

Briefing Note on Issues Arising from Neighbourhood Plan and AGT1 Workshops – 19 January

Planning Strategy Underlying Neighbourhood Plan

1. The spatial strategy underlying the Neighbourhood Plan and the key policies affecting AGT1 were explained to Cllrs in the draft presentation circulated on 4 January and presented in the briefing held on 5 January. The draft presentation was well received by Cllrs and no adverse comments were noted.
2. The finalised presentation was delivered to Bucks Council planning, development control and garden town staff on 5 January and on the whole was well-received. Developers working for BC to produce the AGT1 SPD also engaged with the ideas positively and agreed to produce a response to them before the next scheduled workshop on 29 January. This response recently has been received and is now being looked at.
3. It was agreed that SMNP and BC would meet outside the AGT1 workshop schedule to explore wider issues and a meeting was subsequently held on 19 January.

Issues Now in Play

SPD Timetable

4. Buckinghamshire Council has said it is committed to an extremely tight timetable for the production of the SPD for AGT1, with the aim of having the SPD completed, through a single short period of public consultation, and legally promulgated by the Council by July 2021. A normal best practice timetable for such a document would be 12 or 18 months.
5. The SMNP team, with our professional advisor, are extremely concerned about this timetable and we have raised these concerns with the Council. Our concerns include: that the timetable is extremely short by good practice professional standards; it is proposed to settle the broad masterplan for AGT1 by next week notwithstanding that many strategic issues remain unclear; that the timetable takes no account of probable election purdah; that the key decision to agree the SPD does not even appear in the Council Forward Plan; that the SPD is made under the VALP and the completion of the VALP is most unlikely by July; and most fundamentally that there is no obvious reason justifying such an hasty accelerated timetable for a highly complicated issue.
6. **The SMNP invites the Parish Council to agree that the Chair of the Council and NPSG jointly write formally objecting to the SPD timetable and asking for it to be extended to November 2021 to allow for detailed preparatory work to be completed and full public consultation to occur.**

Stoke Brook Corridor

7. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the designation of land on either side of the Stoke Brook as an ecology, landscape and green zone where built development will be minimal. The aim is for the corridor of land to be developed as a north-south green corridor allowing pedestrian and cycle access within the Parish and giving residents access to green space in partial compensation for that lost to the AGT1 and AGT2 developments. This project is not opposed by Bucks Council and a meeting is to be held with them, especially the Garden Town team, to look at the opportunities for the development of this area of land, such as routing the GardenWay through it. However, the NPSG can only designate land and land use policies – if the Stoke Brook vision is

to become a reality, the Parish Council as a whole must adopt the project as a major strategic aim.

8. **The SMNP therefore invites the Parish Council to consider, at a future meeting, adopting the Stoke Brook Corridor as a strategic project with an action plan to move it forward, in partnership with other stakeholders including HS2, Bucks Council, Bucks & MK Environmental Partnership etc.** The Council is reminded that, after the NP is made, it will receive 25% of all developer contributions towards such projects.

Southern Boundary

9. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the designation of land south of the village as a landscape, amenity and green open space zone free from future housing development, although small sites for amenities and employment might be considered. The aim is for this land to be retained as a green lung for the Parish, continuing to offer access to large areas of green space in partial compensation for that lost to the AGT1 and AGT2 developments. This project is not opposed by Bucks Council and a meeting is to be held with them, especially the Garden Town team, to look at the opportunities for the development of this area of land, for example as a home for the projected 'Stoke Mandeville Park'. However, the NPSG can only designate land and land use policies – if the Southern Boundary vision is to become a reality, the Parish Council as a whole must adopt the project as a major strategic aim.
10. **The SMNP therefore invites the Parish Council to consider, at a future meeting, adopting the Southern Boundary as a strategic project with an action plan to move it forward, in partnership with other stakeholders including HS2, Bucks Council, Bucks & MK Environmental Partnership etc.**

Stoke Mandeville Corridor

11. The Neighbourhood Plan designates the land north of the village and south of Hawkslade, Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange as the Stoke Mandeville Corridor, including the SE Aylesbury Link Road and the two huge AGT1 and AGT2 housing developments. The NP seeks to interpret and give local shaping to the strategic policies of the VALP through a number of complementary policies. In order to do so, the NP will include an outline masterplan for the SM Corridor giving indicative locations for key elements including the Parish Centre. This concept is not opposed by Bucks Council or the developer consortium, but it remains to be settled how the NP masterplan will interact with the developer masterplans for AGT1 and AGT2.

Parish Centre

12. The Neighbourhood Plan, using evidence-based analysis, has identified the need for a Parish Centre to act as a symbolic focus for the Parish, a communications nexus allowing easy foot traffic through all parts of the Parish, and as a green location for public, community and employment sites needed to meet both the historic undersupply of such sites within the Parish and the needs of the new residents of AGT1 and AGT2. The location and further details about the Parish Centre will be specified in the NP masterplan. This idea is not opposed by either BC or the developer consortium but they are obviously keen to have more details of its location, composition and how it might be delivered.
13. Work is continuing on defining the nature and character of the Parish Centre and its best location. An NPSG strategy session will be held next week to look at these issues and produce a draft policy paper for the NP. It is likely that in due course the NPSG will invite the Parish Council to consider adopting the Parish Centre as a strategic project with an action plan to move it forward, in partnership with other stakeholders.

VALP and Main Modification consultation

14. BC has confirmed that the Inspector has decided to hold another series of public hearings about the proposed second round of main modifications to the VALP, at a yet unscheduled time in 2021. **The SMNP will be producing a draft response to this second round of main modifications, some of which directly affect the Parish, for Council approval.** The draft response will include a request to speak at an oral hearing in due course.

Timing Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan

15. It remains vital to complete the policy papers of the NP as quickly as possible, to then produce the NP Main Document which sets out the narrative, and to start the formal process of moving the plan toward legal approval. **The NPSG has set itself the target of being ready for the draft NP to start its first round of public consultation (Reg 14) on 19 March.** This is subject to the Plan being able to be out to consultation during purdah if the 6 May elections go ahead. Expert advice is being taken on this.

Andrew Clark

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