

Settlement	COLDEN COMMON
Date	10th September 2013
Venue	Village Community Centre

Attending:

Commonview - Community Engagement Group ('CEG')

Richard Izard
Val Evans
Maggie Hill
Pam Glasspool
Debbie Harding
Jo Nicholson

Winchester City Council (WCC) Officers

Jenny Nell (Strategic Planning)
Gareth Williams (Strategic Planning)
Zoe James (Strategic Planning)
Nick Billington (Strategic Planning)
Antonia Whatmore (Landscape)
Dan Massey (Transport)
Sara Davies (Transport)
Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey (Open Space)

Purpose of the Workshop

- To pull together evidence and findings of research undertaken between January and July 2013 by the local community and WCC.
- To determine the spatial development strategy for Colden Common, including the identification of sites to be considered/allocated for development.
- To determine the site(s) and development strategy/options to be presented for public and stakeholder consultation later in 2013.

In order to achieve these aims, the work programme consisted of three parts or 'tasks' –

- (i) Consolidation of the needs evidence base.
- (ii) Determining the capacity of Colden Common within the existing settlement boundary.
- (iii) Development Strategy and Site Assessments.

(i) Needs evidence base

Local views, including Residents' Survey Event, 21st July 2013

- The results of the July survey were considered along with residents' views expressed at the previous consultation event in February 2013.
- Not all potential sites were represented at the July event; some were combined with others or excluded for being too small.
- SHLAA site 275 was the least contentious locally, followed by 888/889 & 2389.
- The most unpopular sites were 1874 and 1870.
- Some developers attended the July event promoting schemes on their sites, including a designated SINC at site 2389.

WCC Technical Studies

Working drafts of studies and reports prepared by WCC were available to inform the assessment of potential development sites. These included –

- Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal (with maps)
- Open Space Assessment
- Transport Accessibility
- Sustainability Appraisal

Landscape

- Landscape officer explained the methodology of the sensitivity appraisal and outlined the overall conclusions.

Open Space

- Using the standards in policy CP7 of Local Plan Part 1, there are notional shortfalls in equipped children's play space, informal green space, natural green space and parks and recreation grounds. There is, however, adequate space for allotments and sports provision.
- A need to allocate new open space, but needs to be realistic in terms of deliverability and accessibility.
- Some residents had expressed aspirations to buying land for public open space at site 1874. Officers were of the opinion that this is unlikely to be realistic or deliverable and WCC can not provide adequate funds to deliver this option.
- Developers will probably provide the lowest level and lowest quality of open space necessary to meet requirements.

Transport

- In accessibility terms, 2500, 2511 and 2527 were ruled out.
- Otherwise, there were no 'showstoppers' in accessibility terms on all other sites.
- Site 275 has better access the closer to Main Road you get, and possible on-site provision of services would increase accessibility.
- CEG outlined importance of Colden Common to Winchester cycle way. Officers confirmed that there were no current plans for this, but it would be desirable.

(ii) Settlement capacity

- After allowing for net housing completions since 2011, existing permissions and identified SHLAA sites within the settlement boundary, the **net requirement** for Colden Common for the remainder of the Local Plan period (2013-2031) was shown to be **165** new dwellings.
- Initial disagreement over the (zero) allowance for windfalls.
- Officers reiterated the importance of solid and demonstrable evidence on windfall in order for it to stand up to scrutiny at examination and from developers.
- There was no such evidence to support an allowance for windfall developments and the CEG reluctantly agreed that such an allowance could not be made towards the overall housing target for Colden Common.
- Officers to advise the CEG on the situation on windfall in preparation for the Group's presentation to the Parish Council.

(iii) Development Strategy and Site Assessments

Development Strategy

- CEG wished to promote a strategy that reflects the community's preferences for sites, as expressed through the residents' survey and earlier consultation. This would focus on sites to the east and west of Main Road.
- The meeting debated the justification and deliverability of such a strategy. Planning officers emphasised the importance of doing this, particularly in the light of pressure from developers promoting sites north, south and west of the village.
- Officers declared themselves generally satisfied that the preferred development strategy could be justified.
- No designations on the preferred sites that would stop development in principle.
- No perfect sites – all have some benefits and disadvantages.
- The draft Sustainability Appraisal has issues on all sites, but considers that mitigation is achievable on most of them.

Site Assessments

Discussions on each site were informed by consideration of the WCC technical assessments, along with residents' views from consultation events.

Site 275 (Sandyfields Nurseries)

- Acceptable in landscape terms – sheltered by robust woodland.
- Landscape officer agreed that the site's sensitivity rating on part of the site could be revised from 'high' to 'moderate' as planning permission had been granted to extend the caravan storage area.
- Adjacent woodland has the same landowner and potentially could provide some open space, but it is in the South Downs National Park. Consultation will be required with the National Park Authority who may want a buffer.
- Density and housing numbers are a key issue due to the strain on places at local primary school. No wish to exceed the overall settlement target of 250 dwellings.
- Density could be higher (100-120 dwellings?), but final capacity unknown until the site is surveyed in detail.
- Owners of site 2495 (fronting Main Road) wish to be promoted along with this site.

Sites 888/889 (Clayfield Park/Avondale Park)

- The possibility of a local convenience store here or at site 275 was raised, but officers pointed out there is no evidence of the demand for such a facility.
- A higher density/capacity may be appropriate on these sites due to their location.

Site 1870 (Lower Moors Road)

- Not favoured locally.
- Good in sensitivity terms, but may have impact on landscape of the National Park.
- Feedback from residents in the earlier consultation suggests that the southern half of site may be less contentious.
- CEG expressed concern about development 'creeping' towards Twyford.

Site 1871 (Church Lane)

- Small site that could be acceptable as a natural extension to the village, but is not consistent with the preferred Main Road strategy.

Site 1874 (East of Highbridge Road)

- Very unpopular site, both in the July survey and previous consultation event, despite the community benefits being offered by developers.
- Recognised as popular informal open space, but the land has no formal planning designation and any allocation or acquisition for such a use is unlikely to be acceptable to the landowner.
- Concerns over access and the effect on hedgerows and trees. Transport officers satisfied that safe access is achievable.
- Not consistent with the preferred Main Road strategy.

Site 2389 (Main Road)

- A favoured location in the July survey, but, at the time, residents were not made aware by the developer/landowner of the site's designation as a SINC which precludes it from development.
- If in public ownership, it could form part of open space and green infrastructure.
- A more detailed assessment of the site's conservation importance by Hampshire County Council may be necessary.

Site 2494 (Main Road)

- Visually prominent on north entry to village and fears of creeping into the gap.
- Consistent with the preferred Main Road strategy.

Site 2497 (Rear of properties fronting Main Road)

- Deliverability uncertain – multiple ownerships.
- Access also unclear – no direct road access.
- Concerns over possible change to settlement boundary if 2494 is allocated.

Site 2498 (Ashbrook Stables)

- Fronts Main Road, but does not adjoin settlement boundary - therefore deemed unsuitable.
- Expansion of settlement boundary would encroach on the gap with Fisher's Pond.
- Adjacent to existing travellers' site; potential for new allocation for permanent site.
- Successful appeal for mobile homes, but Inspector considered the current site was not a traveller site.

Sites 2500, 2527 & 2511 (Hensting Lane area)

- Unsustainable location(s), remote from the village and its services, therefore unsuitable for development.

Site 2561 (Off Church Lane)

- Landscape issues - views are deemed significant across valley.
- The matter of which views are affected, and to what extent, were discussed. The general consensus was that views would at least be partially affected by development.
- Proposal was relatively popular in the July survey because of the many community benefits being offered, such as new woodland and community orchard.
- Acknowledged that large sites such as this provide better opportunities for the direct provision of infrastructure than smaller sites.

Site Preferences: overview

- No clear consensus on preferred sites, but several options arose.
- Site 275 (Sandyfields) is a clear favourite with the community, followed by sites 888/889.
- Site 2495 is put forward in combination with 275.
- Apparent that at least one contentious site may also have to come forward in order for housing need to be met, but should be consistent with the preferred Main Road strategy.
- With reluctance, and in full knowledge of the constraints, site 2494 was identified as a means of making up the shortfall (around 40 dwellings).
- Acknowledged that the defined settlement boundary will need to be expanded to accommodate the new allocations.

Next Stages/Actions

- CEG to contact landowners, particularly sites 888/889 and 275/2495 to confirm their interest in putting their land forward for development.
- CEG will aim refine site options which will be discussed at a follow-up meeting with officers at which preferred sites will be decided (date to be agreed).
- WCC (Gareth) to validate/check the residents' survey report before it goes public on 24th September.
- CEG requested a planning officer attend the Parish Council meeting on 2nd October to aid in explanations to full council and add WCC weight.
- Parish Council meeting will be asked to endorse the preferred strategy for public consultation.