

Woodmansey Neighbourhood Plan

4pm, Thursday 15th December 2016, County Hall, Beverley

Present

- David Gluck (DG) (Consultant, Woodmansey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)
- Stephen Hunt (SH) (Head of Planning and Development Management)
- Jessica Hobson (JH) (Senior Planning Officer, East Riding of Yorkshire Council)
- Stephen Oliver (SO) (Chairman, Woodmansey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)
- Jon Palmer (JP) (Planning Policy Manager, East Riding of Yorkshire Council)
- Andy Sangwin (AS) (Director, Sangwin Architects)

Introductions

The meeting was organised by the Council to discuss progress in relation to the Woodmansey Neighbourhood Plan. The masterplan is now in the public domain and was displayed, alongside the Issues and Options Neighbourhood Plan, at a public consultation event on 5 November 2016. A summary of the Council's comments on the masterplan were circulated to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group prior to the meeting.

DG/SO provided a brief overview of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process, which has involved public events and meetings. The latest event was a success, with a good turnout from members of the public. Feedback from the event suggested the community were most concerned about traffic, drainage and flooding. The allocation of land for development in Woodmansey did not appear to be a particularly contentious issue. The latest version of the masterplan shows the different site options available for development. It is not the final version of the masterplan and will be subject to further consultation and refinements.

The Council's main concerns relate to the allocation of land within the flood zone, the scale of housing development proposed and the provision of affordable housing. The Council's role is to provide comments in relation to the Basic Conditions to ensure the Plan passes Independent Examination. However, it is for the Parish Council to decide how to progress their Plan.

Allocating land in the flood zone

The majority of the land allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan are proposed outside the high risk flood zone (flood zone 3) and are supported by the Council. Both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and policy ENV6 of the East Riding Local Plan Strategy Document require development to be located in areas with the lowest probability of flooding. This is known as the Sequential Test. Planning policy is very clear in relation to flood risk and the Council has won numerous appeals in relation to residential development proposed in high flood risk areas.

DG/SO asked whether residential would be acceptable on a first floor, for example above a shop, in flood zone 3. The Council clarified residential development is a highly vulnerable use and this type of development would still be subject to the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test. The Exceptions Test requires applicants to show the sustainability benefits of the development to the community

outweigh flood risk. The applicant must also show that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking into account the vulnerability of its users and that it won't increase flood risk elsewhere.

DG noted the shops/community facilities may only be viable if located with residential development and asked if viability was a good enough reason to approve residential development in the high risk flood zone. The Council confirmed residential development in the high risk flood zone would still not pass the Sequential Test given the availability of land for residential development outside the high risk flood zone in the village. However an argument could potentially be made to pass the Exceptions Test as there could be wider sustainability benefits to the community associated with affordable housing. The Environment Agency should be consulted if the Parish Council decide to allocate land in the high risk flood zone.

It was clarified that commercial development is a less vulnerable use and could be supported within the high flood risk zone subject to satisfying policy ENV6 of the Strategy Document. Policy EC1 also supports the expansion of existing businesses where development is of an appropriate scale and respects the character of the surrounding landscape. This policy supports the expansion of the Beverley Garden Centre for commercial use.

DG/SO asked how frequently the flood maps change. The Council confirmed the maps are prepared by The Environment Agency and are updated on a reasonably frequent basis. The Council are currently undertaking modelling on the River Humber and the outputs of this work may amend the flood maps in the future. The Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared using the latest available evidence.

Scale of Development

At a density of 30 dwellings per hectare, the masterplan indicates proposed housing sites that could deliver approximately 575 new houses (excluding the 58 houses with permission). This scale of development would be significantly in excess of the highest level of growth proposed in any settlement in the next tier of the Local Plan Strategy Document settlement network (i.e. the highest growth proposed in a Rural Service Centre is 295 dwellings for Stamford Bridge).

DG suggested the density on these sites will probably be lower than 30 dwellings per hectare to respond to the character of the area and the need for smaller houses/bungalows. With sufficient evidence, this approach would conform with policy H4 of the Strategy Document and would ensure the scale of development does not undermine the role of Woodmansey as a Primary Village in the Local Plan.

Woodmansey Parish Council could use the Council's Site Assessment Methodology to assess potential development sites in the Neighbourhood Area. The Methodology was found to be a robust/sound assessment method by the Local Plan inspector and could be adapted to add a local dimension, for example, the Draft Plan supports sites which are either:

- a) located within a 10 minute walk of the school; or
- b) located in areas which are already significantly residential in character; or
- c) do not remove land from economic use.

The Methodology includes a question on the deliverability of each site. Using the Methodology would ensure the Parish Council are able to demonstrate there is a willing land owner for each of the proposed allocations.

Affordable Housing

The masterplan shows the provision of affordable housing grouped together in one location. This approach is unlikely to be consistent with national policy or in general conformity with the East Riding Local Plan. AS confirmed the affordable housing sites shown on the revised masterplan would be in addition to the 25% affordable housing required in Woodmansey on the allocated sites.

DG/SO noted the affordable housing sites may be shown as open space in the next version of the masterplan although asked whether a site for 100% affordable housing (known as an 'exceptions site') would be permitted in the flood zone. The Council confirmed planning applications have been approved for affordable housing in the flood zone previously as there can be wider sustainability benefits to the community. If an application was submitted for an exceptions site separately from the Neighbourhood Plan process this might be looked upon more favourably. Whereas if an exceptions site was proposed along with the housing allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council would question whether there was a need for additional affordable housing in the flood zone, given that the allocated sites themselves would also deliver 25% affordable housing.

SO asked if starter homes would be provided on the allocations as a form of affordable housing. The Council confirmed the national policy definition of affordable housing does not currently include starter homes. The Government intend to include starter homes as a form of affordable housing and further information is expected in the Government's White Paper next year.

Next steps

DG/SO confirmed the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report has been prepared by consultants AECOM. An Environmental Report is underway and is required to inform the next version of the Plan. This is likely to be a formal Regulation 14 Consultation in April/May 2017.

The Council will continue to provide constructive support and advice to Woodmansey Parish Council on the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plan. DG confirmed the Parish Council would send the Council a draft of the next version for information feedback/comments.

The next meeting of the Steering Group is on 18 January at 7pm.