



**PUBLIC MEETING  
THE NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON DEVELOPMENT**

6.00 pm Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018

Chair: Deputy Mayor, Councillor Dr James Walsh KStJ

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- 1.1** Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ opened the meeting and acknowledging the scale of response, thanked the public for their patience whilst arrangements were made to accommodate everyone. The evacuation procedures and protocol for the use of social media were explained and noted.
- 1.2** Setting out the format for the evening, he explained that the meeting had been convened to provide members of the public with the opportunity to learn more about progress with the construction of the new Hampton Park development and to raise concerns about how the development and associated infrastructure was progressing. He introduced the panel of representatives and invited Mr Clark from Persimmon Homes to begin the presentations.

**2. DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (FORMER TODDINGTON NURSERIES SITE) – Rob Clark - Persimmon Homes**

- 2.1** Mr Clark began by setting out the history regarding the original concept for the development and presented the most recent Master Plan. The Master Plan envisaged the construction of up to 1260 homes and included provision for leisure, commercial and retail development, and a variety of community facilities. To date approximately 150 homes had been completed and as residents in Mill Lane and Toddington Lane were aware preparations were already underway to begin work on the significant highways and utilities infrastructure projects.

Detailed planning applications for the construction of the next phases of the development would be submitted in the next four months. These would include the main avenue (north to south) though the estate and the proposed central wetland area, essential for opening up / accessing the development and flood mitigation respectively.

- 2.2** Mr Clark pointed to a map of the highways and explained the developer's obligations in respect of highways provision. This was in two parts – provision of the Fitzalan Link Road from The Littlehampton Academy north up to Worthing Road and from Worthing Road into Hampton Park, the southern section of the Lyminster Bypass. It was noted that delivery of the northern section of the Lyminster Bypass

(from the development to north of Lyminster) would be the responsibility of West Sussex County Council Highways. Alongside this, proposals were expected to be brought forward in the Autumn for the construction of the footbridge over the Level Crossing at Toddington Lane. Current projections anticipated that, subject to obtaining the necessary consents from the Planners, West Sussex Highways and Network Rail, construction would start in earnest on these key infrastructure projects by the end of the year and be finished in summer / autumn 2020.

**3. COUNTY HIGHWAYS SCHEME UPDATE (A284 LYMINSTER BYPASS) – Sara McKnight - West Sussex County Council**

**3.1** Ms McKnight proceeded to set out the County Council's obligations in terms of highways in the area. The Lyminster Bypass was an important north – south route providing connectivity between the A27 and Littlehampton Town. It was linked to the provision of new homes and employment as well as improving safety and journey time reliability through Lyminster village. The County Council was responsible for the delivery of the northern section of this road which would start from the existing A284, 600m south of Crossbush and into the developer's southern section. Provision for all road users to use the Bypass was assured through the addition of pedestrian and cycle facilities which then linked into facilities provided along the southern sections, as well as a controlled crossing for equestrians at the Bridleway. The road also bridged the Black Ditch.

**3.2** The complexities of the landscape that would house the Bypass were such that more detailed design work had been required. Acknowledging that the delivery programme had slipped, it was now envisaged that a detailed planning application would come forward in summer 2018 which would be followed by a land acquisition process, if successful. Construction of the northern section could begin spring / summer 2019 with completion in summer / autumn 2020. It was noted that disruption during the construction phases aimed to be minimal for residents in the area.

**4. NETWORK RAIL LEVEL CROSSINGS (NORWAY LANE AND TODDINGTON LANE) - Clive Robey – Network Rail**

**4.1** Mr Robey outlined the nature of the two level crossings in the vicinity of the development, how they operated, and an assessment of the risks associated with their continued operation. The incidents at the Toddington Lane Crossing had grown in terms of volume and severity due the increased use of this route by traffic to avoid congestion elsewhere in the area. This had led Network Rail to conclude that it must be closed. He emphasised that this would only happen after the A284 road over the rail bridge linking the A259 with Lyminster and Crossbush had been completed. In the meantime, two options to provide a way for pedestrians to cross the line. This would be either by

construction of a new footbridge or a footpath along Toddington Lane and Mill Lane connecting to the road over rail bridge.

**5. COMMERCIAL / EMPLOYMENT / COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**  
Tony Burton – Greencore Group and Peter Herbert - Littlehampton Town Council.

**5.1** Mr Burton outlined the areas where land had been allocated to provide retail, commercial and enterprise space on the site. He explained that these areas would house an extension to the household waste recycling facility and could also be used to provide a hotel and care home. Demand for these facilities was as yet unknown but would become more certain as the estate developed and once the infrastructure was in place. He emphasised that only when there was more certainty on demand, would detailed plans on future use come forward and that they were not intended to detract from the Town Centre.

**5.2** As Town Clerk, Mr Herbert outlined the Town Council's aims in terms of ensuring connectivity for residents in the development with the southern part of the Town through the provision of a bus service and community facilities on the estate. These included two allotment sites, a community hub and youth centre and working with Arun District Council to deliver leisure provision.

**6. PLENARY**

**6.1** The planned construction of a footbridge and closure of the crossing would add to the current congestion in the Toddington Park area. Clarification was requested regarding measures that would be put in place to mitigate the impact of these works.

It was acknowledged that this was of great concern for residents and that they were supported in their representations by the elected representatives at all levels. Plans for the delivery of the footbridge included mitigation measures but it was also emphasised that relief from the current congestion would only be fully realised when the spine road running south to north, providing the main point of entry / exit to and from the development, was completed by the developer and the County Council. It was also noted that Network Rail continued to monitor the safety of the Toddington Lane level crossing and would do all it could to protect users.

**6.2** The veracity of the proposed flood mitigation proposals, namely the planned central wetland area, and the continued reliance on the Black Ditch were questioned.

It was explained that these elements of the development had been fully considered and deemed acceptable by the Environment Agency. It was also observed that in the past the site had had more hard standing by

virtue of the volume of green houses. The mitigation measures proposed in addition to the increased amount of open / green space planned on the estate would enhance drainage provision.

Later in the meeting it was stated that the Black Ditch was tidal as it flowed out to the River Arun and that the impact on residents who lived beyond the new development had not been properly considered.

- 6.3** The lack of health care provision with the Master Plan was questioned, particularly given the history of failed proposals elsewhere in the Town. The need for this issue not to be over looked again was emphasised and the public called on the developers to make provision in the plans.

It was observed that the developer would be making a financial contribution towards the provision of such facilities to accommodate the expected needs of the development. However, it was also noted that it was the responsibility of the CCG to deliver this provision. This was met with anger and frustration because of the constant failure of the NHS and / or CCG to meet current need. Residents therefore had no confidence in the ability of the relevant authorities to meet the needs of a new community. It was also noted that Greencore were open to discussions about provision of such facilities being accommodated within the unallocated non-residential area of the development.

- 6.4** During the meeting residents on the new development expressed frustration regarding outstanding snagging issues with their properties and called on the developer to address them.

In response, the developer's representative agreed to take these comments forward after the meeting.

- 6.5** Throughout the meeting the public referenced the current unsafe conditions that existed in Mill Lane and Toddington Lane irrespective of the level crossing. The situation was exacerbated by the reduction in opening hours of the Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) and there were also calls for the panel to visit the area to see the conditions and experience the impact of the congestion on residents.

The representative from West Sussex County Council Highways outlined improvements that were planned to address some of these issues. These included widening Mill Lane, a layby, road markings, resurfacing and kerbs, street lighting, enhanced footpath provision and improvements on the bend leading into Toddington Lane that were due to be implemented in summer / autumn 2018. Regarding the decision to reduce the opening times of the HWRS, although unaware of problems, he stated that any queries in this respect should be directed to the Waste Management Team at the County Council who were monitoring the revised arrangements.

The audience had little confidence that the measures proposed would deliver improvements and some members of the public expressed anger at the lack of proper footways which made the area very dangerous for pedestrians, particularly people with young children. This was particularly highlighted on Toddington Lane. Referencing the impact of additional unanticipated development in the vicinity at Holly Acre and Barns Close, there were further calls for more traffic calming measures and that the length of Toddington Lane south of the development also be included. Overall, there was a strong view that it was not satisfactory that residents in Mill Lane and Toddington Lane would have to wait for the delivery of the main road through the new development by the developer and the County Council and that delivery of these improvements should be brought forward as a matter of urgency.

- 6.6** Observing the complexities of delivering the main highways infrastructure proposed by the developer and West Sussex Highways, an explanation of the contingencies to ensure continuity of delivery was sought.

The County Council's Project Manager explained that the programme of works had been very carefully considered. Whilst there could be no guarantees, every effort was being made to try to align the works. Despite assurances by all parties, scepticism remained that this could be achieved and there were calls to stop building more houses until the new infrastructure was in place.

- 6.7** Clarification was sought regarding the measures that would be put in place to protect the properties that backed on to the route of the Bypass.

It was noted that the mitigation to protect these homes from noise and light and security measures would be down to the developer if deemed necessary by the District Council's Planning Department.

- 6.8** Observing the risk assessment of the safety of the Toddington Lane level crossing and that this was a known "rat run", an explanation was sought as to why it could not be closed immediately.

The Network Rail representative explained the complexities of the process for closing level crossings and the need for the footbridge to be in place before this could happen. It was also noted that although closure of the crossing was an objective for Network Rail, it did not form part of the development Master Plan. Implementation of the highways schemes was however desirable as it provided route options for traffic. It was emphasised that the safety of the level crossing at this point was continually monitored.

In this respect further concerns were expressed that this could have an adverse effect on the Eden Park Estate. Acknowledging this concern, the representative from West Sussex County Council Highways gave an assurance that the impact on residents would be considered through the level crossing closure consultation process.

**6.9** Clarification was sought regarding the proposed development of a plot containing 50 houses south of Toddington Lane. It was noted that:

- This had not been part of the original Master Plan and would place further pressure on the highway at this point.
- Toddington Lane would eventually become a full two-way carriageway.

**6.10** It was stated that the trigger for the construction of the main arterial road through the development was 350 dwellings. It was reported that at the time of the meeting 150 homes were completed and the following points were also noted:

- Planning applications for the highways improvements works were imminent but commencement was subject to consent being obtained.
- The need to amend the plans to meet the flood mitigation requirements of the Environment Agency had delayed the northern section of the Bypass.

**6.11** The northern exit of the Lyminster Bypass was questioned, and it was suggested that it would be better positioned at Poling. It was noted that:

- The intention was to connect with the existing A284 road approximately 600m south of the A27 at Crossbush.
- Construction traffic access for the northern section of the Bypass is likely to be via the A27.
- Construction traffic access for the southern section of the Bypass would be fully considered as part of the planning application process.

**6.12** The view of some who had lived in the area for decades as well as newer residents was that not enough had been done to address the issues of traffic congestion, poor roads and footpaths and lack of traffic control measures. Furthermore, there was little confidence that the agencies could deliver the promised improvements within the timescales stated or in a coordinated manner.

Intervening in the discussion, the Chairman stressed that this was precisely what local councillors had been lobbying for on residents' behalf. The developer's representative also sought to reassure the meeting that the works had already been instigated to support the new infrastructure and that they were committed to working with others to complete them.

This was disputed, and it was suggested that the plans for the development had not been properly thought through especially when it

came to the road network which in the view of a member of the audience were not fit for purpose.

In response, the representative from West Sussex County Council Highways assured the meeting that each phase of the development would be checked in-line with current guidance to ensure appropriate levels of car parking numbers, design and adequate road widths.

- 6.13** A concern was expressed that the development relied on the existing foul water drainage system. Commenting that this infrastructure was already under pressure there were calls for this to be urgently addressed. Flooding in Mill Lane and Toddington Lane had also become a constant source of anxiety for those living there.

It was explained that Southern Water had already started work to upgrade the local infrastructure which took into consideration the planned growth of the Town.

- 7.** Bringing the meeting to a close, Councillor Dr Walsh summarised the key messages from the discussion. It was clear from the strength of feeling expressed by those who spoke during open session that the current levels of congestion, poor roads and footpaths and lack of traffic control measures, could not be allowed to continue. Furthermore, the local councils, developers, the Environment Agency and the amenities companies needed to work better together and adopt a faster, more considerate and coordinated approach to resolving these issues.

He thanked those who had waited patiently to get in to the meeting. This had helped greatly with managing the event and he also thanked the operators for helping to accommodate everyone who wished to participate.

Finally, he urged residents to continue to report issues to both their elected representatives and the relevant agencies. He also drew the audience's attention to the forthcoming Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

The meeting finished at 8pm.