter Clasby, Cllr. Phil Cutter, Donna Etherton, Richard Gabb, Andy Hough, Geoff Hughes, Cllr. Richard Mayo, Cleo Newcombe-Jones, Melvin Reynolds (Chair), Dave Rossiter, Natalia Silver, Caroline Utting, Lesley Woakes, Susan Woodrow. (Apologies from Antony Featherstone.)

Aim: The aim of this meeting was to discuss the potential for one overall approach – a Development Strategy – for potential sites in Ross-on-Wye and, if supported, to begin to outline ways forward.

This note is not meeting minutes. It is a summary of the main outcomes and next stages.

Overall Approach

- There was support for including in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) a coherent, overall Development Strategy to incorporate all the emerging needs for Ross. Herefordshire Council (HC) outlined their expectation that the Ross-on-Wye-NDP would need to allocate sites for housing because reliance on windfall sites and existing allocations was deemed to be insufficient. This needs to be checked and discussed further with HC planners as the baseline for the need calculations had not previously been made clear to the Ross NDP team.
- Given the pressures for new housing, and especially the current lack of a 5 year housing supply, the NDP should continue to plan, as it is already, not just for the Local Plan figure of 900 houses but some figure over and above 900.
- The principle of co-locating a new, purpose-built Children's Centre with any new primary school was supported in principle. The strategic need will have to be checked but the overall principle is backed by the government. (NB. Details have now been received of the other uses located at the Ryefield Centre and plans for these must also be included.)
- Other valuable co-locations should be pursued, where a Business Case supports this.
- Those involved in health planning are working towards a 'health hub' based on the current provision in the centre of Ross (which allows staff to work at both the Community Hospital and the GP surgeries). It would be valuable to this concept if the NDP could allocate a site nearby for low dependency or intermediate care housing. The Police Station was mentioned as a potential site in this regard.
- None of the currently suggested sites appears easy to advance. All have some access (pedestrian and/or vehicular) problems, some have flood problems and some may have problems of contamination.
- General viability must be addressed, especially for the more challenging sites, and this must take account of capital and revenue implications for Herefordshire Council, the NHS and Ross-on-Wye Town Council.
- This all has multi-agency and multi-departmental implications, so careful overall management will be necessary, particularly if the results are to be incorporated into a NDP.
- The impact of the Environment Agency flood mitigation scheme may not yet be reflected on the current EA flood modelling map. Further discussions with the EA need to take place with support from HC.
- The Ross NDP group emphasised that they had only just started to look at sites, and that work was in its early stages. Assistance from HC is required to take this forward and to scope the potential for the options, including technical input from planning and highways teams and others.
- The implications of the CIL 'freeze' were mentioned. The Ross NDP group were keen to understand how and when this was likely to be taken forward by HC because it has a major impact on the Town Council business case. Securing 25% of CIL contributions had been a key part of the benefit of taking forward an NDP in the first place.

- The LEA are clear that the continuing maintenance expenditure on Ashfield Park Primary School is not justifiable, that a review of provision in Ross is needed, and that options for a re-located Primary School are best assessed through the Ross NDP process.

Potential sites (key points only)

- The **Hildersley** housing site is still being pursued by HC working with the developer with the aim of resolving the issues around noise from the nearby firing range, as part of the current planning application process. It is hoped to have made progress by the end of the year but there is a possibility of a Government call-in (with consequential delays).
- **Tanyard Lane** is best considered along with the old laundry site to the north west that could provide road access. It is thought that there are contamination issues on this site which could impact on site viability, however, further evidence is needed to establish whether this is the case.
- The ideas for **Broadmeadow** were based on the advice of the Environment Agency to use their current flood risk map. This shows the whole area in Zone 3. As above, the topicality of this map was queried given recent remediation measures. This may enable some housing on the site. It was noted that the caravan park has been seeking direct access from the A40, however, this has been strongly resisted by highways.
- There was support for considering Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane as one site with one overall masterplan (providing some potential for financial equalisation).
- **Model Farm** is also potentially affected by the firing range noise issue (the potential impact remains unconfirmed). The timing of any support from the government is linked to the autumn statement (anticipated on 23 Nov).
- Direct access to **Marsh Farm** from the bypass was discussed, as an alternative to through access from Model Farm, which would be unappealing if this is to be developed as an employment site.
- Sites to the **north of the A40** were regarded as unlikely, certainly in the short term (there is for example a recent new tenant for at least part of the Somerfield warehouse - a US based distribution company). At best they could be highlighted as reserve sites. Loss of well located employment land would be resisted, and any future redevelopment would need to include a significant element of employment development.
- Some other potential sites were suggested for consideration (e.g. the Cowder Arch Road site for 60-80 houses). These will be pursued.

Actions

- The first next stage action to be a meeting between relevant planning and highways officers of Herefordshire Council and representative(s) of the Ross NDP team to discuss technical and procedural issues around the list of sites, scoping the potential of each. To be coordinated by Sam Banks, working with Place Studio on behalf of the Ross NDP team. *(NB. It would be valuable to have done this before the next schools strategy meeting on 17th November.)*
- Meetings to then be held with other teams/groups (e.g. those involved in the health hub) to elaborate their specific aspirations, briefs, requirements, funding options etc.
- A second all-party meeting to be held when properly refined options begin to emerge.
- At some point early in this sequence agreement will need to be reached on roles, responsibilities, project funding, timeframes etc.
- Some form of protocol was suggested by Ross NDP Group Chair Melvin Reynolds, to agree how HC would support the NDP group going forward. With complex issues and site allocations, this is particularly important to clarify roles, responsibilities, resources and timescales.
- It was agreed that the Wye Valley Trust should be involved in future discussions around the Health Hub.