

BURCOT AND CLIFTON HAMPDEN INITIAL PARISH CONSULTATION

SITE SELECTION

AS AT 26 FEBRUARY 2021

This note describes the process carried over the period January to September 2019 leading to the selection of the Allotment and Paddock sites for the Neighbourhood Development Order.

Requirement

The Village Plan survey in 2014, together with a follow-up survey and two follow-up workshops in November and December 2018 confirmed residents wished to retain some valued village amenities, in particular the surgery, school, shop and social facilities, provide new housing, and that new built development was acceptable.

In January 2018, the local Clinical Commissioning Group produced a review of surgery facilities across the district which concluded the village surgery might be relocated and incorporated into a much larger surgery facility within the new housing development proposed at Culham Science Park. <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/documents/work%20programmes/south-west-locality-place-based-plan.pdf>. The current surgery building is leased from the owner who is retired and whose future plans for the building are uncertain; and the present surgery partners are aware the building is not fit for purpose, for example a lack of disabled access. The existing practice remains viable for the future if suitable permanent premises can be found.

The village school has been struggling in recent years to garner sufficient pupil numbers. Numbers have recently been boosted following the closure of Culham Village School in 2019 (which was itself forced to close because of insufficient pupil numbers). However, the school building needs attention, requiring upgrades to the classrooms, without which the viability of the school remains under threat, even more so with the introduction of new primary schools in the new developments at Culham and Berinsfield.

It became clear to the Parish Council that in bringing forward a Neighbourhood Plan the council would need to find land within the parish for development of a new surgery building, find land for some new housing, and consider how it could support upgrades to the parish buildings, including the school, village hall, and sports facilities on the recreation ground, all which needed investment, and whether it could provide for other desired community assets such as more burial ground space and parking.

In the 2014 Village Plan Survey, residents were asked:

| Where would you like the new houses to be built? (Tick all that apply) | |
|--|-----------|
| In ones and twos within the boundaries of existing properties (e.g. in gardens and fields) | 76 (32%) |
| In smaller developments (1-5 properties) on currently undeveloped land..... | 123 (52%) |
| On sites where existing buildings can be demolished | 131 (55%) |
| As larger (5+) mixed developments on one or more sites | 53 (22%) |
| As single very large (10+) developments on one or more sites | 27 (11%) |
| Land adjoining the parish as a rural exception site for housing to go to residents with a strong local connection..... | 54 (23%) |
| Nowhere - we do not need them | 37 (16%) |
| Other..... | 9 (4%) |

Given the wide range of views, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) were of the view that as many sites as possible that might support development should be identified and assessed, so that residents could be given the opportunity to consider options and express views as to their preferred selection. This was the view carried forward into the site selection process.

National Planning Policy Considerations

Ordinarily a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) identifies a need for development and brings forward land that might be used for that development. The process involves identifying all reasonable sites, providing full site assessments for comparison, then allocating the most suitable ones for inclusion in the NP. A planning application for an allocated site(s) will then be brought forward by a developer, and the scheme evaluated by the Local Planning Authority against the adopted district planning policy together with any local planning policies set out in the adopted NP.

As work began on the NP it became apparent in the initial discussions with SODC there was no policy provision within the Neighbourhood Plan process to allocate a site for development where a NP Area falls wholly within the Green Belt. Instead, it emerged that the only mechanism would be through a Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO), enacted through a Neighbourhood Development Order (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 146 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>).

A CRtBO would enable the parish to bring forward land for development on specified land in the Green Belt. The requirement for a CRtBO via an NDO to deliver new development in the parish was first communicated at the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting. The process would run in parallel with the NP as the two would be linked.

An advantage of the NDO process is that it permits the parish council to lead and control the details of the development (e.g. the numbers and position of houses); the scheme must also deliver a substantial financial benefit to the community, requiring co-operation from a landowner and developer.

In bringing forward an NDO the parish council is not obliged to conduct site assessments of all reasonable alternative sites; nor is there any requirement to assess sites put forward that are not reasonable.

Nonetheless a site selection process, starting with a review of possible sites, was conducted by members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) in consultation with SODC.

The Site Selection Process

Site Selection started with a site-assessment workshop on 16 January 2019. At that meeting, members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and SODC planning department met to identify and assess potential site options. In the knowledge that there were a wide range of views on where houses should be built, it was the objective of the steering group members to maximise the number of potential sites to give the community choice and to provide negotiating leverage with landowners.

In the workshop, 8 potential sites were identified in Clifton Hampden and Burcot. The steering group members were reliant on the planning expertise of the district council in reaching a view on suitable sites, having no particular planning expertise on these matters. In the event, SODC representatives advised that only two of these (the sites now known as the Allotments and the Paddocks sites) might have the potential for development without impacting on the openness of the

Green Belt. All other sites were discounted on the advice of SODC. The minutes of this meeting together with a map of sites can be found here [[NP-Meeting-16-January-2019-Final-with-afternotes-1.pdf \(cliftonhampden.org.uk\)](#)]

On 13 March 2019, the Steering Group decided to accept the findings of the options assessment, and endorsed a strategy of development on these two sites through a Neighbourhood Development Order. This was the meeting at which the NDO SG made the decision on behalf of the Parish Council, and subject to the response from SODC on pre-app advice, to pursue the two sites. The minutes of this meeting can be found [here](#). [[Clifton Hampden & Burcot Parish Council » Meetings](#)]

The steering group applied to SODC for pre-application advice for the two sites. The purpose of the pre-application was to test the potential of the two sites for development. As part of the application, a report was prepared giving illustrative designs for the two sites as a basis for SODC to prepare their advice. The application for advice, the report that accompanied the application, and the officers' response can be found in the 'Additional Documents' section of the website.

The Parish Council only required sufficient sites to bring forward the necessary schemes for the surgery and some new housing, but if more land were required, or the landowner was not willing, then a "Phase 2" might have to be considered. The scheme submitted for pre-application advice demonstrated A and B provided sufficient land for 16 dwellings and a new surgery, and with the potential to expand Site A it became clear there would be no requirement for any additional land provided the landowner of Site A and B consented to development under an NDO.

The landowner of sites A and B (the Gibbs Estate) was approached in April 2019 and was supportive of the proposals, the Gibbs family having had a long-standing philanthropic relationship with the village.

The pre-application advice from SODC regarding the potential for development on the two sites under a CRtBO was received in July 2019 and confirmed "you will need to demonstrate very special circumstances as part of the CRBO process. I do believe however that you can make a case for very special circumstances". It was only after this advice was received in July 2019, that the Parish Council was finally in a position to begin the significant investment of effort required to develop a detailed scheme for these two sites in partnership with the landowner, surgery and developer. The NDOSG was set up to take forward the necessary work.

Conclusion

The Parish Council is satisfied the selection of the two sites was conducted in a fair manner by the NPSG and in accordance with the process of putting together a CRtBO/NDO. All the sites identified at the site assessment meeting with SODC were considered; there was no necessity for full site assessments before SODC advised the NPSG about the relative merits of the sites; and the NPSG relied on the planning expertise of SODC in finding the most suitable sites. The advice was clear - of all the sites considered, development on Sites A and B would cause the least harm to the Green Belt.

The parish council does not require any further sites for development than sites A and B to meet the needs of the parish for a surgery and additional housing, and can confirm there will no additional CRtBO's/NDO's for other land in the parish beyond the present scheme.

The Parish Council will ***not*** be re-visiting this decision during this or any further rounds of consultation.

Residents who wish to challenge the site selection process and/or propose alternative schemes which could deliver commensurate levels of benefit to the parish may do so during the statutory consultation conducted by SODC, under Regulation 21, and/or by making a representation to the Inspector when the proposals go for public examination.