

# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

## Meeting Details

Land at Lodge Road

## Meeting Date & Venue

6.00pm 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022, West Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre

## Report Author

Alison Smith, Parish Clerk

## Report

Visitors from Civils:

Chris Kempton (CK), Jack Kirby from Ilke Homes (JK)

Attending for SPC:

Parish Councillors Adele Sharp, Paddy Riordan, Joan Buller, Bill McLaughlin, Kelly McLean  
Parish Clerk Alison Smith,

**Background:** The meeting was held at Civils request to follow up a previous meetings held on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021, in to update SPC on its plans for development of its land at the western edge of Lodge Road.

### **Reminder of Planning Policy and Neighbourhood Plan requirements:**

After introductions, Councillor Buller suggested it might be good to remind everyone of the requirements of MBC Local Plan and the SPC Neighbourhood Plan in particular with regards to the link road to join this site to the one now known as the Dickens Gate Development under current construction by Barratt Homes. Councillor Buller also drew attendees' attention to the SPC Neighbourhood plan where it clearly sets out the Council's desire to avoid cul-de-sac developments and that they would only support the development of the site if the vehicular link road was included in the site plans which would allow light traffic to allow access to and from the Station and the A229 for residents on the west of the village. Additionally, she commented that the Council had set out its desire to see more smaller properties being brought to market to allow local young people to get on the housing ladder. She also reminded everyone that the Neighbourhood Plan policy H6 indicated the requirement for mixed use of the site. Councillors explained the importance of the link road due to the main crossroads along the A229 being at capacity.

**Current Status of Land:** As there were new Councillors on the Planning Committee CK gave Councillors a short summary of the ownership and previous work that had been done towards developing the site. The current landowner had owned the land since 2007 and the original intention had been to for the site to be a commercial development with employment. Over the subsequent years, despite significant marketing efforts, it had become clear that the site is just not suitable for this purpose. CK explained that barriers to commercial use included being in an 'estate' and not in an area of high footfall, distance to the main arterial route for the M20, high commercial risks for smaller units with limited tenancies and lower demand, poor product markets for commercial mortgages. Five years before Civils had advised of the need to redefine the site as mixed use. CK outlined some of the opportunities for commercial operators that had been explored and explained why they had not been able to progress. This had informed their new position to develop the site as 100% residential due to the inability to identify suitable commercial operators for any commercial units.

**Current status of Plans:** CK confirmed that they were now conducting a high-level consultation with approximately 700 neighbouring residents and this meeting was to consult with the Parish Council. He advised that they were hoping to be in a position to submit an application in early to mid-June with the hope to have a decision in late July. He reassured Councillors that the required road link between Lodge Road estate and Dicken's Gate would be included.

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**Introduction to ilke Homes:** JK introduced ilke homes and outlined in a presentation some of the key benefits that ilke's approach to modular homes would bring. These included rapid build times, sustainable properties, zero carbon by design, excellent good neighbour practices with reduced site traffic and noise during build phase, full NHBC 10-year guarantees with many others. Councillors enquired about other similar developments within the county or SE and JK confirmed that they were currently hoping to commence building a similar site in Thurrock in May and confirmed that he would facilitate a visit should Councillors wish to view the site.

JK explained that they had reduced the number of potential units to 100 at the Lodge Road site due to the requirement to MBC's need for net diversity gain and open space. He advised that the current plan was for 8 x 1 bed flats, 38 x 2 bed homes, 44 x 3 bed homes and 10 x 4 bed homes with 40% being allocated as affordable homes; he confirmed that there are no plans for 5 bed properties. Additionally, each property would have the required number of off-street parking spaces as per MBC policy (mostly 2), along with periodically spaced visitor parking spaces.

Councillors enquired how the properties would be distributed within the site. JK explained that they would be spread throughout, with a mixed approach.

Councillors asked for and received confirmation that the plans therefore did not include garages for properties.

JK confirmed that there were plans for 2 informal pocket play areas and that there would be pedestrian access both to the station and into Dickens Gate estate.

Councillors enquired about the finished style of building. JK confirmed that they would be 46% brick, 46% render and 8% weatherboarding with pitched roofs that would blend into the general design of buildings in the area.

Councillors enquired about sustainability of the properties, and whether solar panels, air source pumps and electric charging points would be installed. CK explained that this would be down to the developer marketing the properties, but that there are challenges due to the core infrastructure for utilities often not being capable of providing/receiving the requirements for that number of properties; however, with regards electrical charging points they would ensure that the plans met the policy standards for MBC.

Councillors reminded all present that any discussion, questions or comments in no way indicated any predetermination of the application, and their recommendations about the application would be formed upon receipt.

It was agreed that these notes would remain confidential until the application was submitted or an earlier date by mutual agreement.

CK confirmed he was happy to receive any further questions or enquiries about the plans.

It was agreed that CK/JK would keep Councillors apprised of progress with the development plans through the Clerk.

The meeting ended at approximately 7.15pm.

**Date & Venue of next meeting**  
**– tbd if required**