

Ashbury Neighbourhood plan group (ANPG)

Summary of key points in discussion meeting on 5th November 2012 10-11 am via MS teams – those present Ricardo Rios (RR) Head of Planning Policy (Neighbourhood Planning) and Nina Merritt (NM) Senior Planning Policy officer (Neighbourhood Planning) both in Policy and Programmes Directorate South and Vale District Council, Pauline Smith and Peter Cowx as members of ANPG

Areas addressed:

- How are NP plans valued and used by Vale Planning and Case Officers
- At what points in the application process are NP content and policies raised to the fore as part of the decision-making process for an application where wider consultation is required
- How could the relationship between South and Vale planning be strengthened or shaped so that our (and other) NPG are connected to the South and Vale required process
- Role of NEW department, since October 1st, 2021, and staff in the Policy and Programme Directorate South and Vale which now includes the Planning policy and Neighbourhood Planning
 - The role of the team in supporting use of NP and the monitoring and review process for NP
 - The role of the team for leading on review of situations where the NPG expresses concern over a decision, where this appears to contradict the policies in the NP
- Balanced decision-making process where required in processing applications
- Possible limits and restrictions of policies in NP as they apply in a planning application situation
- The oversight of NPG that the new team offers to NPG's
- The issues of governance and process for a 'policy decision' made by Oxfordshire Council to roll out Airband and 5G masts across Oxfordshire – all of which does not in most circumstances require local planning permission
 - Our concerns about how, or if at all APC/NPG are informed of these rollouts
- Some application of the above to the current situation of the 5G mast application and the process to decide if this application does indeed need a prior approval or not, or other

Overall summary

This meeting represents a good start: of a very productive discussion on all the above and very timely because the Neighbourhood Planning team are now part of the Policy and Programme Directorate and so act as the connecting vehicle between policy and implementation and where both may need to relook/redefine/sharpen or whatever.

This team, now in the new Directorate, are also intentionally there to provide the direct point of contact for the/any NPG to raise and discuss any planning application concerns and for them to provide any missing context: such as how to make sense of the policy issues

The two members RR and NM provided reassurance that on receipt of an application the Case Officers do not only refer to their LPP1 and LPP2 plans, but also the associated NP policies, as well as national/other context. The two reinforced the process of how 'balanced decisions' are required and made. There are however situations where the NP policies may not stretch sufficiently to meet the challenge raised.

They have both looked at and discussed with the case office the 5G mast application and restated the process that the Case Officer is required by law to go through, including now in the process of deciding whether a 'prior approval' decision is required or not.

We understand that the NPG/APC will receive a detailed report of any decision made.

Actions agreed at the end of the meeting

1. Nina M to send Ashbury NPG the new Neighbourhood plans monitoring and review process and actions as compiled by their team ---- attached
2. For us to know, it is either RR or NM that we contact should we have any concerns about an application decision making process – they will act as the intermediary and or set up a review process with the planning dept
3. For us to:
 - a. keep in touch with both
 - b. Ensure that we provide as detailed as possible information relating to our policies when we respond to any planning application
4. Ricardo R has a meeting with the Exec team of the ONPA this pm and will feed back to them on our discussion, issues raised and ways forward

Pauline Smith as Chair Ashbury NPG November 2021