

**Meeting of Steering Committee
on Friday 13th March 2020
Update on actions in lieu of 17 April 2020 meeting**

Present

Giles Baxter (GB)
Charles Champion (CC)
Chris Neil (CN)
Simon Russell (SR)
Gerry Moscrop (GM)

Apologies

Irene Steinbrecher (IS)
Estelle James (EJ)
Christopher Purvis (CP)
Rob Hollin (RH) representing the school governors

In attendance

Chris Brotherton (CB) of Thomas Homes

- 1) GB provided a quick update on the situation with Locality/NP. The Funding submission for £97,833 is in. Breakdown attached. Afternote. Dave Chapman (Locality) has informed GB that the submission has passed scrutiny and, subject to final agreement from central government (which should be forthcoming) we can expect an email approving the grant by Friday 27th March. DC has also explained to GB that the government remain committed to addressing the housing challenge and community led planning, and that additional funding should be available.
Grant approved and due diligence completed. We can expect the grant in the PC account shortly.
- 2) GB updated on the Neighbourhood Plan. We now have the second draft from Neil Homer. It's coming along nicely. Main elements to work on:
 - a. Articulation of VSCs
 - b. Environment policy – Afternote, Jaqi Mason has agreed to lead the review of this section, and some £ has been put aside from the NP fund to engage Suzi Coyne (Bachport planning consultant) to extract the key points from the Bachport submissions.
 - c. Heritage Assets. Afternote. The PC have been invited to do a piece of work on setting out which (non-designated) assets and views should be included in the character assessments of CH and B, and respected in any planning application. **Action CN/GB This is not really practical under current restrictions. GB to submit draft formally to the parish council for tabling at a PC meeting. They can then either accept as drafted, or suggest specific amendments .**
 - d. SR (and RH subsequently) offered to review the NP draft in detail. Afternote. Draft NP has been circulated comments invited by Thursday 9th April. **Action GB/SR/RH Comments received from SR, RH and Jaqi Mason. Action now with Giles to update draft.**

Update on NP and NDO timing. Locality have advised that central government have currently directed that local elections, including NP referenda, will not take place before May 2021. This may change. GB opinion is that we should just press on as a)the advice may change and b) it will take many months yet to get the NDP and NDO to the referendum stage.

- 3) Progress on Risks
- a. Surgery. IS reported by email that the PCN supports the plan, and that they can now approach the CCG for assistance developing their strategic plan. **Action IS/EJ NFTR**
 - b. School. CB reported that the Diocese have confirmed that they are committed to the school in the long term **NFTR**
 - c. CN reported that central government direction to SODC to proceed with the Local Plan (however unpopular!) means that infrastructure funding for the road is looking more likely. **New consultation on bypass and road is open: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/didcotupdate.**
 - d. There was a discussion on community risk, ie that the community will not support the scheme. Two actions agreed:
 - i. Consultation Event at or around the Village Meeting in May. (C-19 means this won't happen, so we will need to come up with an alternative plan). **Action CN/GB** with support from all. **Update: delay probably until Autumn**
 - ii. Referendum. Following the discussion at item 5, it was agreed to proceed on the basis of the current assumption, i.e. NDO with a referendum at the end. **Action All**
- 4) Finance Model. GB reminded the meeting of CB's suggestion that we should wait until the main risks around VSC were reducing before tackling the finance model. The meeting agreed that it was now worth addressing the finance model. GB proposed that the four key stakeholders get together and start work on the model. GB proposed that he stand aside for to maintain independence as chair. It was agreed that CN, CP, CB and IS/EJ (and any one that they would like to bring as part of their team) would meet and make a start. CN agreed to consult CP, come up with some dates, and convene the meeting. **Action CN/CP. Ongoing**
- 5) Planning Route. GB led a discussion to review the decision to proceed down the NDO route, in light of a) the need to argue VSCs possibly opening up the use of a normal planning application b) the commercial risk of an inspector refusing the NDO after £200-300k had been spent c) the engagement risk of not being community lead (whether real or perceived). He used the attached slides to take the meeting through the options (NDO, Normal Planning Application, Hybrid = normal application with PC managed referendum). It was agreed (**Key Decision**) to proceed with the NDO for the following reasons:
- a. £100K of public investment had been secured, significantly reducing the commercial risk to CB. This represents a significant up front investment by the PC/residents/UK taxpayer which should not be refused lightly, not least because the £100K would ultimately have to be found from elsewhere.
 - b. The need to be, and be seen to be, community led remained a red line, and whilst the hybrid option would meet this condition, it still leaves

the PC, Gibbs Trust, and CB potentially exposed to accusations of being developer led. (It was agreed by all that any public engagement must be led and fronted by CN and GB, with CB, CP/CC and IS/EJ in supporting roles).

- 6) CB asked for direction on next steps for him:
 - a. As soon as the grant is in, the PC will commission CB to proceed with the initial surveys. CN (with advice from the parish clerk) and CB will agree the commissioning process. **Action CN/CB. Subject to CN approval, GB will commission on CN's behalf.**
 - b. As ground surveys of the two sites will be undertaken, the meeting agreed that a communication should be put out in the next few weeks to those properties adjoining the sites explaining what was going to happen and why. GB agree to draft with CN's support. (Afternote – the key here is to link this back to the announcement/presentation made at the last village meeting about the two sites). **Action GB Ongoing. GB to draft communique.**

- 7) **The next meeting** will held on Friday 17th April 2020. Afternote. In light of the C-19 situation, we should plan on holding this meeting virtually on Zoom. Victoria is a whizz on this now so will help me set it up! All you need is a device with a camera and mike and a reasonable internet connection. I'll send you a link. **Action GB/All**
DONM: GB proposes 13.00 Friday 15th May, at LTFH or by Zoom, when C-19 lockdown situation should be a bit clearer.

GB
25 March 2020
16 April 2020