

Chiseldon Parish Council

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**Public meeting held at the Chiseldon Sports & Social Club.
Draft SHELAA (Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assesment)
Presentation and Q&A session
Thursday 15th Nov 2018, 7.30pm**

- CHAIR and Meeting Facilitator – Cllr Caroline Brady Chair Chiseldon Parish Council
- Presenter for Swindon Borough Council (SBC) : Cllr Gary Sumner, Cabinet member for Strategic Planning and Councillor for the Rideway
- Swindon Borough Council Planning Officers Representatives - Phil Smith and Anthony Whittaker

Cllr Brady introduced the meeting agenda & confirmed that information would first be presented by SBC on the draft SHELAA document, relating to the potential sites in Chiseldon Parish and followed by a question and answer session.

Cllr Brady introduced the representatives from SBC on the stage

Cllr Brady explained that the Parish Council organised this public consultation. However it has a legal duty to remain impartial until all facts were heard and the Parish Council voted on the matter.

Cllr Brady advised that questions would be taken from the floor at the end of the presentations from SBC

Cllr Brady advised that a written response from the AONB to SBC concerning the 3 sites identified in the SHELAA document would be put up on the Parish Council website once the AONB had given their approval

Cllr Brady asked that the Public not to interrupt the presentation , there would be plenty of opportunity for Q& A session.

Cllr Brady also asked that the Public avoid overspeaking or interrupting during question time and allow one person to speak at one time . Particularly as there are 2 sign language interpreters present assisting with some residents.

Cllr Brady said she would take questions for the Parish Council before handing over to the SBC presenter Ward Cllr Sumner.

Q Why were the AONB not attending?

A Cllr Brady advised that childcare issues prevented attendance tonight .

Q Mr A Knowles asked why was there no representative from the developers ?

A Ward Cllr Sumner advised that this is the opportunity for SBC to present the draft plan to the public.

Q Mrs C Spreckley asked when was the AONB was invited.

A Cllr Brady advised they were contacted several days ago once the meeting date was confirmed but they were unable to make this date. The AONB will be invited to a relevant Parish Council meeting.

Q Are the draft sites at Hodson Road being discussed also?

A Yes.

Q Is there any discussion between the developers and CPC on this area of land in Hodson Road?

A No, the last the Parish Council heard from the developers was over 2.5 years ago.

Presentation:

Ward Cllr Gary Sumner introduced himself as the Cabinet member for Strategic Planning and Councillor for the Ridgway Ward and presented the following

.....SBC are currently working through the “Local Plan” review. The last plan was adopted in 2015. This is done every 5 years. Part of the process is a “Call for Sites” for the Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assesment (known as SHELAA). It is an invitation for parcels of land to be put forward by developers and land owners.

Sites are then assessed by SBC for planning compliance and allocated provisional ‘Green or Red’ status.

In 2015 SBC allocated land for thousands of houses in areas such as New Eastern Villages which would have created 7-8000 homes.

This housing was promised but none were built. Now SBC are looking for available sites promoted by landowners, where it is viable that sustainable housing can be delivered.

The SHELAA sites were then put into the public domain for initial comment. This isn't a government requirement however SBC have included this additional phase. There is a mandatory 6 week consultation in Spring 2019 and another later in 2019. The report will then be handed over to the Planning Inspectorate. This extra layer of initial consultation is to gain information on why sites may not be developed. There is an extremely high bar for Chiseldon land to have approved housing plans due to its AONB status.

However, just because a site is on a SHELAA, it doesn't mean a planning application would be approved.

Equally planning application can be submitted even if a site is rejected on SHELAA and can be won on appeal

The appeal for planning permission at Blunsdon is a good example – this was won by a developer when SBC had rejected the planning application. The developer appeal was won largely on the strength of SBC not having a 5 year housing land supply.

Land promoters are taking advantage of the fact that SBC cannot defend sites due to the failure to deliver a 5 year land supply.

SBC don't want to defend appeals where they know it is likely they will lose

In Chiseldon, the areas identified are on New Road and Hodson Road.

The New Road site is in the AONB. This places an incredibly high bar on what is possible. If a future development brings particular benefits to the community it might get passed.

SBC sat down with a blank sheet and looked for deliverables that are desired in Chiseldon that would only be delivered by this development and not otherwise.

The Parish Council have complained over concerns for New Road traffic, the turning onto the A346 and the Build Out on New Road. Chiseldon doesn't have a large community space and the current application for 30 houses on New Road is still live with SBC.

Like it or not, the reality is that appeals are granted and as a result villages are changed in the process that are not plan led and not for the benefit of the community.

In contrast the development at Tadpole Garden Village has only 38% of its land area used for housing. The rest is public open space. It had a plan led approach for good quality housing.

If you can't stop something, the best way to approach it is to understand the benefits on offer and engage with the community. The developer is looking for 400 homes on the New Road site, with community spaces and a park. A New 4 form entry primary school and community building. The opportunity to create improved traffic arrangements onto the A346 junction and

reconfigure New Road so it becomes a Community High Street. This could offer something unique.

The presentation showed site maps from the SHELAA document on overhead screen

....Section S0028 shows the original 30 homes

....Section 0027 shows the new larger proposal.

If the developer won an appeal for 30 homes on S0028, then they could just add 30 more and then proceed to add 30 more, and so on the end result would be an undesirable layout with no easy access to the village and no benefits to the community.

There is a need to look at how communities grow and what younger communities need. The site owner would offer 30% affordable housing to include an allocation of social housing for people with a Chiseldon connection.

If the view is “Not at all” to this type of development then it will not stop the developers from putting in an application. At this moment in time there is a good chance a developer would win an appeal for an application in light of the shortfall of housing supply in Swindon .

In a few years time, you may end up with new housing anyway, but with no benefits.

SBC cannot improve the reported local highways issues as there are no funds. Nothing will happen unless through growth , change and development

....The concept of the New Road site layout was displayed on the screen.....

Cllr Sumner listed the potential outline benefits of a sympathetic development....

- country park to the south of the site.
- A primary school in the centre.
- Local shops
- Village Hall
- Housing
- Low density with less than 40 homes per hectare.
- Access would be on New Road with improved A346 junction.
- significant landscaping

Saying no, will not stop the development , but it could result in receiving significantly fewer benefits

The presentation ended and the Chair Cllr Brady opened the meeting for questions:

Questions: (note many residents actually made statement rather than asked questions)

Q: Unknown – The last appeal went to the planning inspectorate, why are you not taking notice of what the inspectorate said and why hasn't this been mentioned?

A : Ward Cllr Sumner – Yes, he is aware of the appeal. However planning decisions do not last forever. Recently 100 homes in Wroughton were lost on appeal. Another sensitive site in Wroughton was also lost on appeal.

SBC are seeking good planning solutions and need more houses for the borough. Some will be on green sites and we cannot avoid this.

Need to engage with landowners to see if sites can be developed. Good planning is about the art of the possible.

If you say no to this concept, there will probably still be a planning application submitted.

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Statement : by Mark Spreckley – This is about the AONB. All of the case studies shown were not in AONB. The NPPF has been updated and has strengthened the argument for not building on AONB. Caroline Spreckley wrote to MP Robert Buckland as the Attorney General and he advised that the NPPF was being updated.*

The NPPF is very clear. Great weight should be given to AONB land. It has the highest status of protection. Major developments are now 10 houses or more. Any major development should be refused unless its an exceptional case. Shortage of housing land should not account for this.

A: Ward Cllr Sumner – Yes, it does have the highest protection , and we are not saying planning will happen but we have to say what is possible....

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Statement : by Paul Sunners who made a number of robust announcements and statements. Firstly he stated that Ward Cllrs have been democratically elected to support their community and that they should support their constituents.*

Stated that he concurs with Mark Spreckley.

Advised that as a Chiseldon Parish Councillor he was not neutral regarding this development and that he confirmed that he would be voting against this development at future Parish Council meeting.

Stated that this development would be a 45% increase in housing stock for the parish. The consequences of more houses will be more traffic, less doctors appointments, busier roads, schools and hospital. In his view Tadpole and Wichelstow developments have high density and he wouldn't want to live there anyway . He urges more views to come forward.

Requested an understanding of Ward Cllr Sumner's job away from Council matters.

A : Ward Cllr Sumner confirmed to the meeting that his council work and private work were completely separate and do not involve each other.

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Q Abi Banyard – Why did the New Eastern Villages development never go ahead?

A: Ward Cllr Sumner – the site was promoted by land promoters. 86% of planning consent is held by non house builders. Their job is to push plans through SBC and then pass to developers. This involves a huge range of infrastructure needed. There are over 100 landowners involved in this area. The completion is 10-15 years away. This is why they are looking for shorter projects.

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Q Unknown - Where does Wichelstow fit in the 5 year plan?

A : Ward Cllr Sumner – There is land for 400 homes and a district centre. There are 3 triggers for Wichelstow such as a tunnel needed under the M4. More homes cannot be built until this is built. Planning is due to be granted at the end of 2019 and it will then form part of the 5 year housing supply.

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Statement : Mr J Hornby – He thinks this is being approached the wrong way. SBC should be looking for sites with 1 landowner. A lot of housing doesn't get built as the owners sit on the land or don't allow small builders to build smaller amounts of housing. Small volume house builders will not build more houses over the threshold for the need for affordable housing. Must address the problem for small developers. The time issue is down to SBC delays. The 5 year plan is leading this. SBC could enable land to be developed by those who can build them quickly. Then the 5 year plan isn't an issue.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – SBC are releasing plots of land for commercialisation for smaller housing developments. There is no perfect answer. They will demand affordable housing where they are able to.

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Q Mr T Smith - What is the plan to sort the lack of a 5 year housing plan and when will it be sorted?

A Ward Cllr Sumner – It will be by delivering a local plan with housing sites that can be delivered, from 5 houses upwards. The local plan review will go to inspector late 2019. In 2020/21 will have a plan to appoint enough housing.

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Statement : Unknown – The affordable housing idea is insulting. 30% of affordable housing is too low. She also thinks the actual figure built would be lower. This its more likely to have 5 bed houses for people communiting to London using the railway.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – Tadpole Garden Village delivered 30% affordable housing. SBC sets the figure at 30%. It could be set higher but then developers couldn't afford to build the houses. In the next 10 years this would be the only chance to get an affordable home in the area. SBC can specify in the plans the different types of affordable housing – buy to rent, rental only etc

Q Unknown - Why hasn't the original 30 houses not yet had a decision from SBC? . There were over 50 objections to this application.

A: Ward Cllr Sumner – The objections would have been noted if they were plan led such as referencing the AONB. There were 5000 petition signatures against Badbury Park and yet Badbury Park was still built. The development was won on appeal so now it doesn't have enough open spaces. It would have been much better as a plan led design. The green areas on the map shown, doesn't mean the site has been given any kind of consent, it is just what is possible.

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Statement : Mrs Caroline Spreckley – Thinks SBC has its own agenda. It is frustrating considering all the feedback already given for the smaller site.

A : Ward Cllr Sumner – SBC are not here to do the landowner or developers job. They could have waited for the plans to be submitted as a planning application. Came to the meeting to engage with the public. It will be taken into account 100% if the residents are against this. The AONB could be enough to stop it. This doesn't stop the landowner from coming forward and taking advantage of the 5 year housing supply not being in place. Have to think about what these 2 sites could do for the community.

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Q Alison King – You mention a school, village hall and shop. We already have those things. Why can't the funding go to the existing school?

A :Ward Cllr Sumner – There is no money to go to the existing school, but CIL funds would go towards a new school. There isnt money saved anywhere in SBC for schools. Benefits would be only be delivered as part of a new development.

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Q: Unknown – There is an area of A419 land that is useless – why not build there? It isnt part of the AONB.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – The area you reference is part of the NEV which isnt being built on currently. The local plan has to go out fairly asking all landowners if they have land for consideration. They don't approach landowners. This is part of the "Call for sites" for the SHELAA. Just because its listed, doesn't mean its going to happen.

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Statement : Mr A Trotman – The New Road build out is dangerous. SBC made a mistake and nothing has been done about it.

Assuming this potential plan does go ahead, the old school site would then get built on. Ref the AONB, SBC should be trying their hardest to protect it. It would set a poor precedence. Would like Ward Cllr Sumner to go back to SBC and say this won't be considered and they would fight it. If the 5 year plan has failed, they need to sort it out. Sort out the developers who want to develop on AONB land.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – there is no mechanism in place to force someone to build a house if they own the land and choose not to.

SBC are not saying they are in favour of this. The AONB is significant protection for the area of land. SBC are saying they cannot stop the landowner from putting in an application. If SBC reject it, the planning inspectorate may still approve it.

Even if it doesn't get added to the SHELAA there is nothing to stop an application from being submitted anyway.

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Statement Mr Trotman – SBC need to work with the parish to stop this.

A - No answer necessary

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Statement Unknown – Concerns that if this does go through, they will then be back with more plans in a few years time. The land to the west at Wroughton will also go through to be developed.

Ward Cllr Sumner - if SBC don't allocated land and the Government feel they are deficient, they can take away the power from the authority and get the planning inspectorate to allocate land. It will not be included in the SHELAA if it has no value but still won't stop an application being submitted.

The planning inspectorate cannot be stopped by SBC.

Have to allocate some land for housing. At the moment, if a house builder can propose a site, and it doesn't cause harm it will be granted. Even if rejected by SBC it can be approved via appeal.

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Statement :Dawn Randall – Traffic on New Road and A346 proposed changes. If Wroughton proposals go ahead what about the rest of the village? Hodson Road is already busy and will get busier. The new houses would add to this.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – this is up to the residents. If you engage with the developers it may be possible to change New Road so its not so appealing for through traffic.

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Q Dawn Randall – What are SBC doing about the lack of success of the 5 year plan?

A Ward Cllr Sumner – the last plan was investigated in 2014 by the planning inspectorate. If the inspectorate approves the plans then SBC have to accept this. They cannot overrule the government planning inspector. The plan in 2014 was found to be sound by the planning inspectorate. It was maybe a mistake to rely on developers for large developments.

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Q Dawn Randall – the presentation tonight doesn't feel impartial. Feels like its on the behalf of the developers.

Who in the community has said they need more shops, more schools etc.

Why is the developers plan so developed if its only a possible area on the SHELAA.?

A Ward Cllr Sumner - Communities always have needs such as the danger of the New Road/As346 junction or the Build Out.

The design is a floating map of what could be given to the community. The NECV has a wide range of facilities apart from the houses.

If people don't need these things, then it may not meet the bar to overcome the objections of the AONB

SBC wouldn't want to add a bolt on housing estate to the side of the village. Has to consider proposals put forward by developers.

Also have a duty to report on the dangers – such as what happened at Blunsdon.

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Q & statement : Dawn Randall – So are SBC deciding on what we need? We would only need these things if we had another 400 houses. Don't need more shops if there are no more houses. Another 400 houses would be chaos for the A346 junction.

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Q Kim Waite – If SBC are aware of the dangers of the A346 junction why don't they do something about it, rather than waiting for a developer?

Also, if the application has to pass a high bar to combat the AONB, what is the criteria the developers would have to meet to pass this?

A: Ward Cllr Sumner – It would need to be exceptional circumstances and in the public interest. J15 of the M4 causes rat running. There is no 100% gov funding to provide improvements for highway solutions. Badbury Park developer has had to pay for this roundabout improvements. Many road improvements are part of development conditions.

There is no description of the bar as no application entered yet. The primary school would be needed as part of a new housing development. The current school is aging and in need of upgrading.

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Q Jane Beaumont – What are Gary's views on the current 30 house proposal for New Road?

A Ward Cllr Sumner – the planning inspectorate may approve it as they may say 30 houses would not be a major impact.

Additional answer by Phil Smith SBC planning officer – SBC might refuse the application as a major development in AONB. If they do reject it the developer could go to appeal and the inspectorate may find in their favour.

Can't be specific but SBC would think this isn't appropriate as a major development.

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Q Unknown – Ref the SHELAA process and the suitability assessment – who makes the decision to say whether land is suitable for inclusion in the SHELAA?

As it's in the AONB why isn't it just put as unacceptable as AONB land and also prone to flooding. He understands that the developer can still put in an application but if SBC talk to the developer then they can claim public interest and get a quicker approval.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – An area marked as red on the SHELAA still wouldn't stop an application from coming forward.. The SHELAA sites are assessed by planning officers.

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Statement : by resident Bill Gillis – Thinks Ward Cllr Sumner is presenting a defeatist position in terms of "Getting the best of a bad situation". Needs Gary to be on the side of the village and not on the side of the developer.

Is worried that 400 homes could spread to 800, 1200 homes. More green land could be built on. Also the traffic issues. Other roads are also in danger. There isn't a need for more houses. It will make traffic worse. Are you prepared to help us?

A Ward Cllr Sumner – it's not a defeatist attitude. The AONB has national protection. If the minimum level isn't reached then SBC would not promote this area. It wouldn't go on the SHELAA and they would look elsewhere. However it won't stop the landowner. Would then have to consider that application. SBC cannot make the planning inspectorate agree with them if they reject a plan.

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Statement by Claire Eggert – Traffic resulting from the new Wroughton development will make Chiseldon roads busier even without any new development here. The Hodson Road site is an accident area when exiting onto the bend on the road. The village would need traffic calming for the whole area.

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Statement by Mark Spreckley – the SBC local plan to 2026 refers that Chiseldon doesn't have the infrastructure to have major development.

The SHELAA map shows 667 houses for New Road where the original plan was for 30. That is 700 not including Hodson Road. That is a 49% increase in Chiseldon which approx 1000 extra new cars. SBC need to think about the countryside as well as urban areas.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – there are no restrictions on the number of houses in any area. We hope we've given you the courtesy of listening to your views, we will support you in objecting but cannot control what the planning inspectorate will do.

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Q Jodie Griffith – Grateful for you coming today but change is scary. What guarantees can you extract from the developers on what they promise. How do you tie them into this? We would need promises from developers. You are asking us to trust you to make the developers stick to their deal.

A Ward Cllr Sumner – Planning conditions deal with this. There are triggers on consent. These make sure that developments happen in a certain order.

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Q Unknoen – Moved from Cornwall which is in AONB. Cornwall faced a similar situation where developers promised things like a bus service etc.

He is confused as to why the Wroughton Neighbourhood Plan was ignored? The planning inspectorate has to look at this.

The Cornwall site was stopped as the council said it didn't have any benefit. Designated as open land even though privately owned.

A question to CPC – Is there a NHP and if not, why not?

Also – Cornwall council created its own building company so they could build their own homes to meet the 5 year plan.

A Parish Cllr Brady – We have a village design statement but were advised by SBC planning that neighbourhood plan would not be necessary as Chiseldon parish were not at risk of further development in view of the Badbury Park development of 1000 homes forming part of the parish boundary . Unfortunately 1 year ago the Parish Boundaries were changed and Badbury Park development was moved out of Chiseldon Parish – thus leaving Chiseldon parish vulnerable,. The Parish council have discussed developing a neighbourhood plan, however this will take at least 2 years to complete and until SBC meet their 5 year land supply neighbourhood plans will not carry any weight

Supplementary answer from Ward Cllr Sumner –agree the lack of 5 year land supply means the NHP carries less weight. In fact SBC has less than 3 year supply Furthermore The Neighbourhood plan is not about stopping growth it is in fact about managing growth. Volunteers would be needed for a NHP. It can shape the future of the community. Would need to talk to the PC about this.

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Statement Unknown – 99% of people here are horrified by how you are talking. Appreciate you have to talk to the developer but horrified this is being taken seriously. Landowners have been trying to develop this since 1966. Will continue to fight it. Residents are not favourable to this scheme.

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Statement from Geoff Hannant - Is there anyone in favour of this (No). We have fought this 4 times already and won. The only solution is to buy the land. Only then can the residents control what happens.

Summary:

Parish Cllr Brady thanked everyone for attending. Thanked the SBC representatives and the 2 British Sign language reps also in attendance, who arrived at very short notice

Cllr Brady advised the Public if there are any further questions to email the Clerk or come along to next Parish Council meeting on the 10th December when the Council will vote on the issue.

Ward Cllr Sumner confirmed that replies to the draft SHELAA can be received up to 12th December. Send them to forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk or to the Parish Clerk.

Meeting closes 21.48