

CABINET

16 January 2013

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BARTON FARM FORUM

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report introduces the scope and purpose of the Barton Farm Forum as an informal consultative body and asks Cabinet to approve the Terms of Reference. Following discussion between Group Leaders the first meeting of the Forum has already been scheduled for 6.30pm on 16 January and the approval of this report will give the framework for its operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the Barton Farm Forum be established and the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1 be approved.
- 2 That appointments be made to the Forum (7 City Councillors).

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2012 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government gave permission for the development of 2000 dwellings and associated infrastructure at Barton Farm, north Winchester, by CALA Homes.
- 1.2 The decision includes a series of detailed conditions setting out requirements for the development and two Section 106 agreements (one between CALA and the City Council, the other between CALA and the County Council) which had been negotiated at the time of the original appeal in February 2011.
- 1.3 By his decision the Secretary of State has fixed a number of the important parameters for the Barton Farm development. However, the details of implementation, such as housing layout, design, and aspects of phasing will only be approved through a design code for the development as a whole, and a series of reserved matters applications for individual phases. In total the development could take 12 years to complete and will represent the largest physical change to Winchester since the Badger Farm development in the 1980's.
- 1.4 There is, of course, very significant and legitimate public interest in how the development will proceed and how it will impact upon Winchester. Some issues, such as building design and sustainability, will be largely matters 'internal' to the development, whilst others such as transport connections, community development, education and health services will interact directly with existing communities. There are also issues to be considered relating to how the residents of the new development will be democratically represented in the future.
- 1.5 The Council, as local planning authority, will make formal decisions on many of these matters at Planning Development Control Committee. That committee will consider the full range of planning policy and other material issues in arriving at those decisions. This process includes a requirement for consultation and the opportunity for public representations. However, it is recognised that the formal decision making process is somewhat constrained by the formalities of the planning system and does not provide the best of mechanisms for taking an overview of the principal issues or for facilitating public engagement on such a major and long term development.

- 1.6 The Council has therefore established the concept of a 'forum' for major developments such as Waterlooville and North Whiteley. The purpose of each forum is to provide a mechanism for elected Members to oversee the progress of a major new development and to provide them, and members of the public, with an opportunity to interact with those responsible for relevant issues outside of the more rigid confines of the planning process. It is now proposed to establish a similar forum for the Barton Farm development.
- 1.7 The terms of reference for the Forum are set out Appendix 1 and it is hoped that they are largely self explanatory. Representation from Hampshire County Council and Headbourne Worthy Parish Council is included because both will or may have a significant role in managing the impact of the development on existing communities. The Forum has no formal decision making powers. The role of the Forum is to offer a response or guidance (where needed) on particular issues after considering the reports which are put before it. Those reports will come from officers and will include input from other statutory bodies (including Hampshire County Council), local organisations and directly from the developer or their consultants. The Forum's response may be informed by the input from public participation. By providing a view the Forum guides the officers and other agencies working with the developer as to the outcomes which they should try to achieve. Through this means it is hoped to avoid unexpected or unwelcome elements within formal planning applications (thus speeding up the decision making process) and to ensure that the development integrates successfully with the existing Winchester community.
- 1.8 The Forum can, of course, call for reports or presentations on matters of particular concern as well as receiving those which officers suggest.
- 1.9 The Barton Farm Forum will differ from those for Waterlooville and Whiteley which have been able to shape the development before a decision on the masterplan has been made. At Barton Farm many key parameters are fixed by Secretary of State's decision and are not open to renegotiation. However there are still many substantial issues of detail and implementation which the Forum can engage with. CALA Homes are looking to make an early start on the first phases of development. For that reason a first meeting of the Forum has been scheduled and properly notified so that it can take place on the 16th January 2013 subject to the decision by Cabinet on this report.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The establishment of the Forum is an important contribution to achieving sustainable long term development and good community outcomes.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 There are no direct resource implications for the operation of the Forum, other than the cost of meetings themselves. All the work underpinning reports to

the Forum is likely to be necessary regardless of whether the Forum were to be established as part of the development process.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The operation of the Forum is regarded as a useful mechanism to reduce the risk of delay in the planning process and to ensure successful development at Barton Farm.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Proposed Terms of Reference for Barton Farm Forum

Barton Farm Forum

Draft Terms of Reference

The development of 2000 homes at Barton Farm, north Winchester, will be a major strategic project with significant implications for the Winchester District as a whole over a ten year period. It is vital that Barton Farm is successfully integrated into the existing Winchester community and this will require that issues of infrastructure provision, community development and political representation are carefully managed. A large quantity of technical work is required to meet the conditions of the planning consent granted in October 2012.

It is important that elected members, on behalf of existing residents and residents of Barton Farm, have an opportunity to monitor and comment on issues of interest and concern as they arise.

The purpose of the Barton Farm Development Forum is to assist in the establishment of a successful new community by providing an opportunity for the public discussion of issues and the provision of purposeful guidance.

The Forum does not substitute the formal role of the Planning Development Control Committee in considering planning applications relating to Barton Farm.

To achieve its objectives the Forum will meet in public and will act as an informal advisory body to discuss and engage with the public on the following issues, and advise the relevant authorities accordingly:-

1. Receive reports and make comment as required on matters relating to the form and character of the development at Barton Farm which are still to be resolved, particularly as they impact on existing neighbourhoods
2. Receive reports and comment as required on the provision and management of infra structure for the new community and consider any issues raised by infra structure delivery
3. Consider issues of community development and representation and make comment if appropriate
4. Monitor the progress of construction and the impact that it has. Raise any issues of concern to be considered by the appropriate organisation or the developer

There may be occasions where there is a need to meet in private, due to matters of confidentiality and commercial sensitivity.

Membership

The Barton Farm Development Forum consists of the following voting members:

- 7 members of Winchester City Council
- 2 members of Hampshire County Council
- 1 member of Headbourne Worthy Parish Council

Quorum

The Forum will be quorate if five voting representatives are present.

Method of Working and Voting Rights

All representatives are expected to seek to reach conclusions by general consensus. Where any voting representative on the Forum requires a formal vote to be taken, this shall be on a show of hands by those voting representatives present and voting (the membership as set out above).

Administration

Winchester City Council's Democratic Services Team shall be responsible for administering the Forum, calling meetings, and recording proceedings.

Public Participation Procedure

General

1. There will be a period of 10 minutes maximum at the beginning of each Forum meeting when the Chairman will invite the public, including local interest groups, to raise any general matters of interest and/or matters relating to the work of the Forum. Detailed matters related to agenda items will not be accepted at this point, as there will be an opportunity for these comments to be heard later in the meeting. As is the usual practice for general public participation, however, officers and Members may not be able to immediately respond at the meeting to points raised by the public where these relate to non-agenda items.

Consideration of Individual Agenda Items

2. After an officer has introduced an agenda item, the Chairman will invite public participation on matters relating to that agenda item. At this point, a period of up to

ten minutes (subject to extension at the Chairman's discretion) will be allowed for public comments. During this period, members of the public, including local interest groups, will be able to object, support or ask questions directly relating to the agenda item and contents of the officer report.

3. An individual speaker will be limited to a maximum of three minutes per agenda item. Where a number of members of the public wish to speak, they will be encouraged to agree the allocation of the maximum ten minute period for public participation. The Democratic Services Officer will assist in this process before the start of the meeting. The Chairman will retain a general discretion to manage the public speaking process, and may limit individual speakers to less than three minutes, or take other steps necessary in order to maximise public participation in an appropriate way. The extension of the total 10 minutes limit allowed for the public to discuss an agenda item will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

4. There will be no further opportunity for the public to comment on an agenda item once the period of public participation has ended even if the prescribed period has not been reached. The subsequent discussion, consideration and decision on the matter is then passed to Forum Members.

5. Members and Officers will not provide an immediate response to public comments raised from the floor. All comments and queries will be noted and the Chairman will invite Officers and/or Members to respond to specific points during the round table debate and discussion amongst Forum members that follows.

6. Members of the public should wherever possible contact the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting (preferably by telephone or email prior to the day of the meeting), so that as many people who wish to speak can be accommodated during the public participation sessions.

Forum Debate and Vote

7. The Chairman will subsequently invite questions and open the discussion and debate to all Members of the Forum and will invite officers and/or Members to respond to any public comments raised from the floor. Where appropriate, a vote will be taken to reach a formal recommendation on the agenda item.