



Minutes of Meeting of the Leatherhead Residents' Association

Held on Monday 6th June 2022 at 7.30pm in the Leatherhead Methodist Church,

Church Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22

Present: Caroline Brown, Martyn Williams, Ray Brown, Paula Sabine, Hilary Porter, Geoffrey West, Percy Hawkins, Maureen Conrad, Jenny Day, Julia Jarrett, Elaine Arnold.

In attendance: Councillor Tim Hall.

1. Apologies received from: Louise Herrity

2. Chairman's Report: The Chairman welcomed all attendees and provided the following report:

The evening is more or less devoted to the subject of the Draft Local Plan but, before that, there are a couple of other subjects:-

Firstly, as reported in the end of May bulletin, a number of us manned one of the Swan Centre barrows last Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd, selling donated items to raise money for Ukraine. We had an excellent two days, selling most of what we had to offer and raising a total of £140. My thanks go to any of you who donated or bought items, and in particular to Elaine Arnold, Katherine Grigson, Julia Jarrett, Paula Sabine, Diana Gale and Susi for their help in manning the barrow. There are a few remaining items on display and a small donation will secure (for guidance, we only charged £1, £2 or £3 in the Swan Centre).

Re forthcoming LRA meetings, NO MEETING IS PLANNED IN JULY. It is intended (but not yet confirmed) to hold an August meeting and if anyone has a subject that they would like to have presented and discussed, then please make it known and suitable arrangements will attempt to be made.

3.The Draft Local Plan: Martyn Williams introduced the subject by confirming that ,as with previous discussions , this one will concentrate on the subject of the proposed provision of new housing in Leatherhead during the Plan period .

He confirmed that the Council have been given the opportunity of commenting on the Representations made on the Draft Plan during the consultation period . Both the Representations and the Council's comments will form part of the evidence that the Planning Inspector will consider in deciding whether the Plan is compliant. Part of that process will involve Hearings, at which those who made Representations will be allowed to speak directly to the Inspector about

them. The LRA has been granted one of those slots, at a Hearing that will deal specifically with Leatherhead, on the morning on 12th October 2022 .

This discussion is therefore an opportunity for Members to hear a summary of the Representations and the Council's comments and to express their views on both. These views can then be reflected in the LRA's October meeting with the Inspector.

The Development Sites

Site DS45 (Red House Grounds / Bull Hill) - Representation: loss of public open space. *MVDC response:* MVDC have committed to provide the same amount of open space "across" the whole site and undertake to consult on the form of development.

Representation: Loss of character and objection to high rise. *MVDC response:* Good design should enable modern development without ruining the "market town feel " of Leatherhead.

Representation: Waste water upgrade likely to be needed. *MVDC response:* will liaise with Thames Water to ensure accommodation only occupied once the waste water upgrades are complete.

Representation: Roads won't be able to cope. *MVDC response:* the site is "sustainable" and close to public transport.

Representation: Concern for trees. *MVDC response:* provision for retention of existing, mature trees is in place.

Representation: Availability of parking. *MVDC response:* a new study will determine what needs to be provided. Note that new spaces are also going to be provided on DS55 (= the Station).

Site DS 46: Food Research site, Randalls Way – Representation: Concern re height and lack of parking. *MVDC response:* the current unimplemented consent is what is reflected in the Draft Plan.

Site DS 47: Swan Centre – Representation: Concern re proposed height. *MVDC response:* Good design necessary to ensure the proposals dont detract from Town Centre character.

Representation: Fairfield Centre's future ambiguous. *MVDC response:* It will be included in any development or re-located nearby.

Representation: Proposed cinema will adversely impact Theatre. *MVDC response:* cinema included only in case required by developer. Impact on Theatre to be assessed before being permitted .

Site DS48 : Sorting Office, Station Road- Representation: lack of parking. *MVDC response:* Site is close to public transport so impact on central area traffic not judged to be "severe."

Objection: More flats not required and no definition of term "low rise." *response:* Noted re flats. Design will have to integrate development of this site to lower uses around.

Site DS49 :: Connect/Trident House: Representation: Overdevelopment . MVDC response: What is included reflects an existing consent.

Site DS 50 : 36-39 Randalls Road: Representation: Loss of Green Belt: MVDC response: Need to use some Green Belt to meet targets, and loss of this shallow site limits encroachment into countryside

Representation: Adverse impact on Cemetery: MVDC response: Housing next to cemeteries not uncommon and issues can be dealt with at planning stage.

Representation: Access to A245 very difficult. MVDC response: effects not judged "severe " and can be dealt with at planning stage .

Site DS51: Hospital Site: Representation: The effect on road network of more traffic. *MVDC response:* Impact not likely to be severe and access and parking can be dealt with at the Planning stage.

Representation: Housing should not crowd out hospital function or woodland. *MVDC response:* Not intended that it should do.

Representation: Part of NHS wants to be able to develop and re-locate health services. *MVDC response:* MVDC will agree in principle, but case must be very robust and provide equal or better facilities elsewhere in the Town.

Representation: A Health Hub would be better positioned in the Town Centre. *MVDC response:* Noted, but part of NHS regards this is to be an appropriate and valuable health location.

Site DS52: Claire/James House: Representation: New development should be no higher than the existing. *MVDC response:* There is a valid planning consent for a higher building.

Site DS53 : Clare Crescent: Representation : Loss of open space and pollution from M25. *MVDC response:* Noted, but has been a prospective development site for 20 years.

Representation: The site is designated as a Nature Reserve. *MVDC response:* this designation is a mapping error. It is not a nature reserve.

Representation: By including owner's other land MVDC could meet "objectively assessed need."

MVDC response: MVDC not required to meet this target. (See para 11(b) of NPPF).

Representation: MVDC should develop more Green Belt land, inc. all Reg.18 sites. *MVDC*

response: development of Green Belt should only be where there is no significant adverse impact.

Representation: Refute that all sites are deliverable. *MVDC response:* sites are deliverable.

Representation: MVDC should extend rural exemptions policy. *MVDC response:* this is contrary to para 149 of NPPF.

Site DS54: River Lane: *Representation:* Further development will risk noise and disturbance.

MVDC response: Noise / disturbance is the responsibility of other authorities.

Representation: Risk of flooding. *MVDC response:* Developable area in low flood risk area.

Site DS55: Leatherhead Station: *Representation:* More parking not needed and will encourage car use. *MVDC response:* Parking here will alleviate pressure elsewhere (Bull Hill etc). Not yet sufficient evidence that commuter parking will be permanently reduced .

The discussions during and following the summary concluded as follows-

-replacement of Red House Grounds (DS45) with patches of open space "across" the whole site not considered a satisfactory substitute.

-high-rise buildings, however well designed, will adversely affect the "market town feel" of Leatherhead (DS45 and DS47)

-assurance that waste-water infrastructure will be improved before any development occupied noted (DS45)

-not accepted that adverse effect on roads of development assessed as less than "severe," means that impact is acceptable (DS45 ,DS48 ,DS50 , DS51)

-assurance of retention of existing, mature trees noted (DS45)

-assessment of parking "need" by new study should not be based on unrealistically low assumptions as to car ownership (DS45)

-retention or relocation of "Fairfield Centre" noted (DS47)

-impact of any new cinema on Theatre to be assessed before being permitted noted (DS47)

-retention or replacement of existing Hospital functions noted (DS51)

-a planning consent for a high-rise building at Claire/James House (owned by MVDC) was granted notwithstanding considerable public opposition. It should not be viewed as a precedent for other sites (DS52)

- historic designations of development sites should not over-ride current day concerns as to development suitability. (DS53)

-concern was expressed as to the policy of designating certain established residential areas as "Development Opportunity Areas." The considerable densification of development in these areas will certainly change Leatherhead's "market town feel."

-it is apparent that as most of the development sites will be developed as flats, and the densities set for the Development Opportunity Areas imply flat development, it is likely that the Plan will deliver far too many flats and not nearly enough of what the market needs, which is low-medium price houses.

CB thanked MW for the presentation and the attendees for their comments, which she will convey to the Inspector in October.

4.AOB / Matters arising : One item was raised, as follows:-

Hilary Porter provided details of local community help programmes, including transport schemes for helping those less able and mobile to get into the Town centre. She also confirmed that Rod Shaw is again working at MVDC following his earlier retirement. He is investigating possible proposals to revitalise our Town Centre, whilst an Access Group is trying to help those with needs for Banking access, Internet literacy programmes, mobile phone usage, etc.

5.Closing statement by the Chairman :

The Chairman again stated that there will be no LRA meeting in July, but it is planned to hold the next meeting in August or September. (Details to follow in the July Bulletin).

Members were also reminded that the Chairman continues to seek a replacement for her position.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.