



Notes of the  
Westcott Village Association Open Meeting Held at  
Holy Trinity Church at 19.30 hours on 5th March 2020

Present from the WVA Committee:

Tim Way as Chairman, Andrew Copeland, Sandra Ede,  
Paul Goddard (PRG), Edwina Gordon, Edwin Harland, Simon Bradley

Apologies: Hugh Broom, James Leaver, Nick Lund

In attendance: James Friend, District Councillor and in part Hazel  
Watson, County Councillor

Attendees: See separate list appended

Tim Way opened the meeting welcoming everyone, particularly Jane  
Smith, MVDC's Interim Planning Policy Manager, and Cllr Margaret  
Cooksey, MVDC Cabinet Member responsible for Planning.

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

**Mole Valley Draft Local Plan**

1. Jane Smith, MVDC Interim Head of Planning Policy.  
Overview from JS then open to the floor for questions,  
comments and discussion

**Other Association Matters:**

2. Open Meeting Venue
3. Speeding and Noise
4. Street Stewards
5. Second Defibrillator
6. Update on Community Facilities and Doctor's Surgery
7. Any other Matters Arising from the Minutes of the previous  
Open Meeting held on 12th September 2019
8. Any other matters

**Mole Valley Draft Local Plan:**

JS explained that the objective of Local Plan was to determine how Mole  
Valley District Council (MVDC) would cater for future development needs  
and demands related to housing, community facilities and commercial

enterprises - retail, office and industrial - with consideration of the environmental and Climate Change impact of these developments.

An overview of JS's brief presentation is as follows:

\* That sufficient land was available to cater for commercial needs. She confirmed that based on a standard National Government formula, MVDC are tasked with facilitating the provision of 6735 dwellings over the 15 year plan life - 2018 to 2033. A 5% buffer has added to give a revised target of 7100. The Plan does not detail housing delivery timelines.

\* Using land in current unused Brownfield Sites is the primary planning target with this estimated to provide space for 3000 dwellings. In addition, space for another 1500 dwellings is estimated to be available by intensifying use of sites already in use. This leaves residual demand of 2600.

\* This demand is planned to be met by a combination of Urban Extensions and Rural Extensions with modest additions to rural villages such as Westcott. To give villages more resilience, MVDC are targeting the provision of Affordable Housing (see definition below) and 'right size housing' in planned developments.

\* In Westcott, the Local Plan identifies two potential development sites which together would provide 44 dwellings. Both sites are currently outside the Village Boundary and in Green Belt land, but if the Plan proposals are adopted, they would both be designated as inside the Village Boundary and not Green Belt. The site details are:

- Westcott House: 30 dwellings
- Mill Way House / Bramley House / Heathcrest: 14 dwellings (described as apartments in the Plan) contained within two or three buildings

Developers would be required to meet site specific requirements such as protection of trees, natural features and views. These are noted in the Plan.

For both sites, MVDC had discussed road access requirements with the Highways Authorities and concluded that acceptable standards could be met. No details however were given at this stage.

JS concluded by confirming that interested parties had until Monday 23rd March to communicate their comments to MVDC - both positive and negative - on any aspect of the Plan.

MVDC would then assimilate and consider responses with a revised plan published for another consultation period sometime in 2021. The final plan will likely be adopted by MVDC in late 2021.

#### Definition of Affordable Housing:

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home

ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following: affordable housing for rent; starter homes; discounted market sales housing; other affordable routes to home ownership.

Summary of Q&As / Open Discussion on Westcott elements of the draft Local Plan:

(Note format: Questioner / Question or Comment / Answer from JS)

Libby Witt

Q: What is the affordable, rented, social housing element in the plan? Will it take into account what is included in the Westcott Neighbourhood Plan?

A: Developers will need to meet a 40% target of Affordable Housing. Housing will be managed by Housing Associations with MCDC setting what is appropriate in detail for individual sites

Dan Rolt

Q: Does the Plan include converting unused / empty Retail & Commercial space to Housing? Other Councils have their own Development Companies rather than simply using private Developers. Does MVDC envisage setting this up?

A: a) Yes, there is some conversion planned. MVDC policies allow this flexibility but also need to strike a balance between housing need and protecting employment opportunities b) There is such a Company within MVDC but it is not to develop Housing. (JF gave the name of the MVDC Company)

Nick Jordan - Moss

Q: What were originally Council Houses in Westcott are now largely owner occupied or rented out at significant cost. Will there be any guarantee of new Council Houses in Westcott

A: No, other than the 40% Affordable Housing requirement. Government policy is to allow the "Right To Buy"

Jo Smewing / Chris Smewing

Q: The Environment Minister has said new builds in a Floodplain will be banned, but the Westcott House site includes a pond and the north part of the site is prone to flooding. Why is housing being planned on this site? Where exactly on the Westcott House site is the planned development?

A: The new dwellings will be in area south of the floodplain and north of the rise in the ground, effectively in a belt east to west between the lake and the steep bank. Sustainable drainage measures will be required to address and mitigate the risk of surface water flooding, fluvial flooding and ground water flooding.

Melanie Armstrong:

Q: Bailey Road floods – isn't this an indicator of existing problems that need to be resolved? There are bats and other wildlife on the Westcott House site. How will they be protected?

A: The Plan includes specifics about drainage and environmental requirements which Developers will need to incorporate in their applications.

(Tim Way commented that it was the intention of the WVA Committee to look at how Pippbrook could be managed / improved to reduce flooding)

Adrian Robinson:

Q:44 New Homes could equate potentially to 120 additional cars to park and to drive on the A25. Traffic between Westcott and Dorking is already regularly congested. This should be sorted before any new development is allowed.

A: Traffic congestion is a problem all over Mole Valley & Surrey generally just as it is on the Westcott / Dorking section of the A25. MVDC cannot develop the area out of the problem. No viable solutions have been identified other than using cars less and other modes of transport and local facilities more.

Ash Banyard:

AND PLEASE NOTE THE AMENDMENT TO THE ANSWER FROM JS IN THE MEETING

Q: Will the other probable / possible developments of the Crown ( 7 dwellings), Indigo Spice (maybe 2/3 dwellings) and others, be counted towards the target of 44 in the draft Local Plan for Westcott?

A: JS answered 'Yes' to this question in the Meeting.

In two subsequent discussions with PRG in the days after the Meeting, JS amended this reply as follows:

i) The Crown and potential Indigo Spice dwellings will not count towards the 44. The 44 would remain the Plan, and any dwellings added from 2018 onwards from any other planning applications would be counted as windfall and contribute to the residual demand of 2600 dwellings.

li) If however one or more suitable sites were identified that could directly substitute for either or both of the proposed Westcott sites, and still provide the 44 dwellings, then that substitution could be considered and potentially included in the 2018 - 2033 Local Plan. To achieve this, the site/s would need to be put forward for consideration immediately because once the Local Plan is adopted, such substitutions will not be permitted.

Andrew Gordon:

Q: Does the Plan consider the need to improve / increase Medical and Educational facilities?

A: Yes either with new premises or by using capacity in existing facilities. Initial discussions have been held with Medical and Education Bodies. Locally, schools will be expanded without new ones being built

A Resident and Edward Bennett

Q: Access to either of the sites to and from the A25 will be problematic given current traffic volumes and speeds. What specifics are being considered to make it safe and effective?

A: Detailed access plans have been submitted for the two Westcott sites. These have not been released by MVDC but they and the

Highways Authorities have reviewed the proposed plans and concluded that acceptable standards could be met.

Note: There was clearly real concerns amongst the audience as to how these two new junctions could, and would, operate safely and effectively.

Tim Gowing:

Q: The proposed 210 additional dwellings in two sites off the A25 Westcott Road will simply add to existing congestion as entrance / exit to the sites will only be from the A25. What plans do MVDC have to mitigate this?

A: None specifically but it is hoped that their close proximity to Dorking will encourage non car travel into town.

Libby Witt

Q: How will MVDC ensure that suitable Green Standards and Credentials are enforced for all new houses?

A: This will be achieved via Housing Policies - for instance they currently mandate a 20% improvement in energy efficiency compared to current standards / building regulations. Policies to encourage other Green Measures will be developed.

Q: Will MVDC require solar panels, no gas boilers for instance?

A: Appropriate polices will be developed as for instance, solar panels are not suitable everywhere.

A Resident

Q: Why was the Kuoni site in Dorking not developed to its capacity?

A: As the Developer chose to use a change of use rather than a full planning application, they retained control, and MVDC did not have the power to enforce changes.

Judith Packer:

Q: What is included in the Plan to encourage local businesses to thrive and reduce reliance / use of those in Dorking?

A: Planners cannot do much to achieve this. They can help businesses to open but only Villagers can decide to make use of them so they thrive

Edwin Harland:

Q: Planning standards require two car park spaces for two bedroom houses and bigger. How will MVDC ensure the impact is minimised? Can underground parking be included at least for the flats?

A: Yes underground could be considered as can Town House type buildings with integral parking. Screening by trees & hedgerows will also be used to respect the rural character and views in, and of Westcott. Underground parking is however very expensive.

Edward Bennett:

Q: Are there any development proposals planned along the A25 to the west of Westcott?

A: No proposed Developments are known. James Friend confirmed later on that there are no plans for any significant developments between Dorking and Guildford though that would not stop any general Guildford developments generating extra traffic to travel to say Crawley and Gatwick Airport

Chris Smewing

Comment: There is a real danger of Westcott becoming West Dorking given the development included in the Plan for the Sondes Place Farm and Milton Court Lane sites.

Adrian Robinson:

Q: Why isn't the commercial site in Chapel Lane included for new houses. Existing buildings could be knocked down and reused.

A: The site was not put forward as one to potentially use. To be included in the Draft Local Plan required a site to be available for development and the Owner willing to sell.

Nick Jordan-Moss

Q: How will MVDC ensure space / floor areas of new dwellings are suitable sizes for modern living and that the 40% Affordable Housing would in fact be built by Developers?

A: Government issued national standards will be enforced as will the 40% MVDC planning requirement via detailed planning permission given to the Developers who are ultimately selected

Edward Bennett:

Q: Why are there other small changes proposed to the Green Belt boundary other than the two sites?

A: To simply bring the GB boundary to coincide with suitable physical markers like roads and rivers

Edwina Gordon:

Comment: Given the gradual increase in the number of dwellings in Westcott over the last 40 years, that three of the four new houses at Garden Court have not sold, and that seven dwellings will be built at the Crown, she felt the scale of Development proposed in the draft Local Plan was unreasonable.

Kay Meldrum:

Comment: Expressed concern about the scale of development planned for the village and the economic viability of the two sites given the restrictions and requirements to be imposed on Developers.

James Friend: Identified a number of things for residents to consider in making their personal submissions to MVDC

- How many sites were currently available in the village
- That the school was not considered under threat and there are available school spaces already in Dorking
- that Climate Change requirements in the Plan needed the support or otherwise of respondents
- There are no immediate solutions to resolve traffic congestion
- Making use of the Neighbourhood Plan content in framing responses
- To note that in 2008 there were 901 dwellings, in 2020 there are now 970 with the proposed increase of at least 44 on top of that
- He asked Westcott Residents to continue to take part in the Consultation process and respond in writing to MVDC

Margaret Cooksey: MVDC Council Member for Planning:

- Emphasised that all Residents need to feedback on what they like about the plan and what they don't like. Comments on the positives were needed just as much as the negatives.

**In conclusion**, Tim Way thanked Jane and Margaret for their considerable input into, and support for, the discussion tonight and for the Exhibition Events they have attended

Note: The Plan in its entirety is available to view / read on the MVDC website and in their offices. The Consultation Period ends on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

**Open Meeting: Minutes / Action Points:**

**1) Open Meeting Venues:**

Comments from the floor included that Holy Trinity was good space and was warm but it was difficult to walk to and had limited car parking. St Johns was thought not be as good a meeting place but was more accessible to more of the Village.

TEW proposed that the two venues would be used for alternate meetings

Thought post Meeting: Could lifts be organised for those not able to walk to the Church?

The next Open Meeting is planned for 21st May & the AGM 8th October

**2) Speeding & Noise:**

TEW urged those in attendance and all residents to

- Complete the Westcott Speed and Noise Survey either online or in hard copy before the 15th March deadline

- To add their names to the Mickleham anti-noise petition. Access to this is via a link on the WVA website

- To use and promote the 30mph car stickers. Tim emphasised that if all Westcott Residents observed the 30mph limit on the A25 then this would be a huge boost to the campaign for safer and quieter driving.

**3) Street Stewards:** Anyone who could give some time to support Edwina and her Team should contact Edwina asap via phone or email

**4) Village Facilities - Surgery / The Hut / Reading Room:** TEW read a statement from Bernd Ratske, Chair of the Joint Working Group considering and progressing possible proposals. The statement is available on the WVA website.

Glenn Wylie, Chair of the Hut Committee, emphasised that progress is being made & whilst it is still early days in the process, a probable solution is expected to emerge in a timescale of months rather than

years. He and Alan Reif confirmed that Residents would be given an opportunity to comment when proposals had been firmed up. At this stage proposals would likely include a surgery and community centre in Furlong Road, with housing both at Furlong Road and on the Reading Room site.

Discussion about the future of the Riverbank surgery building was concluded acknowledging that the owner was at liberty to convert it back to a private house if he wanted to.

### **5) Any Other Matters:**

Speeding and Noise: Support was shown for changing the speed limit on the A25 from Westcott to Dorking to 30 with a 20 mph limit near the school. TEW responded that Highways had categorically rejected any notion of changing the speed limit.

A suggestion that the WVA engage with Unum and the Westcott Sports Club for mutual support was acknowledged. TEW confirmed a planned meet with Unum had been postponed but would be pursued. The Sports Club and the Brownies / Guides were already in the loop

### Planning Applications:

- The Crown: Approval has been given to a development of seven dwellings, including converting the existing buildings. The Owner is marketing the site with this planning permission
- Indigo Spice/Cricketers: a possible solution is being discussed. No detail is available.

Defibrillator: Subject to confirming some minor details, the WVA will be using funds to buy and maintain a second defibrillator in the village located in the phone box at the junction of The Burrell and St John's Road.

Silent Soldier: The members present requested that the memorial, temporarily situated on the bank below the Church, should remain there for the foreseeable future. TEW to discuss this request with Wotton Estates who own the land.

There being no further matters raised, the Open Meeting closed at approximately 9pm.

PRG 11th March 2020

Appendix - List of Attendees:



Appendix 1: Attendees

Ash Banyard	Sue Rolt
Sally Hewetson	Don Rolt
Murray Stephen	Alda Andreotti
James Isaacs	Angela Deloford
Edward Bennett	Nicky Gray
Aline Bennett	Mark Shakespeare
Peter Dunckley	Chris Smewing
Sheila Dunckley	Alan Jonas
Heather McCombe	Glenn Wylie
John Clachan	Emma Hunter
Kate Lamb	Colin Pilbeam
Gavin Lamb	Judith Packer
Fleur Subuh Symons	Richard Packer
Susan Farman	Pam Wilson
Nick Jordan-Moss	Alistair Meldrum
John Moss	Kay Meldrum
Melanie Armstrong	Bev Lawry
Karen Ratzke	Ted Lawry
Mary Johnson	Adrian Robinson
David Johnson	Alan Reif
Cheryl Seymour	Roger Bishop
Tim Gowing	Pam Bishop
Andrew Lewis	Libby Witt
Andrew Gordon	John Witt
Jo Smewing	

Total 49

Plus Committee Representatives and Local & District Councillors as listed on page 1