

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum – Housing & Planning Group Meeting 3  
6<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Note of meeting

Attendees

*Names of attendees are redacted from minutes made public for privacy reasons.*

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

All attendees introduced themselves and new attendees were welcomed.

**2) Minutes of second meeting on 5th July**

GW asked if the minutes of the meeting from 7th July were a true and accurate record of the meeting. No amendments were proposed.

**3) Actions from second meeting**

PT indicated that mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation only related to three storey properties at present (as defined in the Housing Act 2004) but that it was proposed to change this in October 2018 when HMOs with 5 or more occupants will require licencing regardless of the number of storeys.

GW indicated that a visit to Mary Gee houses had not yet been arranged owing to holidays. A meeting would be arranged subject to clarification of ownership of the site (the closing date for bids to purchase the site was understood to be early July).

GW indicated that contact had been made with both Leicester University and De Montfort University regarding masterplans but no masterplan had been provided by either University.

**4. Draft Housing & Planning policies for Knighton**

PT circulated a list of 'draft policies' for discussion. The policy areas had been identified at the previous meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

The policies were intended to provoke discussion. The key approach was to explore:

- Are the policies addressing the right themes?
- Are the policies locally specific?
- How could policies be made more locally specific?
- What could be added to the policies or removed?
- What evidence might be needed to support the policies?
- Whether the wording of the policy needs to be 'tightened'

Each of the policies were considered in turn. A copy of the draft policies showing proposed changes is attached as Appendix A (additions are shown underlined wording proposed to be removed is shown as ~~strikethrough~~).

i. Flood risk

It was agreed that:

The policy should more clearly define words such as 'inappropriate' and that 'overly technical' words such as 'curtilages' should be replaced with plain English.

The ways in which 'naturalisation' could occur to drainage channels should be referred to in any policy justification.

Evidence would need to be gathered to support the policy including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and recorded incidences of flooding. Other areas of flooding may be identified through further consultation.

ii. Mary Gee Houses

It was agreed that:

The policy should refer to appropriate 'materials' and 'architectural detailing'.

The policy should refer to specific infrastructure including schools and health care provision.

The policy should refer to parking. There was some discussion as to the level of parking required and whether this should be specified or other policies referred to.

Discussions confirmed that the site had the feeling of a series of buildings within a green space. Further consultation would seek views from local residents as to whether a similar gap should be retained between the street buildings. Further 'more specific criteria' could be added following further consultation.

iii. Welford Road Playing Fields

The draft policy was broadly supported with minor wording changes to refer to "...primary current designation...."

iv. Mix of houses

The draft policy was broadly supported with minor wording changes to refer to "...households downsizing to smaller properties....."

v. Affordable Housing

The draft policy was supported.

Other approaches were discussed that were more specific about the type of affordable housing but this would require more evidence. Discussions with Leicester City Council would explore whether there are any areas of duplication with the City Plan.

vi. Houses in Multiple Occupation

The draft policy was broadly supported with wording changes to more accurately address the impacts on the character of the area, impact on neighbours and transport hazards resulting from access and egress.

vii. Subdivision of houses

The draft policy was broadly supported with wording changes to refer to adequate and useable amenity space.

AW asked if there was any legislation relating to room sizes. PT indicated that the planning system allows for minimum internal space standards but this must be in the context of a local plan policy. There are some standards for HiMOs.

Action. PT to identify whether there is any legislation regarding room sizes.

viii. Living above the shop

The draft policy was supported.

ix. Backland development

The draft policy was broadly supported with wording changes which sought reference to: sympathetic materials and architectural detailing; a requirement to demonstrate that no flooding issues would occur; and no loss of important flora and fauna.

x. Design of houses

The draft policy was broadly supported with wording changes required adequate amenity space and that 'innovative' designs would be supported where "...they are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area".

## **5. What makes Knighton Buildings unique and locally distinctive?**

GW indicated that no photographs had been received in response to the request for people to identify important local buildings. This would be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

## **6. Any other business**

No other business was identified

## **7. Date of next meeting**

To be confirmed

## Appendix A – Draft policies and initial proposed changes

### **Flood risk**

*Proposals for new development which have the potential to be adversely affected by flooding, or increase flood risk off site will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure.*

*New development should:*

- a. Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;*
- b. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing sewerage infrastructure in particular the Carisbrooke Road and Knighton Church Road environs;*
- c. Incorporate the use of sustainable drainage systems;*
- d. Avoid the creation of impermeable surfaces, including within the gardens and amenity space eurtilages of dwellings, unless it can be demonstrated that the resulting surface water run-off can be satisfactorily directed to ground water.*

*In addition the ‘naturalisation’ of existing water courses in the Knighton area will be encouraged in the interests of visual amenity and improved bio-diversity.*

### **Mary Gee Houses.**

*Residential development at Mary Gee Houses, as shown on the policies map, will be supported where:*

- A mix of dwellings is proposed in accordance with Policy x;*
- Affordable housing is proposed in accordance with Policy x and opportunities to accommodate key workers explored;*
- There are no demonstrable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbours;*
- Houses are sympathetic to the scale, mass, height and form of neighbouring development;*
- Houses use materials and architectural detailing sympathetic to the character of the area;*
- Development would retain the current spacious, verdant and open character of the current site and not lead to the appearance of cramming;*
- Special regard is had to the impact on the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings;*
- Important trees are retained on site and incorporated into the development;*
- The necessary infrastructure required to support development including school and primary health care provision and transport improvements where necessary, in accordance with Policy x;*
- Adequate parking in accordance with policy x*
- Design is of a high quality in accordance with Policy x.*

## **Welford Road Playing Fields**

*Welford Road Playing Fields will be protected from built development, other than ancillary development that supports their primary current designation use as playing fields.*

*Where practical and viable the playing fields should be enhanced including the provision of links to other green infrastructure.*

*Proposals that would include the loss of part of the playing fields will not be supported unless alternative provision, equivalent to or better than the green infrastructure proposed to be lost in terms of its quantity and quality, can be provided in equally accessible locations that maintain or create new green infrastructure connections.*

## **Mix of houses**

*On schemes of more than ten dwellings, a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in Knighton will be sought. The provision of smaller houses and bungalows to meet the needs of downsizing households requiring smaller properties people and younger families is strongly encouraged. Sites comprising exclusively of larger house types of uniform type and size will not be acceptable.*

## **Affordable Housing**

*On schemes where there is a net gain of more than 10 homes, affordable housing will be required. Developers are required to provide a Specific Affordable Housing and Dwellings Mix that reflects the identified needs of Knighton and demonstrate how the proposed development addresses those needs. In particular, the information should set out the type, size and tenure of affordable housing (social rent, affordable rent, low-cost or discounted market housing or shared ownership) and how the mix meets local needs.*

## **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO)**

*Changes of use to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO) will be supported where:*

- a. The proposal would not result in more than 10% of houses being HiMOs within a 100m radius of the application property unless it can be demonstrated that this would not change the character of the area or result in an imbalance in the local community;*
- b. The proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the building ;*
- c. The use of the building would not have a detrimental impact on nearby residential properties (including through noise ~~insulation~~ for and disturbance to neighbouring properties);*

- d. Adequate, useable and accessible amenity space, refuse storage, drying space and car parking is provided; and
- e. The proposal would not create unacceptable highway hazards from vehicles accessing and egressing the site ~~issues~~.

### **Subdivision of houses**

The sub-division of existing properties to self-contained flats will be allowed provided that:

- The property is suitable for conversion to the number and type of units proposed in a logical and usable way without the need for significant extensions and external adaptations;
- The proposal would not adversely impact on the exterior appearance of the existing building;
- It will not result in an excessive concentration of flats and houses in multiple occupation exceeding 20% of all residential properties in a 100m radius;
- It will not have detrimental impact on residential amenity.
- There is adequate on plot car parking or where this cannot be provided the proposal must not exacerbate existing on-street parking problems in the local area;
- There is adequate, useable amenity and refuse bin storage space.

### **Living above shops**

Applications for planning permission for the conversion of vacant space above shops and other business premises to residential use will be supported where this would not result in an unacceptable living environment for new occupiers or conflict with other policies of this plan.

### **Backland development**

Planning permission for residential development proposals on backland sites will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- Proposals should reflect the character of the surrounding area in terms of street pattern and built form;
- There are no demonstrable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbours;
- Houses are sympathetic to the scale, mass, height and form of neighbouring development;
- Houses use materials and architectural detailing sympathetic to the character of the area;
- Development would not lead to over-development or the appearance of cramming and should be of similar density to the surrounding area.
- ~~It can be~~ A requirement to demonstrate that the proposal can be implemented without adversely affecting on and off site flooding;
- It can be demonstrated that development would not result in severe adverse transport impacts;

- *Important site features such as trees, hedges, ponds and other important features are retained on site, mitigated or incorporated in the design;*
- *The proposal does not result in the loss of public green spaces or the interruption of green infrastructure including green links; and*
- *The proposal does not result in important flora and fauna.*

### **Design of houses**

*New development should be of high quality design and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area of Knighton. All new developments should:*

- *Be sympathetic to the built form of Knighton generally and the local environs of the proposal including local street pattern, architectural form, scale, massing and layout;*
- *Use high quality materials that complement the existing palette within the area;*
- *Retain existing trees and other important site features;*
- *Ensure safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and road users;*
- *Provide adequate amenity refuse and recycling storage incorporated into the scheme to minimise visual impact*

*Innovative designs of high quality architecture that are energy efficient and incorporate sustainable design and construction features will be supported where they are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area.*