



SOULTON ROAD WEM COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Group held on Thursday 1 May 2014, at the Council Chamber, Edinburgh House, Wem starting at 5.30pm

Present:

Members: Cllr Peter Broomhall (Chair), Cllr Bev Horsley, Cllr Chris Mellings,
Cllr Edward Towers and Mrs Helen Pugh.

Clerk: Carole Warner

In attendance: Cllrs Len Staines and Jon Murgatroyd, Richard Bowler Construction Director
Shropshire Homes

Members of the Public: 1

SG13/14 Public Participation Time

Mr P van der Westhuizen wished to convey the level of concern of residents from Ash Grove regarding the development. His concerns about the Good Friday working had not been listened to and to be informed the matter would be discussed at the next Steering Group meeting was not acceptable. Poor management had resulted in 2 ruts being made in the highway verge this afternoon. He requested that a response be sent to Mr Robinson's recent emails. Mr van der Westhuizen stated that working on site over the previous weekend was not acceptable. He concluded by saying there was no evidence that the Steering Group had teeth and it should take action.

SG14/14 Apologies for absence

None

SG15/14 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2014 to be approved and signed.

The Minutes of the meeting were approved and signed.

SG16/14 To review matters outstanding from previous meeting.

It was agreed that any matters would be covered under the next agenda item.

SG17/14 To review project progress.

It was agreed to review the points raised in Mr Robinson's email of 29 April 2014.

Point 1 – Revision of site layout.

Mrs Pugh re-confirmed Severnside's decision that the issue of overshadowing and loss of passive solar gains to Mr Robinson's property were not large enough to substantiate a complete redesign of the scheme. This decision will not change.

Point 2 – Change in tenure allocation.

It was noted that the change to the allocation had been approved by Shropshire Council. The request had been considered by the Housing Enabling Team which has access to housing need figures and therefore it must be assumed the allocation still reflected Shropshire Council's assessment of housing need in the Parish.

Point 3 and 4 – Raising of ground levels and impact on drainage

Mr Bowler advised that in the plans and Design and Access Statement submitted as part of the planning application it had been made clear that ground levels would be raised to create additional fall for the surface water drainage system. There is a preference for gravity solutions rather than a pump system which could fail due to mechanical problems. Mr Bowler explained in detail how the drainage system would work. Mrs Pugh reminded members that this site is unlike open market sites and would stay under Severnside's management. Should any issues with drainage occur Severnside would be responsible for resolving them. Mr Bowler advised the design had been in accordance with Shropshire Council's requirements for a 1 in 100 year event + 30% climate change. Mr Bowler confirmed that Gavin Wong, Shropshire Council's Drainage Engineer, had approved the drainage plans and had signed off the relevant condition.

Point 5 – Presence of newts in Mr Robinson's pond

Mr Bowler advised that the Ecology report commissioned as part of the planning application had not identified any Great Crested Newts but noted the pond being referred to had only been constructed during the winter 2013/14. Mr Bowler advised that the boundary fence had been erected between the site and Mr Robinson's property and that the site was not now suitable habitat for newts.

Point 7 (no point 6 in email) – Asbestos contamination of Mr Robinson's land

Mr Bowler confirmed that there was risk, albeit a very small risk, from the asbestos identified on site. The method statement agreed by Shropshire Council required material to be covered up (as confirmed by Mr Robinson's photographs) when not worked and dampened down when being worked. Employees wear disposable protection suits and masks. Work is monitored by Shropshire Council and an independent Geologist to ensure safety including that of workers. Mr Bowler stressed that safety of the workers is of prime concern and therefore all recommended procedures is enforced.

Point 8 – Pedestrian Crossing Point

The Clerk confirmed that a meeting between members of the Steering Group and Highways was to take place the following week.

Point 9 – Damage to highway

Mr Bowler explained that prior to any work commencing on sites a full photographic survey is carried out and the roads close to the site are regularly inspected by Highways

Inspectors for damage. It is standard practice that the contractor is liable for any repairs resulting from the work being carried out on site. The Clerk was asked to request a temporary repair to damage caused to date.

Other issues were then addressed.

Good Friday and weekend working

Mr Bowler apologised for not letting residents know that work on site would take place on Good Friday. He explained that it was normal practice for Shropshire Homes following a request from employees many years ago. It had been agreed that the following Tuesday would be taken as a day off in lieu which would allow employees taking only 3 days holiday for a complete week off.

Mr Bowler advised that 40 homes in the immediate vicinity had been notified that work would be taking place on the highway. Shropshire Council issues permits for highway work and these are phased to try to avoid congestion. Shropshire Homes permit had been shortened in time from first planned. This was due to the overrun of the Gas Main repairs in Wem and Shropshire Council's start date for planned work on Aston Bridge in May not being changed. Shropshire Council had given permission for Shropshire Homes to work at the weekend to complete the works within the shortened permit period. Mr Bowler advised the company had learnt that letters to residents should be more descriptive as to why work is carried out not just from and to dates.

It was noted that there is no restriction on hours worked in the planning permission. Mr Bowler explained that he understood Shropshire Council Planners placed restrictions in Shrewsbury but in rural areas no restrictions are placed possibly due to belief that residents are used to the disturbance of agricultural activities being carried out irrespective of day or time. Mr Bowler confirmed that it is not Shropshire Homes normal policy to work weekends but unforeseen circumstances like the shortening of the permit discussed previously can lead to weekend working.

Parking in Ash Grove

Mr Bowler advised that advisory routes and recommendations where to park had been issued to main contractors. However, he could not guarantee that contractors would pass on this information to sub-contractors and agency workers. There were also instructions on the site sign. This afternoon's damage was the result of delivery drivers refusing to comply with Shropshire Homes' request. Mr Bowler considered this behaviour totally unacceptable and Shropshire Homes would be following this up. He stressed the company was trying very hard to build with minimal intrusion to residents. Mr Bowler advised that residents should not approach delivery drivers but contact the site management. He advised Shropshire Homes were in discussion with Wem Cricket Club regarding hiring its car park.

Emails re concerns

It was noted that members of Steering Group could not act on issues raised by residents or their concerns if emails were not addressed to them. The Clerk advised that by using a scatter gun approach to recipients which included Shropshire Councillors, Cabinet holders, and Officers it sometimes made it difficult to know who was taking responsibility for following up an issue which could cause delays. It was agreed that if a resident wished the Steering Group to be informed the email should be addressed to the Clerk or made clear in the email.

Progress reports

Sod cutting ceremony

Mrs Pugh confirmed this had taken place and had been reported in the press.

Publicity for site

It was agreed that Mrs Pugh and the Clerk would discuss publicity events around the parish.

SG18/14 To agree date of next meeting and to consider future agenda items

The next meeting of the Steering Group was agreed as Monday 2 June, 5.30pm - venue Edstaston Village Hall.

Signed Date.....