

Summary of “Question and Answer Session” carried out at WNP Meeting on 7 September with SODC officers (Simon Rowberry and Gayle Wooton) in attendance

1. Q: SODC senior planning officers informed Oxford Brookes U.(OBU) that **‘The Neighbourhood Plan considers Housing the Preferred use for this site.’** [*OBU’s Estates Director, Sue Holmes, to WNP Chairman, 11 August.*]
A: This was a misunderstanding and is clearly untrue. OBU confused WNP with LP.
2. Q: SODC Head of Planning ([A. Duffield](#)) informed WNP Chairman 24 August, **‘It has been explained to all NPs that any housing numbers discussed in the context of the emerging Local Plan 2032 (LP2032) are a working assumption about potential delivery. They are minimums’** When was this ever put to NPs?
A: It is normal practice for SODC to provide estimates at a consultative stage and sometimes the estimates are the minimum amounts of housing that any site can accommodate. Unable to explain Adrian Duffield’s direct claim in his letter.
3. Q: **‘300 houses net’** is the published figure (*Preferred Sites Stage Doc, LP32, June 2016*) for the OBU site along with mixed development. This is **one-sixth** of the total housing of Holton and Wheatley. In the light of Q 2 above, 300 must be a minimum. **‘600 houses at least’** [with no apparent mention of mixed development] was discussed by SODC-OBU in **July 2016**. This is **one-third** of the total housing of Wheatley-Holton. ‘600’ in the light of Q.2 must be a minimum ... leading to ‘900’ ?
 - a) **What is the ceiling for any minimum in these discussions ?**
 - b) **How can one trust a misinformed / disinformed Public Consultation ?**
 - c) What now has happened to the **‘mixed development’** ?A: SODC explained that the OBU has not been the subject of a properly carried out property assessment and that SODC will neither confirm nor deny estimates of “300” or “600” houses until that assessment is carried out. SODC confirmed that mixed development on the site has not been discounted. SODC also confirmed that there is no housing planned for Wheatley in LP2032 because of the green belt.
4. Q: **‘The Map’**. WNP agreed map, confirmed by SODC January 2016, frames just the built-on half of the OBU site. People here thought this was because the rest of the site, Green Belt, was not for development. In June the whole site was mapped in Draft LP32 under ‘Brown Site Opportunity’. It raised questions in WPC, 4 July and 8 August, in the community on SODC Open Day 13 July and again when WPC released the OBU letter, 11 August. When WNP Chairman asked SODC to explain (in July, after SODC open day) the response was ‘a simple site map. In eventual planning the whole landscape will have to be taken into account. Probably shouldn’t have been published.’ However, Mr Duffield explained on 24 Aug to WNP Chairman, ‘... the Parish Council decided to include [only] the built up area [of the campus] in the WNP area, while the proposed strategic site covers the whole campus...’ A WPC councillor (himself a former SODC councillor) remembers that the agreement was made in a Wheatley pub. SODC reps pressed for the current truncated site map for NP use. **Why was this so ? Why did SODC not advise using the whole site map from the start ?**
A: SODC explained that the LP2032 contained a map of the OBU site showing only a notional boundary for the site. The current view is that the present built-up area at OBU is under consideration for development although there may be need to use some

of the existing green built to prevent the site from being “cramped”. SODC stated that as use of the OBU site was answerable to the Charities Commission then the site would not be vulnerable to “predatory development”. Anthony Yeates (Chairman, Holton Parish Council) pointed out that in the preparation for the WNP it had been understood specifically that only the built-up area of the OBU site would be developed.

5. Q: Mr Duffield advised WNP Chairman (24 August) that ‘delivery of any scheme should be in consultation with local stakeholders [and that] NP agree a list of infrastructure improvements linked to proposed developments at OBU.’ Given that Brookes have not yet sold the site and will not vacate completely until 2022, we are talking of medium- or longer term development. **‘Acceleration’ of NPs is SODC’s firm policy. Our ‘accelerated’ Road Map has submission in mind for early 2017.** WNP personnel will not be available when it finishes.

a) **Is the ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan therefore the WNP ‘stakeholder’. NO personnel will not be around or re-convenable ?**

b) **NPs are local volunteers, but usually without Infrastructure experience. Is WNP now facing overload, or mission creep, or distraction beyond its competence ? How do we comply on this ?**

A: SODC recommended that the current WNP Committee ~~be~~ is reconstituted after the NP referendum to become a forum to monitor and oversee the implementation and necessary future revision of the NP. SODC confirmed that (current stage) LP2032 will be subject ~~to~~ to a further stage and review prior to its adoption.

6. Q: On Infrastructure again – we have approached OCC for advice; we are not infrastructure planners. We have an offer of one initial meeting free with the designated office for New Development / New Roads, but we pay for any subsequent consultation. So many public consultations seem to be recording majority complaints about non-delivery of new infrastructure. **What assurance has WNP that that infrastructure improvements can and will be enforced, especially now that SODC talk of the OBU site having so much greater capacity for new housing than they have put to the public this summer ?**

A: SODC declared surprise that WNP had been asked to pay for advice from the OCC Office of Innovation and Development. SODC confirmed that with the potential size of the development at OBU then as conditions of LP2032 there would have to be carried out a Highways Assessment and an Infrastructure Development Plan. Both of these would have to developed with the WNP.

7. Q: What is the **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** ? Why in 7.3 is its authority **equated** [‘and/or’] with a Neighbourhood Plan ?

A: ~~See A6~~

The ‘and/or’ is not an equivalence, but indicates a required collaboration between stakeholders where a NP exists, and which involves OCC’s Inf. Plan for the development.

8. Q: The ‘mixed development’ originally scheduled for OBU and to include housing, seems to have receded in OBU’s letter of 11 August and Mr Duffield’s of 24 August. **Is it now less likely ? Is the WNP Evidence Base for local opinion no longer eligible to be listened to because WNP has not yet distilled the evidence or submitted its draft Report ?**

A: SODC continues to consult with all the stakeholders and will work to cooperate with OBU, developers and the WNP to reach a final proposal for the OBU site. It was emphasised that recommendations from the WNP must be heavily evidence based.

9. Affordable housing: (5.46). On re-locating a lifted housing subsidy to ‘elsewhere in the district’. **Does it mean ‘South Oxon District’ or just ‘district’ (‘this locality’)?**

A: See A8 Unfortunatrely it means District as in SOD, therefore the fractional subsidy caused by site limits on a full house is eklased to be used elssewhere in the District, not the immediate locality.

10. A positive consideration for the **OBU site ‘mixed development**. Since Wheatley, like many communities, has more over-65s than 16-29s, what about a ‘residential village’ (as at Letcombe Regis) ? Some survey responses call for downsizing, but within the community. Sheltered and care residence could be part of it. **It would add considerably to local employment, and avoid the outer London syndrome feared by SODC itself.**

A: something to be sought in community feedback and to be discussed nearer the time, with developers who also know the market. See A8

11. Q: The Harringtons proposal is criticised by SODC for ‘its location, directly adjacent to the M40 [which]would create the possibility of a less sustainable, commuter based settlement’ (5.37, p37). **Why is this not equally true of the Brookes site, particularly as the figures proposed for the site are increasing ?**

A: SODC pointed out that the “Harringtons” proposal is of much larger scale than that proposed for OBU. SODC confirmed that there has been too much hearsay and misunderstanding regarding the future of the OBU site. In moving forward SODC Simon Rowberry personally) has offered assistance with policy writing and preparation assistance for the WNP.

- 12 Q: As an intensely hard working NP, solely consisting of volunteers, we have our own personal survival to consider. **Can SODC assure it has no more secreted surprises ?**

A: See A11

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