
East Hemel Forum

Inaugural meeting minutes

Held at Aubrey Park Hotel, Hemel Hempstead Road, Redbourn, St Albans AL3 7AF at 18:30 on Wednesday, 14th December 2016.

Present:

Alex Doel (Chairman), Portland (working on behalf of The Crown Estate)

Councillor David Mitchell, Redbourn Parish Council

Steve Melligan, The Crown Estate

Graham Glover, East Hemel North Residents

Bob Sellwood, Sellwood Planning (working on behalf of The Crown Estate)

Colin Gage, Leverstock Green Village Association

Yolanda Rugg, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Dave Abernethy, Friends of the Nickey Line

Andrew Lee, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

James Doe, Dacorum Borough Council

Councillor Maxine Crawley, St Albans Council; Hertfordshire County Council

Councillor Graham Sutton, Dacorum Borough Council

In attendance:

Kamran Hussain, Portland (minutes) (working on behalf of The Crown Estate)

1. Chair's welcome

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed members and explained his role in relation to The Crown Estate's East Hemel proposals.
- 1.2. The Chair explained that membership of the Forum is not an indication of support or opposition to the proposals and instead provides an avenue for the exchange of information between The Crown Estate and relevant stakeholders.
- 1.3. The Chair informed members that Kamran Hussain will be taking the minutes for the meeting and these would be published on easthemel.co.uk if members approved.

Decision: Members approved that the approved minutes could be published online.

2. Apologies

- 2.1. Councillor William Wyatt-Lowe; SADC Officer; Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe

3. Introductions

- 3.1. Members provided brief introductions about who they are representing on the Forum.
- 3.2. Councillor Maxine Crawley noted that St Albans District officers were not in attendance.
- 3.3. Steve Melligan confirmed that St Albans District Council officers were invited to join the Forum.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1. The Chair explained that the Terms of Reference, once agreed, would govern the East Hemel Forum. A draft copy of the Terms of Reference was provided to members on 7th December 2016 and a hard-copy was provided at the meeting.
- 4.2. Councillor Graham Sutton asked if a named representative was unable to attend whether the individual could be substituted by another representative.
- 4.3. The Chair confirmed that members would be permitted to send an alternative representative if they were unable to attend and gave prior notice.
- 4.4. Andrew Lee said the LEP is not part of the local community and asked if the wording in the Terms of Reference could be amended to represent the LEP's membership.
- 4.5. The Chair agreed that the wording should be amended to reflect the LEP's membership.

Decision: The Terms of Reference were approved

5. Update on the scheme

- 5.1. Steve Melligan provided background on the land east of Hemel Hempstead and how the local context has changed since the 1930s.
- 5.2. Bob Sellwood also provided further information about the planning status of the East Hemel project in relation to St Albans District Council's Strategic Local Plan (SLP). He acknowledged that the SLP has failed its Duty to Co-operate, but said The Crown Estate still intends to push forward with its plans for East Hemel, which appear to have the support of St Albans Council, Dacorum Council and the LEP.
- 5.3. Councillor David Mitchell asked if The Crown Estate will submit a planning application for East Hemel prior to the new SLP being submitted.
- 5.4. James Doe said St Albans District Council should look to re-visit the Duty to Cooperate with adjoining Local Planning Authorities in order to progress with a coherent SLP.
- 5.5. Responding to Councillor David Mitchell, Steve Melligan and Bob Sellwood confirmed that The Crown Estate remain committed to submitting a planning application in the Autumn 2017, but this would then take at least a year to come to determination.
- 5.6. Referring to Bob Sellwood's comments about the Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) Green Belt Review, Councillor Maxine Crawley said the Review did not identify East Hemel for development, but instead safeguarded it.
- 5.7. In response, Bob Sellwood said it was safeguarded due to concerns about the delivery of Spencer's Park and this would be detached from the Hemel Hempstead urban area.
- 5.8. Councillor David Mitchell disagreed with Bob Sellwood's comments that the SKM Green Belt Review had identified East Hemel as being weak in terms of Green Belt purposes. He added that the Green Belt performs well when judged against the Green Belt purposes in the NPPF. Bob Sellwood offered to discuss this outside the meeting.
- 5.9. Councillor Maxine Crawley said the Scoping Document and other future planning documents should be brought to the Forum.
- 5.10. Steve Melligan confirmed members will be updated and the documents will also be available on the website.

- 5.11. Colin Gage asked whether it makes sense to submit a planning application prior to the issue of the SLP being resolved. He speculated that under the previous Local Plan, the application would have to be rejected.
- 5.12. Bob Sellwood responded by saying that he hopes the SLP will make progress by 2018 when the application is likely to be determined.
- 5.13. Dave Abernethy asked if The Crown Estate would consider proposing more than 2,500 homes for the site.
- 5.14. Steve Melligan confirmed that The Crown Estate's planning application proposes 2,500 homes.
- 5.15. Councillor David Mitchell questioned why the 4,500 homes figure has been previously mentioned.
- 5.16. Steve Melligan responded by saying The Crown Estate have more land to the west of the M1, but have no current plans to bring this forward for development.
- 5.17. Bob Sellwood explained the site development plan along with the constraints and opportunities that East Hemel brings.
- 5.18. In relation to the Central Commercial District, Councillor David Mitchell was sceptical that the area could provide 8,000 jobs.
- 5.19. In response, Bob Sellwood confirmed that the site would offer a mix of jobs and added that if the Central Commercial District has a high proportion of shed developments, then it would be difficult to reach 8,000 jobs.
- 5.20. Graham Glover and Councillor David Mitchell raised concerns about the prospect of building near the Buncefield site.
- 5.21. Bob Sellwood responded that the Master Plan can accommodate the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation zones.
- 5.22. Yolanda Rugg said the area currently struggles with not having mixed employment land. She said there should be local procurement, which would bring investment into Hertfordshire. Ms Rugg added that we need to look closely at infrastructure and asked whether a representative from Highways England would be able to come along to a future meeting.
- 5.23. The Chair confirmed that other consultants would be coming along to future meetings, but The Crown Estate is not in a position to require attendance from Highways England or Hertfordshire County Council.
- 5.24. Steve Melligan added that The Crown Estate is part-funding a study and working with local partners to find solutions to existing traffic issues especially around Junction 8.
- 5.25. Colin Gage said it is difficult to attract people to the local community. He added that the 8,000 local jobs would be positive for the local economy, but said these would need to come from office jobs, which would add to existing traffic.
- 5.26. Steve Melligan reiterated that The Crown Estate is aware of the existing traffic concerns and is working with consultants in order to address these.
- 5.27. Yolanda Rugg encouraged The Crown Estate to continue working with partners across the area and added there is a greater need for joined-up working with regard to transport.

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- 5.28. Councillor Graham Sutton added that other traffic concerns need to be considered such as further development at Luton Airport.
- 5.29. James Doe said there is the potential to work with local educational establishments for sustainable development. He added that Dacorum Borough Council expects to consult on its Draft Local Plan next year.
- 5.30. In relation to the Southern Residential Neighbourhood, Yolanda Rugg asked whether The Crown Estate have made further enquiries about the size and capacity of the secondary school.
- 5.31. Bob Sellwood said this could potentially be a through school with children aged between 5 and 18. He added that Hertfordshire County Council want a school by 2022 / 23.
- 5.32. Councillor Maxine Crawley informed members that she was previously the Portfolio Holder for Education. She added that 2022 is too distant and school places should be filled before homes.
- 5.33. Steve Melligan said The Crown Estate is open to looking at options including getting more local people into work through apprenticeships.
- 5.34. Councillor David Mitchell said that according to Hertfordshire County Council, the school should be in the northern part of the proposed development area on the grounds that most of the new houses would be in the north. He also raised concerns about the spine road and felt it would not serve local people.
- 5.35. In response, Steve Melligan said The Crown Estate was informed by Hertfordshire County Council that they preferred the school in the south as it could be delivered earlier as the access and infrastructure is more readily available.
- 5.36. Bob Sellwood said The Crown Estate would look to deter HGV traffic from both the northern and southern parts of the site.
- 5.37. Councillor Graham Sutton agreed with Councillor Maxine Crawley about providing schools before homes. He added that Leverstock Green residents would prefer Option C of the Southern Residential Neighbourhood. Councillor Graham Sutton also said there must be school pick up and drop off points included in the plans.
- 5.38. Dave Abernethy said the Northern option was the most attractive option. He said that the spine road should have cycle ways.
- 5.39. Bob Sellwood agreed and said The Crown Estate intends to include cycle ways in its plans.
- 5.40. Yolanda Rugg highlighted that she feels it is important to have green spaces in any development.
- 5.41. Colin Gage said there are issues with the current primary school in Leverstock Green being oversubscribed. He added that the secondary school should be in the north.
- 5.42. Bob Sellwood said a central place for the primary school in each housing area is part of a healthy living area. He said The Crown Estate understands the importance of the local centre in the southern area being complementary to Leverstock Green local centre.
- 5.43. Councillor David Mitchell said we are yet to talk about gypsy and traveller sites. He added that the SLP states that these should be located to the south side and asked whether this was still the case.
- 5.44. Steve Melligan said this was one of the main concerns raised during the consultations and The Crown Estate will work with St Albans Council on where to place the sites.

- 5.45. Councillor David Mitchell said residents in Rebound are concerned about future gypsy and traveller sites.
- 5.46. Councillor Graham Sutton added that gypsy and traveller sites are always the most prominent issue. He also asked if members could be sent the presentation slides from the meeting.
- 5.47. The Chair confirmed that the presentation would be sent to members.

6. Consultation update

- 6.1. The Chair provided an overview of the first consultation events held by The Crown Estate for East Hemel. He said that over 600 people attended the consultation events and 156 formally responded to the consultation.
- 6.2. Councillor Graham Sutton and Colin Gage said many homes in Leverstock Green did not receive an invitation to the consultation events.
- 6.3. In response, the Chair confirmed that after the first consultation event The Crown Estate became aware that some residents did not receive an invitation and after checking with the delivery company realised some streets had been missed in Leverstock Green. Following this a team was sent out to canvass the area on two days to ensure people were aware of the two remaining consultations. He added that after the last event an additional canvass was carried out to inform people of the proposals and how they can provide feedback.
- 6.4. Steve Melligan confirmed that The Crown Estate will consider using different venues for the second consultation round.
- 6.5. Yolanda Rugg added that it would be useful to have more consultation events.
- 6.6. Councillor Graham Sutton said The Crown Estate should host an all-day event and recommended Leverstock Green shops as a potential venue.
- 6.7. Councillor David Mitchell highlighted that residents have informed him that there are many consultations taking place, which confuses people.
- 6.8. Colin Gage asked for the second consultation series to be discussed at the Forum.
- 6.9. Steve Melligan confirmed that The Crown Estate will share their plans for the second consultation at future meetings.
- 6.10. The Chair explained that the main issues arising from the consultation events were concerns regarding traveller sites, traffic and the need for a new hospital. He then explained that the Draft Masterplan will be published in early 2017 and the consultation will take place in Spring 2017.
- 6.11. Yolanda Rugg asked if there would be a difference between when the residential and commercial zones would be brought forward.
- 6.12. Bob Sellwood confirmed that The Crown Estate intends to submit one planning application containing both.
- 6.13. Steve Melligan added that residential units would be easier to fill, but the employment space would be more occupier-led.
- 6.14. Yolanda Rugg and Steve Melligan agreed that 55 hectares is a large area and needs to be managed carefully to maximise its potential.

- 6.15. Councillor David Mitchell argued that The Crown Estate's timeline is ambitious.
- 6.16. Councillor Maxine Crawley suggested that The Crown Estate should consider attending the [St Albans Council] Planning Policy Committee in January 2017.
- 6.17. Graham Glover added that The Crown Estate pushing forward with its plan undermines the SLP process.
- 6.18. Steve Melligan said that The Crown Estate will continue to follow the process and added that as the application would take at least a year to come to determination after submission, it would not make sense to delay the application. He added that the much needed homes in East Hemel need to be delivered as soon as possible.
- 6.19. Councillor David Mitchell said that any planning application should be delayed until the Inspector had approved the SLP, which he suggested could take six months.
- 6.20. Colin Gage said the Leverstock Green Village Association wants to work with The Crown Estate, but argued that the proposed date for the second consultation is too early.

7. Future topics

- 7.1. The Chairman recommended that the next meeting should be centred on traffic and transport.
- 7.2. Councillor Maxine Crawley said she would like to invite a member of the Hertfordshire County Council Highways team to attend the meeting. She added that when discussing transport, this should cover everything including bus routes.
- 7.3. Councillor Graham Sutton recommended that future developments should also be discussed.
- 7.4. Colin Gage added that this should also include the impact from commuters. He also added that the Forum should consider the impact on local infrastructure in relation to traffic related discussions.
- 7.5. Andrew Lee mentioned that the AECOM study is already looking into wide-ranging traffic related issues and not just those pertinent around Junction 8 of the M1 Motorway.
- 7.6. Yolanda Rugg said the proposals should be clearer on the type of housing.
- 7.7. Bob Sellwood said the SLP states there is a particular requirement for small two and three bedroom houses with a garden.
- 7.8. Councillor Maxine Crawley asked what the term "affordable" means and how many of the homes proposed by The Crown Estate would be affordable.
- 7.9. Steve Melligan confirmed that there would 40% affordable housing.
- 7.10. Dave Abernethy asked if the homes would be available to buy or whether they would be rental properties.
- 7.11. In response, Steve Melligan said there would be a mix of tenures in East Hemel. He added that all future meetings will include an update on the proposals.

Decision: The next meeting will focus on traffic and transport.

8. Future meeting dates

- 8.1. The Chair said that The Crown Estate proposes monthly Forum meetings until April – followed by meetings every two months until a planning application is submitted. He suggested that the next meeting should take place on 31st January 2017.

Decision: Members agreed with the Chair's comments and that the next meeting should take place on 31st January 2017.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1. Councillor David Mitchell thanked The Crown Estate and said he appreciates the establishment of the Forum.
- 9.2. Yolanda Rugg asked if there was an opportunity to involve local construction companies and asked if The Crown Estate would be willing to present to the Hertfordshire local construction forum.
- 9.3. Steve Melligan was sympathetic to the idea, but said that it was too soon to speak to the construction forum.
- 9.4. The Chair thanked members for attending.

The meeting ended at 8:20pm.