



The Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft,
Steyning

West Sussex, BN44 3XZ

Tel. 01903 812042

www.steyningpc.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Working Party Held on Tuesday 13th March 2025 at 6.30pm at the Steyning Centre

Present: Cllrs Bell (Chair), S Alexander, Hanson, Linfield, Ballance, Sharp, M Alexander and resident members Barnes, Cotton and Knowles.

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Vistry Representatives Present: Jonathon England and David Scane from SECNewgate, and John Longhorn, Vistry Group

District Councillor : Victoria Finnegan

Members of the public: 0 {Not a public meeting}

Meeting Commenced: 6.30pm

Notes/ Minutes taken by the Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Trundle and Resident member Murry Van der Poll.

2. CHAIRMANS STATEMENT

The Chair clarified how the meeting might progress – presentation, then Q & A. Then started the process of introductions.

3. PRESENTATION FROM VISTRY

The three representatives from Vistry began to talk through their plans as per a slide show presentation, and because they were willing to take questions at any point, it soon became less about the formal presentation, and more about an open Q&A session. There follows therefore, and in no particular order, and in summary, questions raised, and the statements made by Vistry, relating to all aspects of the proposed development.

- The site needs a good landscape solution
- There have been two workshops with HDC planners, and these have been very productive, and involved a landscapers input.
- The site had to sit right within the community, and due to the proximity of the South Downs NP, views in and out of the site were an important and sensitive issue, with these views being maintained, and available for the majority of dwellings.
- There was a contrasting mix of housing types based upon the four character areas, but it was felt that the contrast was too sharp within the outline plan, and therefore the boundaries have been softened or '*blended*' by Vistry – but also '*this was a work in progress*'
- Bungalows on eastern side to blend in with SDNP outlook

- Approx 40% affordable housing, mix of rent and low cost shared ownership, that is 106 out of the 265, rather than all market housing
- The Vistry reps thought that in general terms the scheme was '*well informed*' already, (this being the start of the formal community engagement process), and they felt they '*didn't necessarily have to do much more*'
- They were keen to '*deal with concerns and allay any fears*' concerning the development
- The heavy vehicles point of access was going to be off the bypass, not via the Kings Barn Lane emergency access point, and it was likely it seemed that part of the roundabout scheme would be used to provide the new access roads
- The bypass pedestrian crossing was discussed, and it appeared an underpass idea had been ruled out by the HDC Planning department. Therefore there needed to be a solution to the amount of drop the pathway had to be involved with after pedestrians had crossed the road (on the Abbey Road Side). The solution at present is to have a long gently sloping zigzag which follows the line of the main road, as well as a straight steps provision. – Other suggestions could be entertained it seems, and it was pointed out that the land which could be used to help provide a better solution is owned by the Parish Council. Also, drop curb towards roundabout on likely to be moved closer to the site.
- Highways engineers considering moving the Toucan crossing closer to the roundabout
- Ecology and Sustainability – The site is quite a distance from the high street, and it was suggested that a retail outlet could be put in place to help build a community feel – there appeared to be no central meeting point - but it was pointed out this was not in line with the outline plan. It was therefore suggested that there could be provision made for a 'pop up' catering facility for install adjacent the play and kickabout zone and other open space provision
- When pointed out there appeared to be little cohesive element, Vistry suggested the cohesion would grow with the stability of the community and would evolve over time
- The question was asked '*Do Vistry really have the appetite for the scheme*' to be '*tinkered with*' a bit more. The answer was '*no*' or at least it didn't have to very much, indeed it '*should not step outside and stray too far away from the details of the outline plan*', or otherwise it was suggested the whole scheme would require another outline submission
- Vistry reiterated it had already listened to Officers, Members and taken on board objection responses
- Then they was asked – '*in that case where can we push you? – Where are the boundaries?*' The response was that '*there is some flexibility, and we want to work proactively but cannot go too far*'.
- Normally there are amendments at the reserved matters (planning) stage. Community engagement is important, and the meetings today are the beginning of the process. Extensive consultation is obviously not that easy to manage – at which point it was suggested this Steering committee becomes the conduit for information for all Steyning groups so that clear statements that are truly representative are dealt with and understood on both sides. Open and frank communications are important and SPC should provide this. The Committee takes on a consultation role, with shared collation of notes and feedback.
- Lesser height for housing adjacent the Kings Barn Boundary and the extension of a small green buffer had already been dealt with – and this was used as an example of the plans / Vistry's flexibility
- Was affordable homes provision a reality? With Registered Provider's already preferring to spend money on existing housing stock it seemed.

NB - Social housing association provider not known at this point.

- *Have they been able to achieve affordable homes elsewhere?* – Apparently so.
 - *Questions arose about the management of Kick about zone, Orchards, Play Area and whether residents association would pay, or management agency and for how long or would it come back to the parish council, and would there be a village green status considered* – there seemed to be movement in terms of ongoing management of all of these areas. The idea for a skatepark provision also remerged at this point.
 - Back to the slide show – for a resume of the sustainable building key aspects that were part of the scheme. Items included mainly air source heat pumps, but looking into ground source heat pumps, rainwater harvesting techniques employed, solar panels on dark roofs, adequate fresh air provision via opening windows rather than mechanical extract ventilation, but no details as to how many houses would have any of these systems in place.
 - Solar panels only to be considered on houses facing the right direction
 - It was pointed out however that every building would have EV Charging points, no underfloor heating, and that it helped to have some timber framed buildings in the mix
 - Was the Battery storage off site being adequately dealt with, via appropriate fire risk assessment strategies? – Yes – they believe adequate distancing is in place between the existing store and the proposed nearest houses, but a top consultant is completing checks on this.
 - Whether SPC take on the built Play Areas is a matter for Parish Council to consider – also it may want to get involved in the ‘look’ and theme of the installation
 - The Steering Committee wanted to receive via the Clerk feedback from the Community Engagement meetings and from individuals on the 13th and 15th and Vistry agreed to this
 - Then it was suggested and agreed that more and subsequent meetings be put in place to establish clear pathways to any possible amendment decisions
 - Disability access provision was discussed with Vistry stating that a number of houses had 5% wider doors for wheelchair access, plus slopes rather than steps. Plus LEAP play park considerations. It was also suggested at this stage that Vistry consider the ‘Blue Box Checklist’ which helped ensure new builds were dementia friendly
 - Cil Monies receipts discussed with perhaps up to £4 Million in total {25% likely for SPC}
 - As a number of the chimneys were not functional and were there for better aesthetics the question was raised as to whether Vistry would be receptive to installing habitat bricks that would aid Bird and Bat nesting opportunities
 - The Chair suggested the Clerk share the N. Plan Vision Statement with Vistry – and this was thought to be a good idea, so they can consider if their plan can contribute to the vision.
- {Clerk to Action}

4. I.T. MEMBERS TRAINING

Members training to ensure they could navigate the ‘live’ review of the SP Neighbourhood plan - This item was deferred as the meeting had gone on for some time and many members had to leave at this point

5. INFORMATION / CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 26th March 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Meeting ended at 8.24 pm

Signed by the Chair: Date: 26th Mar ‘25