

## Minutes

**Meeting of** : Special Northern Area Committee  
**Meeting held in** : Glebe Hall, Vicarage Road, Winterbourne Earls  
**Date** : Thursday 8 February 2007  
**Commencing at** : 4.30 pm

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**Present:**

Councillor M A Hewitt – Chairman  
Councillor C G Mills– Vice-Chairman

Councillors, J C Noeken, A G Peach, J Rodell, J R G Spencer, I C West, T Woodbridge and K C Wren.

**Apologies:** Councillors M Baker, J A Brady, D W Brown, Mrs J M Greville and F Westmoreland

Parish Councillors: Mr P Fisher (Idmiston) and Mr S Stubbs (Newton Toney)

Apologies: Mr Lodge (Winterbourne)

**Officers:**

A Davies (Democratic Services), A Madge (Development Services), J Meeker (Forward Planning) and P Tilley (Wiltshire County Council, Highways)

**670. Public Questions/Statement Time:**

There were none.

**671. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:**

There were none.

**672. Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor Spencer declared a personal interest in the Draft Master Plan and Development Brief for land at Porton Down since he farmed on MOD land, but was not required to leave the meeting.

**673. Chairman's Announcements:**

There were no announcements.



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



**674. Draft Master Plan and Development Brief for land at Porton Down:**

The Committee considered the previously circulated joint report of the Principal (Forward) Planning Officer and Forward Planning Officer

A copy of the presentation given by the Principal (Forward) Planning Officer at the meeting is attached at **Annex A** to these minutes.

The Chairman then invited questions and statements from the members of the public, allowing fifteen minutes each for both objectors and supporters to submit their comments to the Committee for consideration.

Mrs Gould of Church Road, Idmiston informed the Committee of her concerns in relation to speeding traffic on the road. She also informed the Committee that there were no footpaths on the road, thus pedestrian safety was at risk. Mrs Gould asked what measures would be put in place to address these issues.

Mr Jenvey of Church Road, Idmiston asked the following questions; (i) Is there likely to be any forward planning as regards the additional motor traffic which will occur? How will this be dealt with? 600 extra personnel – 600 journeys in and 600 journeys out – each day. The present access routes through Idmiston and Porton villages cannot cope now – what hope for the future? (ii) Why cannot a 20 mph limit be placed on the routes through Idmiston and Porton villages now? (iii) Why cannot a 30 mph sign be installed facing the traffic as it emerges from the railway tunnel at the top of Church Road, Idmiston?”

Mr Moxham, resident of Idmiston informed the Committee of his concerns in relation to traffic and the cessation of activities at the social club at Porton Down. He added that when he first worked at Porton Down a number of years ago, 5,000 employees travelled there by bus or bicycle and transport was arranged to relay workers from Idmiston station.

Mr Burton, resident of Idmiston informed the Committee of his concerns in relation to heavy goods vehicles passing through the local villages. He queried whether the satellite navigation system could be revised to take out Church Road, Idmiston.

Mr Gould, resident of Idmiston informed the Committee that the security gate on the south side of Idmiston railway arch was given permission to open for restricted hours in the day. Despite this, the length of time the gates are open has lengthened. Mr Gould felt that appropriate enforcement action should be taken to prevent the continuation of this situation.

Another resident of Porton asked what would be done to encourage access to the site via the A30 rather than travelling through Porton village and Idmiston. They also asked if buses/mini buses would be used to shuttle people from Grateley Station and if so would these travel through the local villages.

Mr King, a local resident informed the Committee that presumably people are encouraged to use Church Road, Idmiston rather than the A30.

A local resident who lived on Winterslow Road informed the Committee that she was concerned about cars both entering and leaving the Porton Down site. From her experience, when traffic reached the bridge at Idmiston Road, cars braked suddenly and then sped off again once past the bridge. This local resident also informed the Committee of the traffic delays in the morning and evening rush hours.

Another local resident informed the Committee that the existing 30mph speed limit on Pheasant Road encouraged people to turn right and drive through the villages. If this speed limit sign was actually removed it would have a positive effect and encourage drivers to use the A30.

Mr C Thorne of Porton Bio Science Technology Centre Ltd (PBTC) spoke in support of the application. In his submission to the Committee, Mr Thorne informed Members that he was aware of all the traffic concerns that had been raised by local residents in Idmiston and Porton village. PBTC had worked closely with the District Council to look at all of the issues and to make sure that the site at Porton was thoroughly planned. PBTC has a good understanding of the positions of all of the different organizations involved. Mr Thorne added that Dstl has appointed a travel plan co-ordinator to put the green travel plan in place in the following twelve months. He concluded that the proposal would bring economic benefits to the local area and to the South West region as a whole.

Mr Fisher of Idmiston Parish Council informed the Committee that consideration needed to be given to the proposed on site crèche facilities and whether other local people would be able to use these. He added that further housing areas needed to be identified and traffic levels would continue to increase unless some disincentives were considered. It was imperative that traffic got to Porton Down via alternative routes. Mr Fisher went on to say that construction traffic continued to pass through the villages despite previous agreements with Dstl that this would not happen. Mr Fisher concluded that it was essential that all the key issues were resolved prior to the development going ahead.

In response to the various points raised, the Principal (Forward) Planning Officer replied as follows:-

- Measures are already in place to direct construction traffic and commercial vehicles to use the A30. However, this matter can be pursued further with Dstl to see what other steps can be implemented.
- A number of the traffic issues raised by the residents of Church Road, Idmiston are addressed by paragraph 6.2 of the previously circulated report.
- With reference to social facilities e.g. crèche, Salisbury District Council encourages the use of shared facilities.
- Wiltshire County Council is currently making representations to have satellite navigation altered so that the A30 is highlighted as the preferred route.
- The speed limit on pheasant road will be increased when the road surface improvements have been completed.

Mr Stubbs of Newton Toney Parish Council stated that in light of the comments submitted at the meeting in connection with traffic issues and the enforcement thereof, it was unfortunate that Wiltshire Police were not present at the meeting to hear these comments first hand.

Following the receipt of these statements, Members of the Committee then went on to make the following observations:-

- Members were well aware of all the traffic problems on Church Road and wanted this issue to be resolved for the benefit of the local residents. The proposed development would result in increased staffing numbers and this in turn would impact on traffic levels, but the present problem needed to be addressed with immediate effect.

At this point the Chairman invited Mr Tilley from Wiltshire County Council, Highways Department, to comment on and respond to the various traffic issues.

Mr Tilley informed Members of the following:-

- Problems associated with satellite navigation are a national problem. Locally, the problem is compounded since Pheasant Road is not shown on the "sat nav" system. Wiltshire County Council has been making representations to the Department for Transport in connection with this matter.
- In terms of lorries/heavy goods vehicles using Church Road, Idmiston, Wiltshire County Council has agreed to install signs at the A338 Church Road junction to encourage usage of the A30. This work is in hand. Mark Stansby, Senior Traffic Engineer at Wiltshire County Council can provide more information on this should anyone require it.
- In terms of the use of the Idmiston Arch, an agreement with Dstl does permit for arrangements to be put in place to limit the use of this arch, when the new office block is in use.
- With reference to the speed of traffic, the local Parish Council can take action to assist with this. For example, Idmiston Parish Council could approach the Speed Camera Partnership for Wiltshire, with a view to monitoring speeding in the area and taking appropriate action.
- With reference to lorry movements through the village of Porton, Mr Tilley informed Members that he was aware of Dstl trying to prevent lorry movements associated with the new contract from travelling through the village. However, taking appropriate enforcement action to prevent this was difficult. Looking forward, consideration is currently being given to the imposition of a lorry restriction of 7.5 tonnes through Idmiston. This would prevent through traffic along the Pheasant and Winterslow Roads.
- Mr Tilley informed Members that with reference to the Science Park development, he was in discussion (initial stages) with the consultants engaged to undertake the transport assessment. The consultants were well aware of the need to engage in the travel planning process.
- With reference to travel plans for Dstl, a Travel Plan Co-Ordinator had been appointed as from 5<sup>th</sup> March. This Co-Ordinator would be well aware of the issues that are currently trying to be resolved.

- With reference to the possible introduction of 20 mph speed limits in the area, Mr Tilley explained that there were no current plans for this particular course of action. However, following the completion of objective speed movements in the village, the Highways Authority may need to look into this matter further. Mr Tilley added that based on past experience, 20 mph speed limit solutions were not always the best way forward.
- Mr Tilley commented that the protagonists involved in the Masterplan were committed to joint working groups and he was sure that Idmiston Parish Council would be invited to join such a group. He added that the effectiveness of such a working group should not be underestimated.

Councillors thanked Mr Tilley for his comments and reassurances in relation to the highway issues that had been raised earlier in the debate. Members added that they were very keen to hear how the travel plan, proposed for introduction in 2008, might develop, commenting that it was important for Idmiston Parish Council to be kept up to date with any developments.

The Chairman replied that the Northern Area Committee would be provided with an update on the travel plan before its introduction in 2008, to ensure that it was developed according to plan. The Principal (Forward) Planning Officer added that Idmiston Parish Council would be included in the development of this travel plan.

Councillors then went on to make the following comments in connection with the draft Masterplan:-

- There is insufficient housing in Salisbury District, including affordable housing. According to the previously circulated report, 70% of the 400 people surveyed, indicated that they would either like to move into the area (252 people) or rent in the area (50 people). Where would these people live? In light of this concern, Members commented that any recommendation to Cabinet should include reference to the need for housing, including affordable housing.
- Once the Green Travel plan was up and running, how would it be monitored and policed?
- Who would pay for the shuttle bus services?
- The provision of services outside “the wire” e.g. banks would surely draw in more people from the surrounding villages and thus exacerbate the traffic problems.
- References to green energy appear to be vague and do not meet targets. These provisions should be tightened up.
- Details of weight restrictions and speed controls should be included in the Masterplan now.
- Representatives from Network Rail should have been invited to this meeting to consider the possibility of a railway link at Porton.
- The introduction of a 30 mph speed limit from Pheasant Road to Porton Camp would help to get over the problems caused by “sat nav” now. Furthermore, this is currently a Crown Road. Would this road fall within the remit of the Highways Authority once the development went ahead? This would be a preferable solution.
- The problems experienced now are the result of piecemeal developments. The proposed Masterplan, provided it is defensible and cannot be unpicked by the developer at a later date, may provide a useful way forward.

In response to these various issues, the Principal (Forward) Planning Officer informed Members as follows:-

- With reference to the comments relating to housing, Officers could seek further information to clarify that the number of jobs and the number of houses required were in equilibrium.
- In terms of the impact of facilities on the local setting, the intention was not to draw trade from existing facilities. The Officer referred Members to Appendix 5 of the draft Masterplan (previously circulated).
- In relation to the query relating to renewable energy, this is covered by PPS22, which specifies that at least 10% of energy should be provided within the development itself. At this point, the types of renewable energy have not been specified.

- With reference to the railway link at Porton, this possibility was very unlikely in light of the extortionate costs associated with such a link. In reality it would not provide a reasonable planning gain.
- In terms of making Pheasant Road into a public highway – this matter would need to be answered by Dstl.

Mr Tilley added the following points:-

- The travel plan proposed will be enforceable by both Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council. It would be useful to include this matter as a standing item on the Joint Working Group.
- With reference to the shuttle buses, a commitment has been made by the developer for their provision, but for how long they are provided will be a matter of judgement.
- The condition of Pheasant Road, which has resulted in the introduction of speed limit signs, is so poor that resurfacing and reconstruction will be required. The road should be reconstructed to an adoptable standard within six months of the occupation of the new office. At this point, it is highly likely that the speed limit would revert to 60 mph.
- Adding to the point made by the Principal (Forward) Planning Officer in connection with the station at Porton, sufficient critical mass in terms of usage could only make this option viable. In turn this could have a negative impact on traffic levels in the surrounding area.

The Chairman thanked all the members of the public for attending the meeting and added that if any of them had further concerns/comments in relation to the draft Master Plan and Development Brief for land at Porton Down, they should either contact himself, the officers at Salisbury District Council or bring this matter to the attention of the Northern Area Committee.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the consultation responses and proposed changes as set out in the previously circulated Appendix A to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the information provided at Appendix D (previously circulated) in respect of staff relocation matters related to the Dstl ilab project be noted.
- (3) That the list of local highway issues set out in the table at section 6.2 of the previously circulated report be brought to the attention of the organizations listed for appropriate attention.

**Recommended to Cabinet –** That the amended Porton Down Masterplan (attached as appendix B to the previously circulated report) and Porton BioScience and Technology Centre Development Brief (attached at Appendix C and previously circulated) be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, subject to the following caveats:-

- (a) In respect of third resolution (detailed above), Officers together with the relevant agencies, identify immediately steps to minimize the impact of current and future traffic levels, and
- (b) Officers be requested to investigate the implications of the housing impact as a result of this development.

(NOTE: Councillor Spencer requested that his dissent to the above decision be recorded)

*The meeting concluded at 6.30pm  
Members of the public present: 35*