

Report to Parish Council meeting, 13 November 2024

As reported previously, we paused proceeding to formal examination of our Neighbourhood Plan in order to see if we could reach greater agreement with the two principal objectors - RPS acting for Miller Homes, and Pegasus acting for Newlands. A productive meeting with Newlands duly happened but we have since been in a frustrating holding pattern with Miller trying to get a similar meeting to agree as much common ground as possible before going to examination.

This is particularly frustrating as many of the key objections raised by RPS/Miller do not seem impossible to resolve:

- They objected to our policy LWH2 on cycling and walking routes, the evidence base behind them and their impact on their development next to the Shurdington Road. We sought to reassure them that we now fully accept the consented development and support its planned cycle route through to Merlin Way, posing no risk to their plans at all.
- They challenged our policy LWH3 on Local Green Space, we think in defence of their development of the fields known as R2 and R3 which we challenged at appeal but now accept we have lost. But the LGS policy itself poses no risk at all to their development and if they maintain their objections to this policy we would simply agree to differ and invite the examiner to judge.
- They challenged policy LWH4 on green infrastructure which originally aimed to protect hedgerows, trees and landscape on their site but which we have already acknowledged will have to be amended to reflect the consented green infrastructure and planting scheme for their development. We sought to reassure them that we do not intend to try to frustrate development.
- They challenged policy LWH5 on valued landscape which they seek to contain only within the designated Local Green Space. We simply believe this is wrong based on previous inspectors' and Secretary of State's finding and will happily argue the toss in front of the examiner. But we again suspect this is a defensive move against frustrating their development so hope to reassure them of this too.

As reported previously, we will keep trying to meet Miller but will not delay examination indefinitely and will request that we proceed to examination by the end of this month if a meeting has not been agreed.

We will still report back any proposed amendments to the full PC but the July PC delegated authority to agree minor changes to the chair.

Cllr Martin Horwood

Chair, Neighbourhood Planning group

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