

MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING – 31.05.18
HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
DEVELOPMENT OF JACKSONS LANE CAR PARK

Top table

**Peter Bone MP, Leader of the Council Cllr Martin Griffiths,
Cllr Jonathan Ekins, Cllr Valerie Anslow, Cllr Graham Lawman.**

General public attendance - in the region of 200

1) Welcome given by Rev Martha McInnes

2) Introduction - timed meeting 6.00pm –8.00pm. Further meetings may be held if required.

Meeting advised that it is not a political gathering – any political views/questions will not be entertained.

3) Outline of the proposal by the developer Keepmoat was read to the meeting.

Keepmoat have committed to pay at least £2million for the land, with proposals to build 91 homes + 23 affordable homes. S106 monies amount to approximately £540K.

Planning permission for this scheme was granted at the meeting held on 18 April 2018. The scheme includes 75 parking places which will probably be used by the residents of the new development.

Now that planning permission has been granted the only recourse for the community is to ask the council to stop the sale of the land to Keepmoat.

4) Statement by Leader of the Council – Councillor Martin Griffiths

Fully understand the concerns and recognises the need to listen and answer questions.

One Council, 36 members from two parties who need to follow planning law.

Seeking to address issues to improve the town centre and to tackle the homelessness situation. Currently 58 households living in temporary accommodation.

Looking at additional parking, recognise workers etc. need somewhere to park and this is being done now. Looking at ways of regenerating the town.

Council operates a committee system.

MG is Chair of the Resources Committee – full Council has 36 members

Ideas for development on this piece of land have been in the pipeline for 9 years.

Will be holding a drop-in session for the public and businesses to review plans and see where alternative parking provision will be.

Global change in shopping habits – Borough Council of Wellingborough and the community is on the way up. 4.3% unemployment, huge business opportunities, HM Prison/Stanton Cross/Appleby Close providing jobs.

Statement by Cllr Valerie Anslow – gave an apology for not speaking at the Planning Committee meeting, as she was coordinating the Homelessness Shelter. Not interested in figures but wants to speak to the hearts of people about what is just and right. Is it right to sell one of our assets to developers for their profit? Is it just to have 58 families in temporary accommodation?

We need to be making the decision about selling the land for 2 benefits – space for public parking and for the Council to take responsibility for building council houses – affordable – not sold for profit.

Statement by Councillor Jonathon Ekins – was asked to speak at the Planning Meeting by residents and businesses. The town needs affordable housing. 7000 homes approved for Stanton Cross and Glenvale Park. Local users need 500 car parking spaces. If proposal of 114 homes goes ahead car parking will be lost. Parking creates two or three times more visitors, and we do need to regenerate the town centre.

Not opposed to some development on this land but two thirds is required for parking. There is a scheme to be had but not this current one. Cllr Ekins voted against the scheme and will continue to fight for what the public want.

Statement by Councillor Graham Lawman – voted against the proposal at the Planning Committee. In 2009 there was a proposal for 220 homes + 200 car parking spaces – there was concern about the St Johns Street junction and it being a conservation area – some of the reasons why this proposal was not fit for purpose. Planning is not in place until the SD106 is signed. Wish this many people could come to the planning meeting. Must obtain best value for the land – not just about the price but includes best value for the town/social issues. Need to take time to have a holistic approach to the provision on this site – need a car parking strategy. Look at the viability of the town centre – money received from Rushden Lakes for the town.

Statement by Peter Bone MP – has an interest as his surgery is on the High Street and vulnerable/disabled people need the parking facility. His role is to make sure the public voice is heard ‘listening to Wellingborough’ campaign – his personal views are irrelevant. Decision rests with the full council. Visit the MP/get the media involved. This is one of the biggest causes of concern in this town for a long time.

Important that everyone who has a view writes a letter in their own words to the Borough Council. Petition can be presented in Parliament – raises the issue/publicity and Minister must reply.

6) Questions & Answers

*Whose proposal was it?

GL – 2009 framework down to one developer – Keepmoat

Undercroft parking was in brief £25K for 1 underground space – made it prohibitive

MG – no high-rise proposed. BCW have new Property Director – lots of good ideas

How many people knew the planning meeting was on?

JE – it was publicised thoroughly. All meetings are publicly open.

Information can also be found on the website – Committee Meetings – guide to meeting dates (Cllr Ekins to action = post dates of meetings)

*Ripples in a pond – going to need facilities – housing is being built with facilities but not on this site though – it is wrong. Infrastructure not in place (schools/doctors) will cause problems for the whole community.

JE – 30 houses might be ok

VA – 300 spaces needed

*Double parking in the area in surrounding streets/inconsiderate parking on pavements – listen to the residents.

VA – parking is a big issue in the ward

Can't make decisions after land is sold so don't sell

*Town is more than just shops – good access is prime from all different directions. JL carpark is key to the North area of town. Will be chaos if forced into one-way system. Please bear in mind the citizens and the good of Wellingborough.

MG – work in progress – parking will be in the North of the town - additional spaces have been identified

Will be well publicised

Drill Hall is for sale – aim is to keep the façade of the building – soft marketing to develop the site is underway.

*But where are the spaces?

MG – Council land in the area plus additional elsewhere

*Leightons Yard 67 spaces – this will be built on

At 6.30am – 25 vehicles – local residents parking

Highest use of cars during the day – where will these go?

Also plans to build flats on the council car parking area at the bottom of Doddington Road.

Current policy – do not need to provide car parking for residents in flats

*Scheme does not improve the town centre if passed on a casting vote by Earls Barton Councillor.

MG – not appropriate to vilify Councillors who give their life to serving their town/communities. Voting was carried out in accordance with regulations.

*Biggest asset in the town is free parking. Need to retain the car park. What will be left to attract people into town? Council can't have confidence in the future of the town if development goes ahead. Multi-storey had a 15-year life span – now not fit for purpose – cars were a lot smaller. Closes at 6pm – this is no use to the church for evening functions.

MG – current proposal/matter will go to full Council

*When is the next full council meeting?

MG – it will not be at the full council meeting this year

VA - BCW own the land – as soon as it is sold we won't get it back – may be consider Community Land Trusts? Option for the council to start again – involve Wellingborough Homes.

MMc – 45 – 70 cars use the site at night

MG – hopes and plans for town are for more niche shops.

*A member of the public who deals with Keepmoat gave a less than favourable comment on their role as developers.

*At Planning Committee meeting written views were not considered

1 supporting 187 objections

Noted that the planning portal has been down for several hours in the last couple of days

*Could lose momentum if this is not dealt with quickly. Big elephant in the room – likely this council will not exist when unitary council comes into existence – land etc. will pass to unitary council and not the people.

MG – transfer car parks to town council?

VA – how about a Community Land Trust. We have a really good crematorium – a facility for the dead. Need a facility for the living!

*Chamber of Commerce – Council own the land – do not sell it. Put the houses on the small pieces of land and not on the car parks.

*Doddington Road – proposal for flats – no parking but will provide good cycle facilities. Where to park – plans suggest parking at JL car park! Cast your vote elsewhere when it comes to elections.

Summing up

Town Centre Partnership have objected

Business Improvement District have objected

Chamber of Commerce have objected

Public are encouraged to engage with Ward Councillors

Considerable amount of work to be done

Not likely to go to full council meeting this year, if it does it will be an extraordinary meeting

People choose to hire the United Reformed Church because of the car parking facilities.

A variety of people use the car park during the day and in the evenings (weekdays and weekends)

Councillors are encouraged to make up their minds on the information in front of them – been presented with the facts.

Need to continue with the petition

Need help to obtain signatures – URC cannot do this alone

The meeting caught the message – lets keep it going.

PLEASE WRITE TO THE COUNCILLORS

Additional Information

Councillors present at tonight's meeting:-

M Griffiths

V Waters

J Ekins

J Bone

V Anslow

B Graves

G Lawman

B Skittal

L Lawman

J Paul Carr

M Waters

M York

A Scarborough

Timeline

Proposals for development began 14 years ago

There have been a lot of meetings

Considered mix-use schemes to include retail/offices/200 car parking spaces

This current proposal does not retain 200 car park spaces – only circa 60

Not providing a vision

Need to utilise under used area of town

Look at holistic scheme

What is needed for the community?

Deliver a new scheme

Meeting closed 8.00pm.