

MINUTES of the Special Planning Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 6.30 p.m. via Zoom conference call.

PRESENT: Councillor E M Ahearn presiding; together with Councillors J A Bassett, P Brown, A J Coppin, J P Cooper (arrived at 6.59 p.m. and from item P/2020/077), P T Cooper, J R Gibbs and P L G Skea and K W Stubbs.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. P Martin (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr D Bidgway (Executive Assistant) and Mrs B Briggs (Senior Admin Assistant).

P/2020/074 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES:**

Apologies had been received from Councillors P Brown and P L G Skea.

P/2020/075 **Declarations of Interest – Members to declare interests in respect of any agenda item.**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

P/2020/076 **PUBLIC REPRESENTATION SESSION – An opportunity for local residents to make representations or ask questions relating to items on this agenda. (Note: a maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated for this session and there will be a time constraint of 5 minutes per speaker).**

There were no members of the public present

P/2020/077 **To receive a presentation from Mr S Jolly, Marengo Communications, Mr W Morris, Bunnyhomes and Mr T Wright, Thrive Architects regarding proposals for the land adjacent to Old Callywith Road, Bodmin (minute ref P/2019/262 refers);**

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Jolly outlined the changes since the previous Planning Committee meeting attended by himself and Bunnyhomes. He advised that, at the time of the previous meeting, they had been in the process of negotiating the land deal, whereas Bunnyhomes was now in legal control of the site (Marked Area 1 on the map within the 'Site Outline' slide on the presentation). He clarified that Area 2 on the map was in control of Callywith College.

Mr Morris reported that it was the responsibility of the developer to conceptually masterplan all elements of the site (Areas 1 and 2) in order for Cornwall Council to be able to understand how the two sites would fit together, with the main consideration being that of traffic flow and how commercial and residential traffic would fit together. He noted that he was aware that this had been a concern of BTC at the previous meeting.

Mr Morris advised that, as part of the previous plan, Area 2 would have been accessed through Area 1 (Bunnyhomes site) as part of their obligations. He noted that Cornwall Council had allocated the site, but had also ransomed the site, however there was some discrepancy with this ransom and the proceeding negotiations between Cornwall Council and the College has taken 2 years to resolve.

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Mr Morris advised that, due to ongoing concerns about access, they had now secured another access, through 51 Castle Street. He advised that there was a conditional contract in place allowing Bunnyhomes to purchase the property should planning be achieved.

Councillor P Brown stated that he lived in the vicinity of the development and, having previously threatened to disrupt the College development, he would not support this development without assurances that improvements would be made to Callywith Road.

Mr Wright then presented the slide entitled 'The earlier scheme' as had been presented at the previous meeting, and noted that this had also been presented to the Design Review Panel, who had provided a subsequent report in late November. He noted that they had been working through this report as part of the revised plans.

Mr Wright then presented the current plan, outlining the current proposed pedestrian and vehicular access, as per the 'Our current scheme' and 'Updated Proposals' slides. He highlighted that the new vehicular access was at the North West of the site, with the previous access at the North of the site now proposed as pedestrian access.

Mr Wright then advised that an access route for the College was planned to the East of the site, whereby the developers were in discussions with the College with regards to sacrificing a corner of their land to the College to ensure vehicular access through Area 2 of the site, which would in turn ensure that commercial vehicles would not need to come through the development (Area 1) to access their site (Area 2).

Members enquired as to whether it was possible for access to Area 2 to be via the retail park off Launceston Road. Mr Wright advised that there was a ransom in place on that land preventing that being possible at the current time. Members commented that access via the retail park would be preferable to a new route through the College car park. Mr Wright responded to advise that this was out of their remit as developers, and that they were looking at how best to address the access to Area 2 should this have to be adjacent to their site.

Members commented that it was necessary to know what the future use of Area 2 was going to be in order to assess the suitability of the access route. Mr Morris advised that this was not known at the current time. He commented that, once this plan came forward from the College, they would be required to show how their development would interact with the Bunnyhomes development but reiterated that, as Bunnyhomes were not in control of the site, this was outside their remit. He advised that the next stage for them was to conceptually masterplan the site and that their duty through the planning application was to show conceptually that the site is capable of accommodating what the allocation specifies. He noted that their focus must be on their element of the site.

Councillor J P Cooper joined the meeting at 6.59 p.m.

Members then considered the pedestrian access proposed at the South of the site onto Love Lane. Some felt it was not safe for pedestrians to exit the site onto Love Lane in its current state and that works would be required in order to make it safe. They felt that the volume of traffic on the road was not conducive to pedestrian use. Mr Morris advised that

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conversations with the Highways Department had resulted in an agreement for potential upgrade to Love Lane.

In answer to a query from Councillor J P Cooper, who had not been present for discussion around the masterplan for the site, Mr Morris reiterated that this master-planning was currently underway and that, as an allocated site, it has been through a number of processes up to this point. He agreed that a holistic approach would be ideal but with the current level of information available on the proposed use of Area 2, they were doing the best they could in terms of forward planning and reiterated their responsibility as developer to demonstrate the conceptual feasibility of the access to Area 2.

Councillor P Brown reiterated that he lived at the end of Callywith Road and saw the problems caused by the commercial traffic his business caused, and was therefore concerned about the effects of additional traffic in the area and felt that the vital issue in his opinion was Old Callywith Road. He commented that he did not like the revised entrance, just below the brow of the hill, and felt that additional traffic would make a bad situation worse. Mr Morris advised that the Highways Consultant was very familiar with the area and was keen to ensure the access is fit for purpose. He commented that Bunnyhomes are also keen to deliver nothing short of the absolute best as this will be a flagship development for them.

Councillor J Cooper commented that BTC would be keen to work with the developer to ensure that Cornwall Council were aware of the issues and request that they look to resolve the ransom issues to allow access to the site via the retail park junction off Launceston Road. He stated that any other solution may not be in residents' best interest, and BTC may not be able to support the development unless the matter was resolved.

Mr Morris suggested that the issue of highways be deferred until such a time that a meeting could be arranged with the Highways Consultant who could address their specific concerns. Councillor Ahearn suggested that, in her remit as Chair of the Planning Committee, she write to Cornwall Council outlining BTC's concerns and invite them to a meeting. Councillor J Cooper considered that this letter should take the form of an open letter from BTC and the developers.

Mr Morris advised that the developers were bound in their planning application to explain to Cornwall Council how they can access their site and what impact their site will have on the surrounding road network. He noted that Cornwall Council will have done initial access surveys during the allocation process, and he acknowledged Councillor J Cooper's comment that the DPD stated that this was to be reviewed. He hoped that this would form part of the process and that it was ultimately up to Cornwall Council to consider the developer's planning application, with appropriate access considerations included, and either agree with the acceptability of the access or not, and introduce any conditions on the site. He advised that Bunnyhomes remit did not include a more fundamental review of the road network infrastructure. Members noted their concerns around Cornwall Council enforcing any such conditions as they felt had been the case with previous developments.

Mr Wright then outlined the open space design of the development, noting that the concept of the design was to engage the community and they had brought in a renowned

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landscape architect to work on the project. The intention was to include open lawn, wildflower meadows, bound gravel footpaths, a natural play area (number 6 on the map) and benches. They also wanted to maximise the visual connection with Bodmin Beacon Monument and as such were proposing inclusion of an elevated area of land (number 14 on the site map).

Mr Morris responded to a query regarding ground maintenance to confirm that a management company would be responsible for maintaining the open space and that Bunnyhomes intended to retain places on that management group along with residents. He also confirmed that a management fee would be levied on residents to allow provision of this service.

Members then queried the provision of affordable housing and bungalows on the site. It was queried as to whether the percentage of affordable housing could be increased from the minimum 30% required. It was also felt that bungalows would be attractive to older and less mobile residents and should be included in order to encourage residents to move through the property cycle, releasing larger properties for families to purchase elsewhere in the town.

Mr Morris advised that, when bidding on a site, viability of the development must be considered, and an increase of affordable housing, or the provision of comparatively land hungry bungalows would lead to this site being unviable. However, he advised that 25% of the proposed housing on the site (type M42) was designed with the capacity for built in adaptations to increase accessibility.

Mr Wright then went on to outline the property types to be included. He advised that the key building was to contact a block of flats with lift access and that there would be smaller terraced and larger detached homes on the site. Mr Morris confirmed that the affordable housing offering would include 1, 2, and 3-bedroom homes. Mr Wright noted that local materials would be sourced wherever possible and that the architects had been working with Bunnyhomes for a number of year and had developed some really good quality house types which were reviewed on a site by site basis.

Mr Jolly then outlined the consultation process. He noted that this would commence in the coming weeks, with a newsletter to be distributed to residents as well as an advert placed in the local paper and a press release. He noted that, as well as information being available online, there would be a freephone number available for residents without internet access and plans could be sent out by post on request.

Mr Jolly advised that immediate neighbours to the site, and those properties facing the proposed access sites, would be offered a one-to-one meeting, be that a physical socially distanced meeting, or an online conversation. He also noted that he would like to maintain the dialogue with BTC throughout the process.

Councillor J P Cooper reiterated that his main concern was the access and urged the developer to push, via the planning process, for review of the Callywith Road usage as outlined in the DPD, and that BTC do the same via a meeting with the Planning Officer and through the Strategic Planning Committee for this review to take place. He indicated

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that without this review taking place, he did not see that BTC could support the development due to their concerns over access.

Councillor A J Coppin left the meeting at 7.55 p.m.

Councillor P Brown enquired as to whether the results of the Callywith College post-development traffic counting could be made available. Mr Morris indicated that these results should be available on Cornwall Council's website and that he would endeavour to find and circulate them.

Mr Morris noted that they understood the key concerns of BTC and that they would certainly consider them as part of planning application. He also noted that he would be happy to attend a meeting between BTC and Cornwall Council, should it be helpful to have the developer present.

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting closed 8.06 p.m.

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