

**FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the**  
**Planning and Highways Committee held on**  
**Thursday, 6 November 2008 at 7.15 pm in the Old Town Hall**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs **A V Hickmore (Chairman)**  
**Mrs M J Barker**  
**Mrs J Boulton**  
**J C W Gillman**  
**D Hughes**  
**A Marsden**  
**D Price**  
**Dr M L H Wise**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** D/Cllr **R Cox and 13 members of the public**  
**John Thomson, Moore, Allen & Innocent**  
**Peter Horridge, Stansgate Planning LLP**  
**Jayne Haynes, Faringdon Chamber of Commerce**  
**Daphne Saunders, FAP**  
**Colin Desborough, FAR**  
**Clive Davis, FAR**  
**Richard Smith, Faringdon Community Bus**  
**Isobel Thomson, resident**  
**Jim Brown, Faringdon Probus Club**  
**Al Cane, Faringdon Folly**  
**Alban Henderson, G L Hearn**  
**Sarah Allen Stevens, Wicklesham**  
**Tom Allen Stevens, Wicklesham**

(In the absence of the Deputy Town Clerk, notes of the meeting were taken by Cllr Dr Wise.)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Boyle and N O'Keefe.

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting: Tuesday, 28 October 2008**

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**3. Matters Arising**

Matters Arising were deferred until the next meeting.

**4. Public Question Time**

Ten written questions were received from Mrs I Thomson regarding Stanford Rd. The Chairman circulated the questions and his prepared responses for comment. The Chairman's responses were approved by the Committee.

A question was received from Mr and Mrs Hancock regarding a suggested road through Jespers Hill. Because this had been misconstrued as referring to the Jespers Way off Berners Way, the Chairman undertook to make a reply separate from the meeting.

**5. Public Speaking Time**

With the approval of the Committee, Public Speaking Time was deferred to Item 7 of the agenda as this constituted the main part of the meeting.

**6. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**7. Town Council Development Strategy for Faringdon 2008-2026**

The Chairman suggested that discussion be limited to one hour and Cllr Price asked that the Chairman explain the process of consultation. It was stated that the District Council is charged with the responsibility with the implementing the Local Development Framework. The geographical make-up of the Oxfordshire and VoWH sub-regions was explained and that Faringdon's contribution to the VoWHDC was both necessary, and welcomed, to assist the VoWHDC in providing information for adapting the plan to meet the expressed wishes of the Town. It was hoped that the consultation document would provide a consensus of opinion, however, anyone was able to make an individual representation to the VoWHDC if they so wished. The meeting was then opened to the public.

Mr Desborough asked whether this was only a plan to build houses, to which the Chairman replied that comments and questions should be aligned to the content of the Development Strategy document.

Mrs Saunders commented that the FTC had accepted the concept of growth, but she wanted the proviso that this be undertaken in a sustainable manner, that the possible social problems associated with low cost, high density housing be anticipated and that there should be adequate provision of employment in the near locality to limit commuting distances. The Chairman explained a key aspect of the Strategy was that housing growth should be accompanied by concomitant employment growth.

Mrs Saunders continued that there should be some recognition of 'peak oil' predicted for 2015 and the likely effects of the increasing scarcity of fossil fuels. She also wanted recognition of the success of the Local Food Group in developing locally sourced food, particularly to schools, and that there were 17 organic farms in the district. Faringdon's reputation as a hub should be recognised and that we should aim to become a 'Transition Town'.

Mr Brown commented that he did not think the re-opening of the railway line to Uffington was feasible and that this should be deleted.

Mrs Haynes suggested that the plan should allow for the building of larger, more expensive houses to encourage entrepreneurs to move to Faringdon. The intention was that this would lead to the setting up of businesses. Ms Allen-Stevens also asked about the ratio of affordable homes. The Chairman replied that the proportion of affordable housing in new estates was fixed by the VoWHDC; for the Bloor Homes development it was now 35% (having previously been 40%) and that this percentage did not apply to developments of fewer than 10 dwellings, estates of which could constitute the requested 'executive' homes.

Mr Horridge observed that the planned housing build rate for the VoWDC region outside the Oxford sub region (p 7) should be 66 p.a. and not 75.

Mr Davis was concerned that the plan was being driven by the Regional Assembly which was not a legally constituted body.

Mr Smith commented that his view of Faringdon from driving the Community Bus was that there was a large proportion of affordable housing already in Faringdon and that we needed to ensure a good mix of housing types. The Chairman referred to the statistical information included in the documentation, which indicated that in 2001, 33% of the housing in Faringdon was affordable cf. 25% in the VoWH overall.

It was widely expressed that employment should be the priority rather than housing. Cllr Price commented that there needed to be a balance between housing and employment and that housing was needed to attract entrepreneurs as suggested by Mrs Haynes. She also observed that the closure of the Gateway had been to the considerable detriment of employment in Faringdon. The Chairman explained that the FTC could not directly influence entrepreneurs to come to Faringdon, but could identify likely sites for industrial development; thus, FTC's remit was to influence the VoWDC in identifying potential employment land.

Cllr Gillman reminded the meeting that the Town Council was obliged to provide, on request, allotment land of 2 acres (0.8 ha) per 1,000 head of population and that we currently had an under-provision. The strategy should include the provision of allotment land in line with population growth (i.e. 10 ha for a population of 12,000).

Mr Desborough enquired how the population target of 12,000 had been derived. The Chairman explained that this figure had come from his previous experience in retail and was based on the viability of specific shops with respect to size of vicinal population.

Mr Cane endorsed the concept of providing a development strategy, but asked whether FTC had a policy on culture and if a stronger emphasis on culture could be included. The Chairman replied that FTC did not have a policy on culture per se, but could influence cultural development by identifying and, where possible, providing communal space in which cultural activities could take place. It was important that the strategy identified the need for sufficient communal space for cultural opportunity.

Mrs Saunders asked that there should be provision of communal space in which specific groups, such as the elderly and disadvantaged, could undertake activities safely. The Chairman indicated that in the Bloor Homes development, the area earmarked for industrial development was now being considered as a retirement village. This could include such facilities, in addition to those available in the premises under the FTC's control.

A discussion on the desirability of Tesco developing the JDS site ensued. Discussion ranged on the amount of money retained in Faringdon as a result of this development to its impact on local shops. Mrs Haynes stated that the Chamber of Commerce was undertaking a survey of the views of retailers and suppliers in the district. The Chairman emphasised that the P&HC had no view on this development and would not have one until more information was available regarding Tesco's intentions and until a

representative opinion poll had been conducted that represented the views of the majority of the population in Faringdon. The general view was that any development should not compromise Faringdon's almost unique aspect in not having a high street dominated by national chains. It was hoped that Faringdon's diversity and quality of shops could be sustained.

The public session was closed at 8.30 pm.

The committee then discussed the suggestions raised in the meeting and modified the strategy document accordingly.