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## East Hemel Forum

Held at Aubrey Park Hotel, Hemel Hempstead Road, Redbourn, St Albans, AL3 7AF at 18:30 on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

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### Present:

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

Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe, Dacorum Council, ward member for Woodhall Farm

Steve Melligan, The Crown Estate

Graham Glover, East Hemel North Residents

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

Colin Gage, Leverstock Green Village Association

Naomi Powell, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Councillor Ian Caldwell, Friends of the Nickey Line

Councillor Victoria Mead, St Albans Council, ward member for Redbourn

Chris Taylor, Dacorum Borough Council, Group Manager Strategic Planning and Regeneration

Councillor David Mitchell, Redbourn Parish Council

### In attendance:

David Bird, Vectos (on behalf of The Crown Estate)

Rupert Thacker, Hertfordshire County Council, Programmes and Strategy Manager

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

### 1. Chair's welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed members and reaffirmed 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.

1.2. Members provided brief introductions about who they are representing. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe declared that she is a member of the Dacorum Council Development Committee.

### 2. Apologies

2.1. Andrew Lee (Hertfordshire LEP); James Doe (replaced by Chris Taylor); Councillor Graham Sutton; Councillor William Wyatt-Lowe; Councillor Graham Adshead; Dave Abernethy (replaced by Councillor Ian Caldwell); Councillor Maxine Crawley; SADC Officer.

### 3. Minutes

3.1. The minutes were agreed and the Chair confirmed that these would be uploaded onto the website.

### 4. Matters arising

4.1. The Chair confirmed that the following actions were taken following the inaugural EHF meeting:

- Scoping request uploaded onto the website and hard copy provided to members;
- Highways Officer invited from Hertfordshire County Council;
- The presentation from the inaugural meeting was shared with members;
- The Chair added that the St Albans District Council Planning Policy Committee meeting due to be held in January had been postponed.

4.2. Bob Sellwood confirmed the meeting is now taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

4.3. Chris Taylor confirmed that there is also a joint LPA meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, which will look at issues relating to the Local Plan.

## **5. Transport – overall strategy**

5.1. David Bird introduced himself, saying he is working on behalf of The Crown Estate and will be delivering a presentation on the options being explored in relation to transport and highways as part of The Crown Estate's proposals for East Hemel.

5.2. David Bird explained the site location context in relation to Spencer's Park.

5.3. Graham Glover requested clarification on width restrictions on Cherry Trees Lane – David Bird confirmed that The Crown Estate is not looking to change these.

5.4. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe raised concerns about the traffic levels around the T-junction on Shelley Road. She added that Hertfordshire County Council are exploring measures to control speed limits. In response, David Bird said that a new roundabout would reduce speed.

5.5. Councillor Ian Caldwell disagreed, and said the plans would only push traffic further down towards Redbourn.

5.6. David Bird said The Crown Estate have been working with Hertfordshire County Council and have been asked to look at issues affecting Breakspear roundabout. Members noted that there are existing traffic problems associated with the Breakspear roundabout.

5.7. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe and Colin Gage said The Crown Estate should consider implementing traffic control measures earlier rather than later. They both asked to be involved in the process.

5.8. David Bird discussed the existing travel patterns in the area and demonstrated that a significant proportion of people working in the Maylands area lived either within the immediate vicinity of Maylands or within Hemel Hempstead.

5.9. Councillor Ian Caldwell asked if there are any businesses that have expressed an interest in purchasing units in the proposed Central Commercial Zone of East Hemel. In response, Steve Melligan said it is too early at this stage, but work is being done with Savills to look into this.

5.10. David Bird updated members on the progress that has been made with the walking and cycling strategy. He added that The Crown Estate are keen to work with local partners to explore ways to extend the cycling route to St Albans. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe added that if this was upgraded then it is likely to be used more often.

5.11. Councillor David Mitchell and Graham Glover disagreed, saying commuters will be unwilling to cycle the distance proposed in the plans. David Bird said The Crown Estate encourages people to cycle to work and this is within the government guidelines. Naomi Powell added that this is not appropriate for parents who usually drop their children off at school on their journey to work.

- 5.12. David Bird explained the bus strategy in relation to The Crown Estate's proposals. Councillor Ian Caldwell asked if Hertfordshire County Council are involved in these discussions as there have been cut backs made to local bus services. David Bird confirmed that there will be a fund agreed with local authorities to improve bus services.

## **6. Highway options**

- 6.1. David Bird explained The Crown Estate's proposals and the highway options being considered. The discussion mainly focused on the proposed spine road. Councillor David Mitchell said this has the potential to serve as a main road and raised concerns about HGV vehicles running through the new residential area.
- 6.2. David Bird added that the Spine Road will be designed as a residential access road and will incorporate a number of features to discourage through traffic such as an urban square.
- 6.3. David Bird presented options for crossing the Nickey Line and said signalling is one of the options being explored to reduce traffic.
- 6.4. Members discussed the options for dealing with congestion around Junction 8. Members highlighted that the proposals could be expensive and questioned the timelines. David Bird said that after an upgrade of J8 the focus of debate could shift to establishing a new Junction 8a or enhancing Junction 9 – something being considered under the Maylands Growth Corridor Study.
- 6.5. Councillor David Mitchell raised concerns, saying the proposals could add to existing traffic.
- 6.6. Referencing the Hemel Hempstead Paramics Model Network, David Bird said the model looks at traffic patterns in the surrounding area and confirmed The Crown Estate has paid for surveys to look into this. Rupert Thacker added Hertfordshire County Council have similar models, which look at traffic trends.
- 6.7. Councillor Ian Caldwell said more should be done to increase the use of public transport. In response, Rupert Thacker said there needs to be more demand for services and the Council cannot continue to run services at a loss.
- 6.8. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe highlighted that in some cases where subsidy has been cut, private operators have been used at no expense to the public purse. David Bird and Rupert Thacker agreed with Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe, saying many small operators have been successful in doing this.

## **7. Assessment**

- 7.1. David Bird provided an update on the assessment options, saying that the base model has been agreed, and that the next stage is to add in the projected population growth from the Local Plan.
- 7.2. Rupert Thacker said the population of the area needs to be considered and said that St Albans is one of the most congested areas in the country. He added that more work needs to be done to ensure people can access Hemel Hempstead train station.
- 7.3. Councillor David Mitchell and Councillor Ian Caldwell said Harpenden and St Albans train stations are easier to access by road as the parking provision at those stations is better.
- 7.4. Councillor David Mitchell raised concerns that the development is too distant from an easily accessible train station.

7.5. Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe raised concerns about the availability of infrastructure. She also recommended that community meetings be held in Woodhall Farm.

7.6. Steve Melligan confirmed the second consultation will take place in spring / early summer of this year at more than one location.

## **8. Future topics**

8.1. The Chair recommended that the next meeting should focus on the development of the Draft Masterplan. Bob Sellwood added that the meeting will also cover social infrastructure and the Nickey Line.

8.2. Naomi Powell asked if the provision of a local hospital could be covered. In response, Chris Taylor said this is a matter for the Clinical Commissioning Group to consider.

8.3. Councillor Victoria Mead declared that she is a member of the St. Albans Health & Wellbeing Partnership, and added that there is the potential to redevelop the Hemel Hempstead hub hospital.

8.4. Colin Gage requested a separate meeting to be on education.

8.5. It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm, focusing on the Draft Masterplan.