

Latest news from the NDP Steering Committee

Following on from the survey and the presentations of the results, we are pleased that so many have come forward to participate in the next phase of the process, namely the formation of the smaller groups, looking at the specific issues arising from the results. Recently several steering group members met with Homes England to open a dialogue with them regarding the development of the Pirbright site, in the centre of the village. This was the first meeting with owners of land that may be for development in the Parish.

As will be seen in this issue of Compilations, there is going to be activity on site to examine potential contamination issues. It was explained to us that this is the first step in the process of disposal of the site for development. We were concerned at the news that this activity and the subsequent report will lead to either Homes England, or a developer carrying out the remedial work, with a view to putting in a planning application towards the middle of next year. This timescale has taken us by surprise, as we had expected that we would publish our plan before the application went in. We have therefore decided we need to act now, to ensure the views you expressed at the survey stage are put forward to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), namely West Berkshire Council. We are seeking an urgent meeting with them to express that the results of the survey be taken into account, at the planning application stage.

It was clear from the results, that there is general agreement that development on that site is the preferred option for most of the survey respondents and we will be stressing all aspects that emerged from the survey such as the effect on schools, transport, affordable housing, etc. We have already discussed with Homes England whether an element of homes reserved for local people, namely a Rural Exception Site, would be possible, with a negative response. We will be emphasising our Housing Needs Survey results to the LPA, which was preliminary research prior to the NDP.

I cannot reassure you that the survey result of development of “up to 25 units” will apply. I believe that this site will represent the largest development ever seen in Compton and we should take our chance to impress upon the LPA, the opinions expressed in the survey. The pressure from Government on Local Authorities, to provide more housing, could well see a significant increase in units on the Pirbright Site, above the current c140, allocated in the Supplementary Planning Document for the site.

There may well be other, smaller developments, known as windfall sites but the main focus will be the Pirbright site and we will be working to ensure that we make our voice heard at every level to express our concerns.

We will keep you informed of progress.

Dave Aldis-Acting Chair, NDP Steering Group.