SGB/PC

28 Jan 18

All Cllrs

NL Parish Clerk

**ST GEORGE’S BARRACKS UPDATE**

**REPORT TO NORTH LUFFENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 28th JANUARY 2019**

1. Since our last meeting I have met formally and informally with the County Council Leadership and Members on a number of occasions including the Advisory Group, who met on 9th January. The Parish Council Liaison Group and Parish Council Working Group have been active in the period and I continue to meet with Norman Milne of Edith Weston Parish Council 3 or 4 times each week. I would particularly like to thank our 2 x Ward Councillors for their support and sage guidance. Both have been fully involved in our discussions and are enormously supportive of our efforts.

2. We held a very useful meeting with Sir Alan Duncan on 12th January here in North Luffenham, I have circulated the Minutes of this meeting, the key outcomes of which were:

* Sir Alan agreed to seek an early meeting with Gavin Williamson (SofS for Defence) to discuss the viability of the preferred development of 500 new homes.
* It was agreed that each PC Chair would write to RCC Councillors by 17 Jan 18, setting out their concerns to the development.
* Sir Alan agreed to meet CE/Leader of RCC again on 18 Jan. prior to the Council Meeting that would consider the HIF bid.
* It was agreed that Sir Alan needed to make his views clear on supporting or not the HIF bid. Many Councillors would value his view before making a decision.

 I am afraid that on-going confusion in Government over Brexit and Foreign Office commitments has meant that Sir Alan has not been in a position to provide the support to the Parish Councils that we might have wished. However, it is clear that he is very concerned about the proposed size and aesthetics of the development.

3. Over the Christmas period I reviewed in detail the SGB Master Plan – Edition E and consolidated all my points into a single document that has been circulated and published widely, including to all members of the Advisory Group. The Masterplan was a complex and undigestible document. Our comments have been published on the website.

4. In early January, Parish Council published a newsletter as we discussed at the last meeting, and included a significant piece on the development proposals and our concerns. Thank you to those that contributed and also those who volunteered to assist with its distribution.

5. Norman Mine and I coordinated responses to the HIF bid paper and arranged for Empingham, Edith Weston, Morcott and North Luffenham PCs to make deputations to the County Council prior to their consideration of the proposal. You will be aware that I made a representation on your behalf to RCC (Copy Attached) and am grateful for the input provided by Cllr Burrows in drafting this document.

In our deputation I summarised the PC position as being:

***“our contention is that the current proposal is not an appropriate solution to the redevelopment of the site. It is not sustainable nor environmentally sound nor does it incorporate innovative and imaginative ideas that might attract high tech business to the site;”***

6. The deputations were well received and I believe made a substantial impact. Both Cllr Waller and Cllr Bool made strong, dynamic speeches which reflected our view that the HIF bid was premature, and the Masterplan was substantially flawed. The final result to put forward an HIF bid was agreed by 12 Votes to 11 – it has certainly made Councillors think about the impact that this development will have on the County.

7. Finally, we have continued to get items published in the local press – with particular thanks to Mike and Gill Wyatt. The balanced approach taken by the PC has been well received – but is it enough?

8. One way that we try to influence the DHCLG HIF Bid is to show that there is not local support for such a bid. As noted in the DHCLG briefing note on HIF, HIF requires that the HIF bid has support locally. The document states that:

We are asking communities to accept that more housing is needed if future generations are to have the homes they need at a price they can afford.

For Housing Infrastructure Fund bids, we are also asking local authorities to demonstrate that their infrastructure proposals have **support locally**.

This means we will seek evidence of a strong local commitment to delivery, including between different tiers of local government and with delivery partners and providers; the involvement of local communities and MPs; and engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships.

9. I propose that we pass a resolution that the PC write to Homes England to state that:

*“North Luffenham Parish Council do not support the Housing Infrastructure Bid that has been proposed by Rutland County Council for a grant of £30M towards the development of essential infrastructure in respect of the proposed development at St George’s Barracks, North Luffenham.”*

*Original Signed*

PBG CUMMINGS

Chair NLPC

Attachment:

NLPC Deputation to RCC – 21 Jan 19

*Good Evening – My name is Paul Cummings, the Chairman of North Luffenham Parish Council.*

This debate is **premature**. Whilst tonight you are considering the Housing Infrastructure bid, there has been no proper debate or opportunity for the Council to challenge the proposals on the table for the development in the form of the Masterplan, which the HIF bid underwrites. At the moment, it seems to the residents of Rutland that this project is being railroaded through, with no real opportunity for their elected representatives on the Council to have a proper debate on the detail of the proposals, or indeed any alternative proposals such as Woolfox. The HIF bid and Masterplan are inexorably linked, however the 'Project Fear' analysis in the Business Case, that without HIF funding the Council would withdraw from the project and the partnership and the MoD would insist upon building thousands more homes on the site, is absolute nonsense.

Beyond a few stylised drawings have you really any idea of what you are now committing millions of pounds to? What will this huge housing estate really look like? Certainly not ~~t~~he promised typical Rutland village. I would remind you that the MoD are in the driving seat of this project, yet have no responsibility for its sustainability. Once the last soldier and last dog leaves the Barracks, the MoD only want to meet their financial and house building targets.

As you have heard, in terms of sustainability, the Masterplan still lacks any imagination or credibility in respect of job creation. The scale of this development far exceeds the RCC’s own accepted demand for both jobs and housing and, it is simply in the wrong place to meet these needs. Nothing in the plan proposes to build on Rutland’s critical £124m/annum leisure and tourism industries that support over 1,700 jobs. In terms of environmental sustainability, we see nothing to suggest that the development will result in the requisite net gain in biodiversity.

Affordable homes for local people are a vital part of the County’s future. But what will attract the new residents of the **665 affordable homes** to live nowhere near any centre of services or **currently** established employment, and next to a huge quarry. Solely in terms of affordable homes - this community will be the size of Edith Weston, Lyndon, Manton, Preston, Ridlington and Wing, combined. There simply is not a need for this number of affordable homes to service the County’s needs – the number is driven by the requirement to build a total 2,315 homes, 30% of which must be affordable. There is no clarification about what actually is affordable to a bus driver, nurse or shop worker.

This is not ‘Nimbyism’ it is simply our contention that the current proposal is not **“an appropriate solution to the redevelopment of the site. It is not sustainable nor environmentally sound nor does it incorporate innovative and imaginative ideas that might attract high tech business to the site; all of which we support.”**  An essential element of any HIF bid and indeed a Garden Town community is that it does have the support of the local communities and in this case, it is clear that it does not. I urge you to reject this application for HIF Funding. You, the County Council, not the Executive or the Cabinet are in charge of the direction the Barracks development takes, – we urge you to take control and to seek an early and full debate on the Masterplan, before committing to spending £30 million pounds of public money. This is too important for the future of Rutland to be " nodded through".