

BURCOT AND CLIFTON HAMPDEN INITIAL PARISH CONSULTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AS AT 9 DECEMBER 2020

1. Why do we need development?

There are massive developments proposed of 3500 houses in Culham, and 1700 in Berinsfield. As a rural parish with two small villages, we are fortunate to have such great amenities, our surgery, our shop and post office, our school, our village hall, our recreation ground, sports pavilion and scout hut. The surgery building is not fit for purpose as a modern medical facility. We must build a new surgery building, and grow the size of our community if we are to secure the long term future of these amenities, and all they do for our health and wellbeing in the future. We must provide some smaller houses for residents to downsize, lower cost housing for sale, and some Affordable Housing. You can read more about why we need to act now in the [draft Neighbourhood Plan](#)

2. What might happen if we do not proceed?

If the community does not take this opportunity to take control of its destiny, our future may be imposed upon us. We risk graduated loss of our amenities over time, and losing control to developer led initiatives with little or no benefits coming back to the parish.

3. Will the development include Affordable Housing?

Yes. The need for some affordable housing was identified in the 2014 Village Plan Survey. The proposals are fully compliant with local planning policy which is that 40% of new homes should be Affordable. This means 10 homes, of which 75% will be social housing for rent, and 25% shared ownership. Affordable Housing will be owned and managed by a local Housing Association. In addition a number of the homes for sale on the open market will be smaller 2-3 bedroom units.

4. Will the properties be suitable for older residents, e.g. on one floor with no stairs?

We are examining the option of building some of the properties as flats. If a flat is on the second floor, then consideration will be given to inclusion of a lift in the building scheme.

5. How have the community been consulted and kept informed?

Here is a summary of the community engagement events to date.

[2014 Village Plan Survey](#). There were 266 respondents.

[2015 Village Plan published](#). delivered to every household and on the parish council website.

[2017 Annual Village Meeting](#): Neighbourhood Plan 'launched'.

2018

- [Annual Village Meeting](#): Update to the community.
- [Follow Up Survey](#). There were 213 respondents.
- Two drop in events at the village hall at which residents had the opportunity to comment on the draft policies now reflected in the [draft NP](#). Members of 40 households attended, representing 87 residents.

[2019 Annual Village Meeting](#): Update to the community including site options.

2020 (May) Update to the community in the form of a flyer distributed to every household with details on the website, a village email, and an article in the Bridge Magazine. Due to COVID, it was not possible to hold the annual village meeting. [Click here to view flyer](#).

[2020 \(November\)](#): Initial Parish Consultation

Each of these events was publicised through a combination of flyers to households, posters, notice boards, village email, articles in the Bridge magazine and word of mouth. And at each public event an invitation has been extended to join the NP steering group.

6. Why have we not been consulted on the development proposals?

This is precisely what we are doing now. It has taken nearly two years from identifying, in January 2019, the two sites with potential for development, to the creation of a potentially viable proposal which the steering group could put to the community to hear their views. This is the design proposal that has now been shared for consultation. This is the start of the dialogue on the development proposals, not the end.

7. How, when, and by whom was the decision to pursue the two sites made?

On 16 January 2019, members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and SODC planning department met to identify and assess potential site options. It was the objective of the steering group members to maximise the number of potential sites to give us choice, and to provide negotiating leverage with landowners. 8 potential sites were identified in Clifton Hampden and Burcot. SODC representatives, whose views carry great weight, ruled out all but two of the sites, on grounds of harm to the openness of the Green Belt. These are the two sites in the development proposals. The minutes of that meeting can be found [here](#).

On 13 March 2019, the Steering Group accepted the findings of the options assessment, and endorsed a strategy of development on these two sites through a Neighbourhood Development Order. The minutes of this meeting, and the strategy map, can be found [here](#).

Following the meeting, further advice was sought from SODC. The response indicated that development would be possible on the two sites, but that a case for Very Special Circumstances would be required because of their position within the Green Belt. SODC also indicated that such a case could be made. This sequence of events led to the formation of the Neighbourhood Development Order Steering Group, who have put together the proposals for development which have now been shared for consultation.

8. How has the project been funded?

Work to develop the **Neighbourhood Plan** started in 2018. This work has been funded by grants of:

£5,000 from SODC

£13,650 from Locality, who administer grants for community led projects on behalf of central government.

This funding has been spent on marketing materials, consultancy fees, membership fees of relevant national bodies, and establishing the Community Land Trust.

Work to develop the **Neighbourhood Development Order** started in 2020. This work has been funded to date by a grant of £97,833 from central government.

This grant is being spent on professional fees, e.g. architects, surveys, etc, consultation materials, and legal fees. The development partner, Thomas Homes, has not received a fee or taken a margin for their work in preparing the development proposals.

Capital funding for the development of houses and the surgery will be raised by the developer.

Community members of the NP and NDO SGs receive no remuneration for their work.

The trustees of the Gibbs Estate, and the Community Land Trust receive no remuneration for their work

9. What are the governance arrangements?

There are 4 governance groups:

The Parish Council, the overseeing body for the steering groups, and the Qualifying Body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Order.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The NPSG is an empowered sub-committee of the Burcot and Clifton Hampden (BACH) Parish Council. By empowered it is meant that the NPSG is authorised by the Parish Council to take decisions to achieve its objectives. The NPSG's purpose is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Burcot and Clifton Hampden in order that these will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council. The TORs and minutes of meetings can be found [here](#).

The Neighbourhood Development Order Steering Group. The overriding principle is that a Neighbourhood Development Order is community led. The NDO SG's purpose is to oversee, on behalf of the Clifton Hampden and Burcot Parish Council which is the Qualifying Body, the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Order so that it can progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be approved by South Oxfordshire District Council. The TORs and minutes of meetings can be found [here](#).

The Community Land Trust. The Burcot and Clifton Hampden Community Land Trust is a special form of registered company which exists purely] the benefit of the community. The company is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and is a registered charity. It can retain ownership of or other interest in property held for community benefit such as land, amenities, or affordable housing for rent. There is a team of managing Trustees. Every eligible member of the community is invited to become a member/shareholder and to have a say in the company's affairs, and residents can put themselves up for election to become Board Members. Membership costs £1.

It is proposed that ownership of the new allotments and the village stores and post office building will pass to the Community Land Trust.

10. What is the difference between the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order?

The draft Neighbourhood Plan, which is a planning policy document which, within the framework of national and local planning policies, will be used to inform decisions on future planning applications within the parish. This document sets out our vision for the Parish, and why we must act now to secure the future of our school, our shop/post office and surgery. But due to planning policy related to the Green belt, it cannot make site allocations, or specify the number of houses needed.

The Neighbourhood Development Order is a planning application, owned by the Parish Council, for the development needed to deliver the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan.

11. What are the interests, financial and otherwise, of those involved in the project?

Ultimately, the entire community has an interest in our vision: the future sustainability of our villages and amenities and the health and wellbeing of our community in the threat of new development at

at Culham and expansion and regeneration Berinsfield. We all stand to gain if our amenities are secure, and to lose if they close.

Additionally, the community stand to benefit from:

- Ownership of the village shop and post office building by the Community Land Trust (in which every eligible resident is entitled to be a shareholder).
- Ownership of the new allotments, by the same mechanism.
- Retention of a surgery within the parish,
- The new footpath and cyclepath to Long Wittenham, part of which is on Gibbs Estate land.
- Securing in perpetuity the right for residents and visitors to use the Barley Mow carpark
- Improved parking provision – Parking has been a perennial problem for the village.
- And, subject to the new road crossing and bypass being built, agreement from Oxfordshire County Council, improvements to pedestrian safety across the bridge, including moving the traffic lights to beyond the Barley Mow.

The Parish Council's interests are:

- To fulfil the mandate given by the Parish to solve issues and meet needs raised in the Village Plan survey and subsequent consultations.
- the Community Infrastructure Levy which will result from the development. Normally set at 15% of the CIL received by SODC, it rises to 25% if a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted through referendum. To be used for improved infrastructure projects in the Parish, projects that would otherwise remain unfunded and unaffordable
- Ownership of additional parking spaces created for community and visitor use, i.e. excluding parking provided for new homes.

South Oxfordshire's interests come from:

- 'Windfall' housing to satisfy the housing needs within the District Local Plan, set at a 10% increase within smaller villages, and the provision of Affordable Housing, which will be sold to a Housing Association to manage.
- The 75% of CIL generated by the project and retained by the District Council.

The landowner namely the Gibbs Estate, (but not the trustees) interest comes from the sale of the land to the development partner.

The developers' interest is in the margin that they will make from the development, balanced against the risk they are taking through the raising of the capital.

The surgery's interest is in the provision of a new purpose built building and dedicated parking within the parish. The land has been donated, and the developer will build at cost, i.e. no margin. For clarity, the cost of building the surgery will ultimately be borne by the GP Partnership, which will receive no subsidy from the community.

Clifton Hampden Stores and Post Office (i.e. the business) interest is in the increase in potential customer base, and improved parking for customers.

The Village Hall's interest is improvements to the building infrastructure.

The School's interests are:

- Long term sustainability as a small rural school, through growth in the size of the community, providing resilience against the competition from new schools at Culham and Berinsfield.

- The grant that will be received toward infrastructure improvements
- Improved drop off and pick up arrangements

The Sports Club (who own the pavilion) and the Scouts who will receive grants toward infrastructure improvements.

At the time of writing, and other than those set out above, only one further interest which may lead to a conflict of interest has been registered by a member of the NP SG. The potential conflict of interest of two members of the NP SG who live contiguous to one of the assessed sites (Site H) and who would be impacted was noted during the site selection process. This site was rejected by SODC representatives, and therefore the potential conflict of interest in terms of discussion or vote did not materialise. A second site, (Site G) which might also have presented a conflict of interest although not identified or registered at the time, was also rejected by SODC representatives, and therefore the conflict of interest did not materialise.

12. Can I join one of the Steering Groups?

The NP SG and NDO SG terms of reference both set out arrangements for new membership, including the provision that the standing invitation is subject to the SG not becoming unwieldy, remain extant.

The NDO Steering Group would now welcome two or three new community members, particularly any from residents who do not live in the High Street which is currently over represented, and Burcot which is under represented.

Those wishing to join will from henceforth be invited to a short interview with three community members of the steering group to discuss the role that the applicant might fill, and identify the potential for conflicts of interest and how they might be managed. The steering group members will also consider the issue of balance, i.e. how well the SG is representative of the geography of the parish.

The TORS of both committees will be amended in due course to reflect this change in practice.

13. Will there be follow on phases?

There are no plans for follow on phases, i.e. a second and/or third NDO. The possibility of follow on phases was considered at a NP SG on 13 March 2019, should there be any community needs not met by this NDO. As it is the intention of the NDO SG to meet all of the expressed needs, no further phases are planned. It should be noted that, on the basis of the SODC assessment of sites in January 2016, there are at present there are no other sites identified within the parish that are assessed to have the potential for development.

The above paragraph refers to development that might need to be brought forward under an NDO, i.e. community led. SODC policy towards development on Infill remains extant.

14. What is the project timescale, including how I will be consulted in future?

The development proposals are only proposals at this stage. When this initial consultation is complete the proposals will be further refined as a result of comments received and dialogue with impacted residents. We are unable to give an exact timetable. Indicative timescales for the project going forward are:

- Jan 21. Pre-application advice sought from SODC, the purpose of which is to identify, from their perspective, any concerns which should be resolved before the draft NP and NDO are submitted for Regulation 14/Regulation 21 consultation.

- Feb/March 21. Amendments to the draft proposals in light of comments received and ongoing dialogue with impacted residents, e.g. through site visits, meetings etc, leading to the submission of the draft NP and NDO to SODC.
- March/April 21. Regulation 14/21 consultation, i.e. the formal public consultation as with any planning policy document or planning application.
- May 21. Amendments to NP and NDO in light of comments received. If there are major revisions, SODC may direct that a further consultation under R14/R21 is required.
- July 21. Independent Examiner appointed
- Late 21/Early 22. Inspectors report and referendum

15. How will the NDO, the planning application, be decided, and when?

By the community by referendum, decided by simple majority of those that vote. We had hoped to hold the referendum in May 2021, the earliest possible under central government policy for the holding of local elections and referenda. Autumn 2021 is more realistic, due to various consultation stages left to run, and the time taken for public examination by the independent inspector.

This is very different from a development that is not community led, where the application is owned by a landowner/developer, decided by a planning committee, on the basis of a recommendation by planning officers. In this case, the community are consulted, but do not own the application and do not have the final say.

16. What are the financial arrangements particularly regarding the landowner and developer?

The development provides an opportunity for the parish to obtain, or make grants towards, the assets that it has identified as important for its future. The developer, Thomas Homes, will raise capital at their own risk for the development, to be recouped from the sale of new houses and the surgery. The developer will purchase the land for an amount which will be agreed once the proposals have been finalised, and taking not account the forecast state of the housing market. The landowner will gift back to the community land, assets, and grants. A final element is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will be forthcoming as a result of the development.

The detail of the financial settlement is as follows:

On the development land

The surgery is being subsidized through the gift of the land and through waiving of the Thomas margin

The land for allotments, cemetery, carpark is being gifted

Construction costs of new allotments, cemetery and car park are being gifted

The cost of improvements to village hall is being absorbed in the development costs

Elsewhere

Cash sums will be forthcoming towards:

Public loo

School upgrade

Scout hut and pavilion improvement

The size of these grants will be confirmed as part of the final agreement. They are expected to total several hundred thousand pounds.

Gifts

The shop and post office building will be gifted to the Community Land Trust

Village rights to use Barley Mow car park will be included when the car park is sold, at no cost to the community.

Rights for a cycle lane across paddock owned by the Gibbs Estate (details of mechanics to be worked out) will be given, at no cost to the community.

CIL

It is hoped that the CIL will be forthcoming to be used for the traffic lights and road improvement at the bridge

Net proceeds

The expected net proceeds to the Gibbs Estate have yet to be finalised.

Thomas Homes will work on a standard industry margin. However, as indicated above, they are also providing elements of the scheme at no margin.