

Minutes of meeting of High Lane Neighbourhood Forum

Date: 12th May

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Village Hall

Present: Richard Jones, Ian Carpenter, Trish Conroy, Anne Walker, Claire Porterfield, Helen Stocks, Peter Stocks, Cllr Colin Macallister, Cllr Dominic Warner, representatives from Hazel Grove Green Belt Action Group and residents of the High Lane community

Apologies: Ann Young, Geoff Gaskell, Julie Utranty, Aron Thornley, Cllr Shan Alexander

The previous minutes were approved.

Richard welcomed people to the meeting.

1) Financial Report

There is currently £551.37 in the Forum's account money mainly collected from the Go Fund me collection (still open) and from donations made in the public November meeting for which the forum is very grateful.

2 Using Funds during Scrutiny

It was agreed that when details of the Stockport Plan are released with information on the High Lane/Sandown Road allocations, the Forum will use the money to mobilise and motivate the public of ways to react. Rather than using the money now when we are unsure what we will be fighting against, the Forum would prefer to wait until we know what the new challenge is and the precise numbers of houses and create an action line. RJ asked for comments on this. There was no disagreement at the meeting so this is the pathway the Forum will take.

3) Regulation 19 Consultation on the amended draft Plan

(i) At the Meeting of the 4 forums in March with Heads of Planning Policy, the planners stated they have been through all the consultation responses and are now deciding what if any amendments can be made. Stockport has met 80% of the housing target set for it by the government so there is little room for manoeuvre. The Planners pointed out if there are any amendments to the existing choices of allocations, the problem then becomes - which sites will replace the amended ones as the 80% target still has to be met. RJ said there are other sites in the town which could be used.

(ii) Cllr Colin stated all the comments have now been collated and there is a council meeting on Thursday 14 May in order to decide how they're going to proceed and

what the timeframes will be. Colin said he will let us know when this information is released. He stated his thinking is to consider how we will mitigate the sites in HL.

(iii) Colin commented on some sites being very difficult eg Chadwick street in Marple and the 2 in HL .The proposed development of 250 houses behind Sandown Road will be problematic as it cuts across the footprint of the development of the A555 to Bredbury so would prevent this happening if the housing went ahead. RJ agreed it will be challenging . Colin said in the town centre sites the densities are quite low in comparison to other town centre sites so there is potential to increase density there .

(iv) Colin pointed out there is also the fact the proposed HL development is within a 15 minute walk of public transport namely Middlewood Station- despite the fact the station is unsuitable in lots of ways(lack of lighting, no car parking, its remoteness) its proximity will be considered as a positive for development to go ahead as development close to railway stations is a highly favoured. Colin said these sorts of issues need to be raised by local people once the allocations are released. RJ pointed out councils are rejecting some developments eg one in Lancashire on the news tonight 175 houses were rejected as the council didn't consider them in the interests of the community

(v) A question was asked about what Lisa Smart is doing in relation to the proposed housing. Colin stated she has made representations about the grey belt and has written to the ministers about the unfair nature of the regulations which hit rural and semi rural communities particularly hard causing the loss forever of Green Belt land.

Action: Colin to get an update from Lisa and to share with the community, Residents Association and HGGAG.

(vi) Some developers are putting in speculative applications since they know Stockport has only met 80% of its target so are gambling they can propose developments since Stockport may be forced to accept more housing.

(vii) Advice re speculative development - Don't respond and if you do, be careful what you say as developers are capable of taking people's words to suit their own purposes. Richard stated this is the advice the Forum is offering to people. Colin agreed and stated his advice is not to respond to pre - applications.

4) Update from Hazel Grove Green Belt Action Group

Richard read aloud a summary passed to him of the Action Group's work over the last few months

- They have lent support to and co-operated with other groups in the area (Bramhall/Jacksons Lane/Bean Leach)
- They created a focused presentation on the key issues that support the removal of Sandown Fields from the SLP

- Delivered that presentation in physical meetings with Hazel Grove and South Marple councillors and including yourself.
- Submitted digital versions of that presentation to all other SMBC councillors and Liberal MP. This will be relayed now local elections have finished.
- Created a Newsletter which summarises activities of HGGAG and updates which is to be hand - delivered to local residents in the area.
- E mailed 700+ of our followers
- Continued the ongoing campaign to achieve our goal.

HGGAG'S objective is :

'No development on Sandown Fields, to have the fields removed from the allocation totally, and for the fields to retain their Greenbelt classification'

5) Traffic and Traffic Count

(i) The traffic count was organised by Aron Thornley supported by the Residents' Association on Tuesday 21st April seven years after a previous Residents' traffic count . This response from the community is helpful in many ways but raised some questions on traffic passing through. It's not just the numbers it's the speed, air pollution and congestion. Increased congestion means cars move more slowly, traffic movement generally is slow. Cllr Warner suggested repeating the survey for 2 hours and comparing with the same 2 hours on the survey just undertaken, thereby adding weight to the survey's findings if the numbers on both occasions are roughly the same. It was agreed this could be useful

(ii) A resident Alex, who participated in the traffic count sent a very useful critique of the findings to the Forum which Richard read excerpts from. The Forum is grateful for this input.

(iii) Barry said there was a car every 3 or 4 seconds. To him it felt like the road was at capacity. Disley councillors support the view that traffic has got much worse since the opening of the A555. Peter took part in the survey from 8-9 am and 12-1. He was surprised there were fewer HGVs than expected. It was suggested this could be because they travel earlier 5-6am to avoid the congestion and to save on fuel.

(iv) Colin stated there's a significant number of (much needed) crossing points in HL which obviously slow traffic. Richard pointed out that's an argument against having a staggered crossroad which is part of the proposal in the HL allocation as it's well known that staggered crossings make congestion worse

(v) Angie asked for the result of the official traffic survey carried out some months ago to be shared with residents. Angie has already asked Aron and Sue Stevenson(Head of Highways)for this information but nothing has yet been forthcoming. It was pointed out that most surveys are done by TFGM rather than

SMBC and it would be good to establish this as a starting point to getting the information.

Action: Colin said he will ask. Angie asked for an ETA he said he'd send an email this evening requesting the information. It was pointed out that it took 18 months to get the result of the 5 year report on A555 released.

(vi) The traffic figures were lighter than the 2019 survey figures that were carried out in October. It was pointed out that 2019 was pre Covid and there are more people working from home since then. There's also the fact a significant number of vehicles cut through the estates onto Jacksons Edge/Thornway/Meadway/ Wybersley Rd and then into Marple towards the M60 and also Hartington Road. Obviously these are not picked up on a traffic count of the A6 since they've left the A6 but it has been estimated you should allow 5000 extra cars to cover this splintering of the traffic.

(vii) A resident stated a few days ago that in 35 minutes 137 cars passed through Meadway around 7 - 8am.

(viii) RJ said he pointed out to Emma Curle head of Planning that a report from WSP (the consultancy company working for SMBC) stated if housing reaches the 80% target this would slow the traffic in the whole Stockport area by 25% and increase its volume by 20%. The percentages for the A6 in HL would be higher since traffic volume here is already one of the highest.

(ix) There was a discussion about having the 192 coming to High Lane. There's no easy place for it to turn round is stated as the main reason this has not already happened. People pointed out school buses turn round and large wagons negotiate small rural roads round here

(x) A resident asked if there is to be monitoring of pollution including PM2.5 particles.

Action: Colin to ask will there be another pollution survey which will include PM2.5 particles.

RJ summed up by saying: **the traffic problem is the most compelling argument against having large scale development in HL.**

6) Local planning applications

(i) There have been 6 applications: 5 extensions and one at the old Simpsons factory to demolish the remainder of the factory and build 9 houses. The Forum has no objection to this since it's previously developed and small in scale.

(ii) Ian asked: what's the definition of an affordable home? Colin explained it's a complicated formula and different from area to area. The worse the deprivation is an area is, the lower the affordable homes threshold is. It was pointed out a developer for a HL site said the affordable homes and sustainability requirements for the site were not deliverable within their costings. RJ said many places do meet the

affordable homes and sustainability requirements using housing associations (like Viaduct in Stockport).

7) AOB

(i) Warren raised a question on behalf of other residents. Why did residents have to pay on council car parks to cast their vote?

Colin said he'd got the council to accept there would be no parking fees on the day of the local elections but unfortunately not everyone got the news. It was pointed out they could have had signs or a cover over the fees sign.

(ii) The observation was made that since the fees started the car parks now have available parking spaces which they didn't used to have, conversely some business vehicles now park on side roads near the car parks with the obvious disadvantages for residents and pedestrians.

(iii) The question of whether volunteers who use the car park can have some sort of dispensation was raised. Colin said there's to be a vote on this and the council would then have to work out how the scheme would work.

(iv) Several people commented that undergrowth on pavements from tree roots on the A6 from the Royal Oak to the Middlewood Way are a real hazard. Richard advised people to report this to the Footpaths Maintenance Team at the council using lamppost references which are shown on yellow stickers on each lamppost.

Richard thanked everyone for their contributions. He emphasised how helpful it is for local groups such as ours, the Residents' Association and Hazel Grove Greenbelt Action Group to collaborate and share information for the good of their communities.

The date of the next meeting will be set once the Stockport Local Plan is released