

## MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WHADDON PARISH COUNCIL

Held: Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016, at 7.30pm at School Room, Whaddon Chapel, Stock Lane, Whaddon.

Present: Cllrs Sir B Stanier Bt (Chairman), Peter Lemagnen, Graham Stewart, Derek White, John Chilver.

Members of the Public: 21

Clerk: Suzanne Lindsey

Apologies: Cllrs Graham Hain, Hazel Hedges, Helen Hickman

### PUBLIC SESSION.

1. Members of the public unanimously expressed concern about the proposal under the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) to build 2000 new houses within the Parish. Cllr Stewart reviewed the broad planning process and the mechanisms for submitting comments about the plan to AVDC. The draft objection prepared by Cllr Stewart on behalf of the Council was reviewed and agreed, and further work would be done on this. Cllr Stewart emphasised that it was important for people to know about and understand the proposal and submit their comments no later than 5<sup>th</sup> September; this could ideally be done on line, but comments could also be submitted in writing and by email.

Cllr Stewart presented a local map showing the proposed development areas, and emphasised that the supporting work on infrastructure for the new 2000 houses had not been done, or it may be in the process of being done – in which case we might see it at the pre-examination stage {early 2017}, but this would really be too late to influence any major changes in the process, as the submission to government, ready for the public inquiry was planned for March 2017, so it was unclear how the development would fit into the local area in terms of traffic, employment, infrastructure and other essential public services, etc. He pointed out that no areas in the north of the Vale were protected by green belt and few other areas had other landscape constraints such as lla's and aal's, so the north of the district was an easy target for housing development and un-met requirements from areas south of the region. The land between wha001 and Coddimoor Lane was simply green field with no landscape designation at all.

Cllr Chilver confirmed that no funding was available for infrastructure, and that in any case until it was clear what was needed the requirement could not be identified and planned for. He stated that 'scatter gun' development was not the best approach, and although there had been little 'joined up thinking' he favoured a single new settlement of 4000-6000 houses in the Haddenham area as it had better transport and the land was identified as suitable for housing. Wherever it went it would have a significant impact – especially if on the old WW2 Horwood Airfield site. Cllr Lemagnen said we should strongly favour the Haddenham site in preference to Horwood/Winslow.

Members of the public requested advice about how best to present objections to the new housing; it was agreed that Cllr Stewart would try and prepare a bullet-point list to assist, but it was more important given the time to complete the WPC objection, which would be circulated when updated. This would include roads and traffic, drainage, medical services, environmental issues, schools, landscape and the topic of 'defensible boundary'. Members of the public pointed out that there was no gas and no foul drainage services in the area, which would need to be provided to enable the project to go ahead, nor were there any footpaths, cycle routes etc. The water table level was very high in the wha001 site vicinity.

Cllr Stewart reassured members of the public that the village Recreation Ground would be safe, as it was owned by the Parish Council, and a designated Village Green and could not be sold or taken without Parish Council agreement. A member of the public expressed deep concern about the POSSIBLE AND HINTED AT proposal to build eleven houses on the farmland at the rear of his property. Cllr Stanier (Chairman) explained that AVDC had analysed the number and size of villages in the Vale and all 'small' villages were being asked to find space for a percentage of their population – in Whaddon's case some eleven houses. The lack of planning policy due to the rejection of the previous VALP had created difficulties. It would be possible for the owners of any land to sell it for possible development and there was not a lot that could be done to prevent it, but such applications would have to go through the normal planning process. Cllr Stewart stated that the Village did not have a neighbourhood plan, but would benefit from some small homes for retirement and starter

homes, and this could possibly be provided under an Exception Site Scheme. But developers preferred not to take that option, as they usually consider their land has full open market value potential. What is really needed is a philanthropic landowner or part of a bigger land deal.

Cllr Stewart explained that the new houses proposed at WHA001 constituted a 350% increase in housing in Whaddon Parish, and no other area was being asked to accommodate such a large amount. AVDC while accepting the need to take some of the unmet needs of the other Buckinghamshire Councils, is vigorously opposing having to take all of them. The plan focused on putting the biggest growth on the edge of Aylesbury. Cllr Chilver agreed to ask if tables were available showing population and housing density and how this compared between north and south of the Vale.

Members of the public pointed out that placing houses in the north of the region to accommodate people working in the south did not meet sustainability objectives, and it was impractical for people to travel that far due to poor existing connectivity, and the existing traffic density. The houses should be located near the jobs. Cllrs Stanier and Stewart pointed out that Milton Keynes had been planned and built using a holistic approach and this had worked well.

Cllr Stewart expressed concern about where the new A421 Expressway would be routed, and if it would be relevant to the new 2000-house development, but feared the building of the road would lag the building of the houses by many years and the interim traffic congestion would be horrendous. Cllr Chilver commented that the likely A421 Oxford - Cambridge route did not go through any major populated centres and would have a very high environmental impact on this general area.

Members of the public expressed concern about the inclusion of gypsy/traveller sites in the area. The recent agreement by AVDC to grant retrospective planning permission to an illegal site in Nash was condemned, and the basis of grave concern for the future. Cllr Stewart suggested that provision for travellers is likely to be included in the 2000-house allocation, if it remains in the plan, and not in a rural location.

Cllr Stewart stated that it was better for members of the public to submit individual comments to the VALP consultation process, and not in the form of a petition. He emphasised that objections to the development must be supported by data and suggestions of alternative solutions to be taken seriously. He hoped by presenting a good response to the Planning Inspectorate, WPC would be included in all future consultation processes and hopefully be offered a seat at the public inquiry hearing which would be greatly to its advantage.

The Chairman and Councillors thanked members of the public for attending the meeting and stated that further information would be disseminated as it became available.