**Minutes for Committee**

**7.30pm, Tuesday 19 July 2016, Children’s Centre**

**Present** **In attendance**

Brian Willman (Chair) - BWnAnnemarie Lewis

Justine GlynnBrian Waters - BW

Geoff Bond David Lamb

David Williams Andy Rogers (taking minutes)

Stan Shaw

Penny Frost

Lisa Fairmaner

Chris Ruse

Helen McNally

Petra Braun

1. **Apologies** for absence were accepted from John Goddard, Jean Loveland, Danielle Coleman, Andree Frieze, Siriol Davies and Anne Powell.

2. **The minutes of the Committee meeting of 16 June 2016**

were approved.

3. **Matters arising** not covered on the agenda: None

4. **To approve the new chair & vice chair of the Drafting Team**

Chris Ruse was elected as chair unanimously, with Justine Langford as vice chair. BWn thanked LF for her work as chair of the Drafting Team and wished her well in her new job: there will be an overlap until late September to allow a smooth transition.

5. **To receive a report on a meeting with representatives of the developers for the Convent site**

BW summarised discussions, which confirmed that the developers are still in ‘listening’ mode. They have slightly reduced the number of houses in the so-called ‘stables area’ but are reluctant to make further changes. GB and BW made it clear to them that the current proposals do not accord with either the RuT policies or the draft Neighbourhood Plan, although as the OOLTI has not yet been designated the developers’ present view is that the proposals do not cause harm and are not against RuT policy.

GB made a strong case for the existing ‘wilderness’ character of the main grounds (with no buildings visible from the surroundings apart from those at now the front of the site) to remain unspoilt. BW suggested it must be made clear that the Neighbourhood Plan will support the Council’s open space policies and noted that the developers have agreed there is still some flexibility and a “large landscaping budget” (not necessarily a good thing). BW agreed to draft a letter to the developers for BWn to send.

DW proposed that the Plan should take a tough line and make clear exactly what will be acceptable and what will not. The tenures and servicing/management arrangements are likely to be key - is a specified/limited public access provision deliverable?

CR queried the provision of affordable housing - does the developer’s claim that their market is for ‘over 55s’ count?

LF pointed out that an economic viability report is most likely to counter any monetary affordable housing provision, especially as we are dealing with a listed building.

6. **To receive the notes of a meeting held with RuT and agree how to respond to the Richmond Local Plan consultation**

LBRuT (Andrea Kitzberger and John Freer) met with BWn, PF, JG and AR. BWn reported that further funds (c£10k) will be made available to assist with the final Neighbourhood Plan drafting: it was agreed that competitive quotations for this work are not essential.

The Committee approved the forwarding of current draft policies to RuT by SD, for their comments/assessment. DW advised caution but noted that pre-agreement with the Council should be helpful: JF is leaving but AK will remain as the main contact for local policies, Forum liaison, etc.

The consultation on Richmond’s updated Local Plan will end on 19th August: it was agreed that members of the Drafting Team will look at their specialist policy areas and send to CR for co-ordination so that a formal response can be formulated. It was noted that there are still several stages for the Local Plan to go through and it is not likely to be adopted until 2018.

LF particularly suggested reference to the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 150-158, etc, be considered.

The role of the Forum after the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted was discussed: BWn noted there were three options: disbandment, continuing co-ordination with the Council, or reconstruction as a Parish Council. DW said that continuing co-ordination is important to assess local matters such as the allocation of CiL monies. LF pointed out that the Forum is only one representative part of the whole local community.

7. **To receive the latest version of Housing policies**

LF reported on a small number of changes, mainly to do with design quality and the flexibility that may be required to allow positive, excellent design possibly with higher buildings. This was agreed but with a “cap” on the number of storeys and wording to ensure that new design relates well to the existing character. BWn thanked LF for her work on this document.

BW noted that it is important to include an overall map of the whole area showing infill and opportunity sites, which will be critical when details of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 are published granting ‘Planning in Principle’ to designated sites. It was suggested that JL might be able to arrange this through her student contacts.

8. **To review the Ham Close consultation/stakeholder meetings**

AL said that despite her background in the economic viability of development and knowledge of housing developers, she did not understand why a figure of 400 new dwellings had been fixed by RHP.

DL advised his understanding from these meetings was that, while design and density are crucial considerations, there was a shortfall in funding even with 500 dwellings. The availability of funding resources overall is unclear. It seems that the redevelopment plans have never recovered from the disastrous presentation exactly one year ago.

GB noted that the high numbers proposed took no account of the local community’s antipathy to such intensive redevelopment. PB added that the same schemes/numbers were being repeated and many local people did not seem to realise that the Forum is also critical of them.

Density figures (130 units/hectare?) are well above what is allowed by the London Plan for this kind of location and DL noted that any design that is chosen should comply with the London Plan in terms of both density and infrastructure (public transport, local services, etc).

PF said that even as a councillor the thinking of RHP/Richmond is very opaque, with viability figures unclear. LF suggested submitting a Freedom of Information request in respect of economic viability for Ham Close.

BW queried whether the Forum could commission an alternative scheme. DW suggested that the Forum must make clear what minimum conditions will be acceptable and BW agreed that the Plan must set out what is appropriate for Ham & Petersham at “masterplan” level. SS pointed out the “red-line” for the Ham Close site also needs to be properly established.

BWn proposed, and it was agreed, that JG as a member of the stakeholder reference group will take this forward together with DW and AL and report back to the next Committee meeting.

9. **To be updated on the employment of an editor for the Plan**

LF is negotiating with a consultant, who has provided alternative names for consideration, and confirmed that once commissioned the editing process will be quite quick. All the policies are needed together and are now complete subject to final agreement of Commercial/Retail (see below).

BWn hoped it would be possible to present a final draft to the Committee in October at the latest, prior to transmission to RuT. DW suggested a full public meeting at/near the next AGM, say in November, and this was agreed.

10. **To be updated on the Retail and Commerce policies**

CR tabled a draft Retail/Commercial policy document. SS queried whether the Forum would have much much real control over these aspects, but welcomed the draft.

PB agreed it is a good document and suggested it should include pubs. GB said they were probably in the Community Facilities section but it was noted that a degree of cross-referencing (for all documents) will be inevitable.

BWn and BW made a plea for “home working” and internet connectivity to be included/cross-referred. Similarly PF noted that recycling should be considered (cross-referenced to Sustainability).

The draft was, subject to these comments, approved and BWn thanked CR for his work on the document.

11. **Any other business**

It was proposed that Annemarie Lewis should be co-opted to the Committee and this was unanimously agreed.

12. **Date, time and place of next meeting**

7.30pm, Tuesday 16 August 2016, Ham Library Annex (to be confirmed).