

**STRAT 14, SODC Proposals and OBU/GVA Appeal.
WNP Committee Chairman's Statement.
October 2019**

(John Fox, spoken 3.30, 22 October)

- 1. On Strategic Site '14', WNP Committee has consistently supported SODC's allocation of '300 homes on the Built Form' proposed for nearly 4 years, 2016-2019. It is a Strategic Allocation. We are not allowed to reduce the proposed base figure, but local knowledge and the NP Brief allows us to advise modification and to express reservations. Examples are: we question the ambivalent qualification of '*at least 300*' and since February 2018 OCC has done the same; we point out the lack of connectivity, infrastructure and facilities for any large proposed development separated from Wheatley, the neighbouring settlement, by the A40M 'dry moat' linking with the adjacent M40/J8A; it has threadbare links with Wheatley - one half century old flyover (1970) in the west, congested by peak period traffic, while in the east, the Waterperry B-road meeting Old London Rd, recorded as a Saxon 'track' in AD 956, by-passed in 1925 by an employment scheme development, and extremely vulnerable to modern traffic. WNP has logged reports of air pollution affecting homes there. OCC called Wheatley an A40/M40 'rat run' in 2012. The village itself is a virtual slip road for the M40 and Service Station, which in turn is open to all local A-roads. In January 2018, WNP Committee first discussed infrastructure concerns with OCC. At that exploratory stage after first draft of our NP, we talked of how to accommodate and connect with a large settlement on the OBU site. OCC would not consider a second bridging of the A40, only a re-dividing of the 1970 flyover to allow more room for cyclists / pedestrians. This is not the 'adequate infrastructure' required in law after large-scale development.**

- 2. WNP Committee has opposed OBU/GVA proposals for 500 homes in stakeholder working parties (Sept 2016-July 2017) and in the bid for outline planning permission We learned of it in an unsolicited personal letter (11 August 2016) from OBU Director of Estates to me as Chairman WNP, literally 8 days before the end of SODC Public Consultation on Local Plan P 2032 (3). The public had known for 10 weeks from both SODC and WNP of the proposal 'at least 300 homes on built form' (01 June, 2016). OBU remained in the shadows. The OBU letter of 11 August appeared after WNP had sent out (09 Aug – 31 Aug. 2016) its own major Housing Needs Survey and Community Opinion Survey: 3 questions sought comment on SODC's Strat Site 14 proposal, but OBU's projected working party figures of '500 and up to 600 homes stated in this August letter, could not be included in WNP surveys already just delivered by our**

contractors to every home in both parishes, 2 days before the letter was sent. From September, the proposed '500 homes', spread-out or raised-up in volume-dispersal schemes across the OBU site ('efficient use of land'), were the sole topic-figures presented to stakeholders on 5 occasions by OBU/GVA, (Sept 2016 – July 2017). Meetings were not minuted save by lecture slides, nor any opinion-survey conducted from them. 'We were just required to listen', WNP Committee members and Parish Councillors remember. We attended the working parties dutifully, as required by the SODC Strategic Allocation, but no consensus emerged. No attempt to meet personally with WPC/HPC on their own, or with WNP Committee on its own was ever made which might have triggered some working relationship. Stakeholder 'agreement' seemed to be 'achieved' as the meetings themselves ticked the Box required.

3. WNP Area Map was drawn up in November 2015 by Holton and Wheatley Parish Councils and approved by SODC. Holton had general concern about the loss of its open space / Parkland. The WNP brief was confined to the OBU 'built form', which became part of SODC LP 2032's proposal seven months later: - 'at least 300 on the built form' and remained so through to 2019. Confined to that Neighbourhood Plan Area brief, we may unwittingly have strayed beyond its remit at times, but in good faith and infrequently. WNP has been a learning curve, but we believe in principle that our criticism of proposals beyond the built form is permissible and appropriate from within our own 'built form' Area Map which corresponds to the LP 2032 map. We have respected the Strategic Allocation limit itself, which the figures insisted on by OBU throughout our 5 working parties failed to do. Statutory Bodies spoke out on the wider Holton Park site in both our Public Consultations, 2017 and 2019.

WNP Website – www.wheatleyneighbourhoodplan.co.uk

Go to 'The Process' and see right hand Column of headlines, notably 'Understanding the Number 300, 2016-2018'

and EB – Evidence Bases – a succinct summary of the WNP years 2016-19 and the record of over 200 interviews, research reports, meetings and regular public updates.

Attached, unsolicited letter, OBU Estates Director, Sue Holmes, to **John Fox, Chairman WNP Committee**, 11 August 2016, *via* p/a M. Seeney.

WNP Committee recorded action: 15 Aug, half hour phone-call to OBU; 21/24 Aug, lengthy correspondence Head of SODC Planning & JF; 07 September 2 x Planning Officers (courageously) attended full WNP Committee meeting to be questioned.

