

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MEETING OF CWRT Y GOLLEN STEERING GROUP

Wednesday, 13th August 2008

Present

Name	Representing
Mrs Mary Taylor	Chair, Brecon Beacons National Park
Tracy Nettleton	Brecon Beacons National Park
Edgar Jones	Brecon Beacons National Park
Terry Flynn	Brecon Beacons National Park/Powys County Council
Steve Burgess	Powys County Council
Ross Murray	Crickhowell Estates
Cllr John Morris	Powys County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mrs Mary Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised to everyone for the late start due to a fire evacuation.

Apologies were received from Mr David Lander (Boyer Planning) and Mr Matt Lloyd due to attend in place of Mr Robert Greenland.

Concern was expressed that Cllr Rosemarie Harris, or representatives from the Vale of Grwyney Community Council and Crickhowell Town Council were not at the meeting. Apologies had not been received.

2. Minutes of the Steering Group

The Minutes of the Steering Group held on Thursday, 7th February 2008 were approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Page 2 –

Design Considerations. Edgar Jones referred to the note regarding a district heating system in this paragraph and informed that the meeting this would be a matter for consideration later on in the Agenda.

Page 3 –

‘Maintenance Statement’ –this would be discussed in Item 6.

Facilities and Services – “Powys County Council were in negotiation with WAG to overcome the objection as the second access was vital to the whole layout of the site”. Edgar Jones advised these issues have been discussed at various levels and would need to be raised later in the meeting at item 6.

“Cllr Greenland thought it out of the question that the Council would encourage use of this road...” this refers to the minor road from Glangrwyney to Gilwern and again this would need to be discussed later in the meeting.

“Communal Waste Collection and Recycling” – Ross Murray has been in discussion with Lee Marshall (PCC) and is ongoing.

“Community Impact and Enhancement” – Ross Murray advised the education strategy needed to be discussed later.

Page 4 –

Item 8 – Future Progress and Actions – Third bullet point – to be discussed at the next item

4. Development Meeting

The Minutes of the Development Meeting held on Friday, 22nd February 2008 were approved as a correct record.

Edgar Jones referred to the three options on page 3 in connection with the highways issues. There have been significant changes arising from discussions. Richard Hobbs was asked to approach Transport Wales but Planning Transport Wales was unlikely to make further comment prior to a formal application being submitted. Ross Murray will therefore revert back to the original plan in accordance with the Authority approved UDP (March 2007) with regard to the main access to the site.

Edgar Jones advised that Members had attended a useful site visit on the 5th August to Cwrt y Gollen and to the Glangrwyney Road whereby a broad perception on the issues that arise from traffic on that road was gained.

The reference relating to the firing range at the bottom of page 4 would be raised in item 6.

With regard to the Play Area, Ross Murray advised this was now in a ‘state of flux’. A new area is going to be provided within the site which will allow flexibility.

Cllr John Morris requested that the word ‘of’ in the penultimate line of page 4 be changed to ‘to’ (risk to life).

Page 6 – “Report of discussions between Powys CC and Monmouthshire CC Education Officers”. Edgar Jones queried whether the meeting of the 27th February to formalise an agreement had taken place.

Cllr Morris did not know but there is an Officer’s meeting to be scheduled next week, Tuesday 19th August at 2pm where he would raise the issue. Powys County Council Officers did not want to split the obligation, they wanted to manage it as a whole. Although he did say it was difficult to negotiate for another county. Cllr Morris would take the view to the meeting expressed by Ross Murray in that he thought Powys County Council would co-ordinate with Monmouth. Powys County Council needed to know what the NPA wanted to put there and looked at the planning obligations based on the number of houses.

Ross Murray advised it was six months since the last meeting and he was still unclear as to what Powys County Council wanted.

Tracy Nettleton informed the meeting that BBNPA would need an idea of dwelling numbers, types of houses, family make-up etc resulting in a mix of house types. Ross Murray said he would feed that back.

Cllr Morris then referred to affordable housing that does not require planning obligation against it. Ross Murray pointed out that the planning authority is the National Park and it is incumbent for the NPA to co-ordinate this and inform Ross Murray so that he knows.

Tracy Nettleton clarified that the NPA planning obligation strategy is a draft, and PCC’s is in abeyance. It is difficult to bring them together. Suggested having a separate meeting with Monmouthshire County Council and Powys County Council so that we know how to progress the issue.

Ross Murray spoke about the use of the gym by Crickhowell High School. PCC will need feedback from the High School for the onsite facilities. Thinking about other uses for the gym throughout the year.

Cllr Morris advised this was an arrangement between Ross Murray and the school. It could be incorporated, but the gym is a building which is only used a few weeks of the year. Also include leisure and recreation facilities.

Steve Burgess clarified the education strategy of PCC. If there is any payment in lieu it will come down through the Education department. It was advisable that BBNPA meet with Monmouth and Powys to agree the cross border arrangements. From a PCC perspective, the Planning Obligations strategy should be adopted fairly soon. There is a degree of agreement already and in the next month this will be sorted out between the two authorities.

Ross Murray referred to timescale and said it is critical for the September Development Brief, if PCC agreed go for one idea on cross border arrangements by the end of September.

Tracy Nettleton suggested that Edgar Jones organise a meeting of the authorities.

Ross Murray thanked Steve Burgess for clarifying the position on primary education.

Steve Burgess suggested that if we follow the strategy there would be a sum generated for education purposes. There would be a sum generated for highways, leisure and education which would be a sum of money divided between authorities and within authorities

Edgar Jones to arrange a meeting of the relevant officers of the three authorities in September to discuss community benefit contributions.

Ross Murray will prepare a housing mix with a caveat that it is notional.

5. **Progress of actions to date**

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting regarding the above.

Edgar Jones pointed out that the paper was a summary of what had been happening since 22nd February 2008. The National Park Authority, at its meeting on 26th March, agreed the four points as set out in the paper. Ross Murray was thanked for the full and free access that was given to the site on the 5th August and many of the buildings Members wanted to visit which was a very useful meeting. 17/19 Members attended the site visit and were able to get a good impression of the scale and extent of the site. They also looked at the firing range in relation to the potential development areas and looked at the proximity between Dan y Gollen and Martell Way, the proposed access arrangements and more importantly the minor road down to Gilwern.

With regard to affordable housing levels, a report has been received from Pioneer Housing who have constructed a scenario which has helped to calculate an affordable housing level within the development. This will set a baseline for the outline planning application.

The NPA has confirmed the proposal requires an EIA report and the Park's officers are preparing a formal Scoping Opinion response to Boyer Planning in accordance with the EIA Regulations. An extension to the 26th August has been agreed for the production of the Opinion. The Opinion will then allow Boyer Planning to provide the NPA with a full EIA report. A transportation assessment,

flood consequences report and ecological studies will be included in the EIA. With regard to the Flood Consequences Assessment, the Environment Agency have provided draft conditions which they want incorporated in any planning consent.

The meeting was advised that the Authority's Solicitor had received Counsel's Advice in relation to the submission of an outline planning application. This Advice had now been received and this is the appropriate means to go forward. There is no reason to expect a detailed planning application at this stage.

Other surveys and discussions are continuing such as a contribution under the planning obligation agreement in relation to education, consultation with Transport Wales regarding the access and an ecological survey of the site to include a Bat Roost Survey. There will be a need to obtain a CCW licence before any work is carried out to the buildings.

6. **Draft Development Brief (July 2008)**

A presentation was given to the meeting in relation to the above. Edgar Jones advised that the majority of the text remained the same. The need for a Development Brief was specified in the Authority approved UDP (March 2007). Crickhowell Estates have drafted the brief in conjunction with the National Park and other agencies and in accordance with the Authority approved UDP (March 2007). This is the fourth version and it was hoped that the March 2008 version would have been approved by the Authority but Members wanted to visit the site. It had been a useful period since March in that issues such as affordable housing, access and the EIA had been discussed.

Edgar Jones then advised the meeting of the following:-

Page 7 – Land ownership and planning status

Confirmed that the cadet training block was outside the development boundary and ownership of Crickhowell Estates.

With regard to access, Ross Murray advised that the independent access will be retained for the MoD's own use, but that additionally Crickhowell Estates would provide the military an emergency access through the CE site onto the A40 in time of extreme flood, as the Army access onto the A40 was prone to being blocked by flooding during extreme flood events.

Cllr Morris referred to the retention of the existing access in that there are still ongoing concerns with regard to access and egress for industrial purposes.

Page 10 – Key design considerations

“The MOD open firing range will be modified to reduce noise impact on the development site and wider area” – Ross Murray recognised that this will be liable to a separate planning application.

Page 11 – Figure 4 Design Considerations

The access will revert to the existing one with a secondary route forming an emergency egress route.

Discussion ensued regarding the extension of the 30mph sign and the management of the junction at the A40. Cllr Morris pointed out that this was a fast piece of road and the access needed careful planning.

Ross Murray said that whilst the access was good it would have to be improved and agreed with the extension of the 30mph although he advised that roundabouts on trunk roads and speed limits are very expensive and he was reluctant to look at this. He further said that speeding on the main road is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Steve Burgess agreed that it needed careful design and that a roundabout would probably be the safest. However, he said the above issues would need to be discussed with WAG. He also said the Powys Engineer would have to look at this to achieve a satisfactory junction design. He then suggested the site would require some form of traditional lighting. At design stage this would have to be compatible with the PCC change in policy which is switch off 50% of street lights. He supported the WAG requirement for emergency access

Tracy Nettleton voiced concerns about the route of the residential spur. She accepted the problems of sharing employment and residential routes, but added this was something which had not been on the table before. The principle of the development here is that future development will take place on the existing footprints which includes the road. This, she said, needed to be designed before it could be incorporated into the brief which has to be in line with development principles and due consideration given to landscape impact.

Ross Murray pointed out that it is desirable in planning terms to separate the traffic to the commercial and residential areas especially as there is already a route on site for vehicles. He said routes could be landscaped into the design and hoped we would not recommend that further work be undertaken in relation to splitting the traffic two ways. As there is a road across the site now, he said it was significantly better. It has been used for 50 years and that we had received the aerial photos 4 years ago.

Referring to the emergency access onto the A40 trunk road, he said all it needs is dropped kerbs and was sure Richard Hobbs would have had a meeting with WAG and accepted the principles of using the existing gate.

Edgar Jones informed the meeting that he had expressed concern about a traffic route through the parkland with Nora. The previous shorter route would not impact quite as much. This is something we still need to reconsider. He suggested that a split off of employment and residential traffic be considered if there was no chance of a second access. He also said that on receipt of the outline planning application, the EIA would incorporate transport assessments and landscape impacts.

He queried whether the route through the parkland could be shown in a different colour as an optional residential route subject to detail agreement at planning stage.

It was agreed

Page 14 – Accessibility and ease of movement

Bullet point 3 – change to reflect residential route subject to agreement.

Bullet point 6 – “traffic signals” – change to read “traffic lights”

Page 16 – Figure 5 Movement Hierarchy

Amend

Page 21

Bullet Point 5 – Maintenance – delete the words “the site owners” at the end of the paragraph and add “a site management agreement”.

Page 22 – Diversity

Bullet point 5 – This is an addition specifically referring to the level of affordable housing units based on the report by Pioneer who looked at the PCC housing needs survey for Crickhowell and Glangrwny 2004/05. These were based on those needs on a pro rata basis.

Terry Flynn requested that the words “Up to” be taken out. He informed the meeting that that the Pioneer report had reached similar conclusions to his own and therefore that he found the report acceptable. The only concern he expressed was over timescale and the recent market trends. He therefore proposed to accept the suggestion made by Pioneer but with a slight change – that a total of

30% of the properties be made affordable at 80% of ACG with the mix at each phasing stage to be discussed in the planning detail.

Ross Murray requested that we respond formally, presenting this change, before Friday.

Terry Flynn pointed out the immediate current figures for the PCC waiting list supports those levels. The PCC social housing list for Crickhowell was 27% for families with children, 40% single people, 13.8% Single parent families.

Cllr Morris said that affordable housing was his biggest workload and we need to be careful what we put in the Brief. He had not had the opportunity to see the report from Pioneer and queried if we were going to put all the people who needed affordable housing in Cwrt y Gollen. If not, we need a further commuted sum if the 108 people in need in this area are not all to go to the Cwrt y Gollen site. He was concerned that we needed to take this into account when a figure is put in the Brief. Pioneer had not seen the housing needs survey for Llangattock and therefore do not know the whole story. He could not agree up to 30% would be affordable. It needed to be over 30% and flexible according to how the phases will be progressed.

Ross Murray accepted 60 out of 200 and agreed with the PCC officers but the decision is one for the NPA.

Tracy Nettleton pointed out that Cwrt y Gollen was the only allocated site in the area. Provision of affordable housing would need to be on the site on which the development is proposed. There is always the possibility of exception sites elsewhere if a need can be demonstrated. We can only negotiate on the site available. The NPA has a policy of a minimum of 20%. There is a need identified here and Pioneer have assessed a 30% requirement at the present time. Terry Flynn is comfortable with this. In terms of Cwrt y Gollen, affordable housing is based on the need in the community council area and after that it cascades out. The development might take place over 10 years. Reserved matters in 10 years needs to be negotiated and the need and mix at that particular time.

Cllr Morris pointed out that the Park is not a housing authority and do not have the day to day issues. There is a huge need at the present time. We need affordable houses. The NPA has sterilized the other areas and we have one big site so we have a responsibility for the whole area and not just in the Vale of Grwyney. He queried where the money would come from ie either the development or a commuted sum. He further stated that we were putting a huge proportion on one site. He said the Park is the planning authority and do not have to take the phone calls. We have a problem and have to get the affordable housing right for communities in the area.

Tracy Nettleton said we could not expect the site to address the need for the whole of South Powys. Sites included in the Authority approved UDP (March 2007) addressed perceived planning need and this was part of a democratic process which the Inspector agreed with. There is an exceptions policy. She stated the money has to come from the housing association. We cannot accommodate the need for all of South Powys in one site. We can accommodate the need in that area, but not for all the other areas.

Terry Flynn pointed out he was speaking as a housing strategy officer for the National Park and said that sustainable communities is our aim and these should reflect society as a whole. 30% is in line with a realistic social mix. From a housing strategy point of view what is on offer is a good mix. If you go higher than 30% it would open both authorities to accusations of using the site as a dumping ground. The Pioneer report is close to the mark and robust in its methodology and the mix should be agreed at each stage.

Ross Murray said that the Pioneer Housing and Development Consultants' proposal of 30% affordable housing onsite, i.e. 60 units, was put forward on behalf of the landowner, and it generally accords with Powys County Council's policy on affordable housing. Were all 108 affordable homes required to house those on Powys County Council's waiting list at that time to be provided on this site then, under that policy, the developer would expect a total of some 350 housing units. The site effectively has capacity for that number without significant problems. However he did not believe this is what Cllr Morris really wanted. He expressed the view that the officers had done a good job for the respective Authorities (BBNPA and Powys CC) in their negotiations on this matter.

Edgar Jones said that .provided there is compliance with applicable planning policy the fundamental issue is has the application complied with the policy in being at the time. It is clear from the reports and everything else that it is a very well established Authority approved UDP (March 2007) and an acceptable document. Combined with the fact that we need to have economic viability out of the development you end up with compromise. There is a balance to be achieved and looking to the future there would be a tough fight that if it did not comply with policy at that time.

Terry Flynn referred to the new Powys County Council Advice Note, stating we should reflect the policy of the relevant housing authority which in this case is 30%. He said if there are a large number of affordable houses in one place, you can end up with social problems. This is addressed through good management, something that both authorities and RSLs take very seriously. The 108 in need are already in and around the Crickhowell area. You are not bringing into the area any problems that are not already there. As the Affordable Housing Officer, I have

taken a look at affordability at every angle and looked at what is realistic for the development. The Pioneer report is a good report. If we can get it up to 30% of site at 80% of ACG, this would make it absolutely affordable for the RSLs as well as realistic for the developer.

Cllr Morris said the community want affordable housing and the Park has a responsibility to identify the affordable housing need. It is an issue with the Park's policy to put 70/80/100 affordable housing on one site, this is not the way to do it. He is concerned with housing a lot of people to one spot. He added that we need the flexibility of putting these people in other areas and cannot rely on Housing Associations as the money is not there.

Tracy Nettleton pointed out that the above is reality, that the Authority had an excellent affordable housing policy and that Planning could only do so much and we have done a very good job. She would be happy to agree 30% as a starting point of the whole at 80% ACG and did not have an issue with the first phase but there may be an issue with the second and third phases.

Ross Murray advised that as far as this site is concerned it is to deliver on the this site and not on the other areas. The Pioneer proposal which will be reviewed on Friday is on that basis and not subject to re-negotiation on subsequent phases. He said their offer will put in a planning application on that basis and will take it to appeal if need be. He also said the Pioneer report is a concrete proposal which is fixed for the lifetime of the development.

Terry Flynn agreed to 30%, which will be an exact reflection of the Powys policy, but once more requested that this all be at 80% ACG subject to this being agreed by the developer.

Page 35 – The Parkland

Access to open space for the general public will need to be addressed in the EIA.

Pages 36/37 - Phasing

These sections are new and cover all the areas discussed.

Phase 1 is due to start next year and the design to be completed by the end of the UDP.

The affordable housing figures may need revision.

Page 38

Discussion took place on the heading of item 11. Planning obligations.

Steve Burgess did not want this list of obligations 'set in stone' as discussions needed to take place with the 3 planning authorities. He did not want the landowner to sign up to anything only to find out later they had been misled. He felt the list was therefore somewhat premature and could be subject to change. He also felt it was controversial in the terms of the way PCC had been drawn up in relation to leisure, highway and strategy services. After discussion, the meeting agreed that the title 'Planning obligations' was wrong and it was therefore changed to 'Public benefits'

Steve Burgess suggested members be advised of the terminology.

On behalf of the landowners, Ross Murray expressed his thanks to Edgar Jones in dealing with the project in a professional manner. This was echoed by Mary Taylor.