

Notes of Meeting between Harbury PC and Bloor Homes

Re land east of Butt Lane

25 September 2025 at 9.00am

via Teams

Prior to the meeting, members of the parish council and representatives of Bloor Homes had received a copy of the PC's protocol for pre-application meetings with developers and had agreed to its terms and conditions.

Present

Cllr Tim Lockley (PC chair)

Cllr Ashley Sylvester

Cllr Keith Thompson

Cllr Alan Knowles

Cllr Robert Stockdale

Cllr Ed Mulley

Cllr Samantha Allen (chair of PC planning group)

Gemma Johnson (associate director at Marrons)

Sarah Millward (strategic planning director at Bloor Homes)

Alison Biddle (parish clerk)

Introduction

This is a 9.6 ha site comprising 3 fields currently in agricultural use. The land is free from any known physical and environmental constraints. It is in flood zone 1.

There is a national housing shortage. The current local plan is out of date and the new local plan is still at an early stage of preparation. SDC currently has only 2.74 years housing supply as calculated by the planning inspector (using the government's new method of calculation) in the recent appeal decision in respect of land at Bordon Hill, near Stratford.

Proposal

Up to 150 dwellings, 35% of which would be affordable. Access off Butt Lane, public open space and potential play provision. A memorial garden is also proposed in tribute to the WW2 plane crash on this site. Trees and hedgerows would be enhanced with additional planting. There would be a 10% biodiversity net gain.

Bloor Homes is currently running a community consultation which closes on 6 October 2025. They have targeted 1090 address and are engaging with the parish council. They expect to submit an outline planning application this autumn.

Q&As

- **Access.** It was pointed out that Butt Lane is a busy road already and therefore perhaps some consideration should be given to installing a roundabout on the right angle bend on Station Road/Ufton Road with an access to the site off that roundabout. This could provide easier and safer access. Gemma Johnson agreed to feed this suggestion back.

- **Play area.** Who will be responsible for maintaining the play area? That depends on whether the PC would like to take ownership. If not, it will be maintained by a management company. Another possibility is that instead of creating a new play area, Bloor makes a contribution to the parish council to improve facilities at the existing playing fields. This would need to be agreed with SDC.
- **Why this location?** In recent years, all development has taken place to the south of the village. The Village Design Statement seeks to protect the eastern edge of the village. Gemma Johnson responded that it is to do with land availability. Bloor does not currently own the site which has been offered to them by a property development company but would take ownership in the future. It is not designated as a reserve site.
- **Archaeology.** No archaeological surveys have been carried out yet. This is an absolute necessity. The WW2 crash happened somewhere in this area but the exact location is not known so it requires further research. There is also the possibility of Roman remains being found.
- **Density.** How does the density (150 houses proposed for this site) compare with the developments at Oakfields and Manor Orchard? Bloor hasn't carried out a comparison. Cllr Allen calculated that the density would be 20 dwellings per hectare which is less dense than the Oakfields development.
- **Affordable housing.** What guarantees are there for provision of affordable housing? Gemma Johnson explained that the housing mix is provided in line with the NPPF. A consultation will be carried out with a local provider and SDC's housing officer at the reserved matters stage to find the right mix for a village of this size.
- **Vehicular access.** It looks as though only one access point is being proposed but the local plan prefers more than one option. There has been no feedback from WCC Highways on this point at the moment.
- **Delivery of houses.** One of the current problems is that developers have not delivered on the planning permissions that have already been granted but have banked the land instead. This has impacted on housing appeal decisions because the new houses are not being delivered. Gemma Johnson responded that this problem occurs when it is a development company leading the planning application rather than a house builder. As Bloor Homes is a housebuilding company, it shouldn't be an issue in this case.
- **Infrastructure.** No new infrastructure is included in the development. The village already has a problem with sewer capacity. What assurances can Bloor give to allay these concerns? Utilities and capacity are being considered at the moment. They are also consulting with the education authority and the NHS. It is too early to advise specifically at the moment, but these issues could be addressed via a Sec 106 agreement. When considering the capacity of utilities, are other current proposals taken into account when making the assessment? Gemma Johnson explained that it depends how far advanced those proposals are. If they have already submitted pre-development enquiries, the service providers will take it into account.

- **Traffic.** The current speed limit in Butt Lane is 40mph. This development would create a lot more traffic. What mitigation would be offered? Gemma Johnson responded that consultants are currently assessing the local network and capacity which will be reviewed in consultation with WCC Highways. A plan would then be put forward for improvements which Bloor would need to fund.
- **Housing numbers.** Harbury has had housing targets for years and the parish has delivered. Over the years, the parish has accepted development elsewhere in the village in order to protect this eastern boundary so it is very disappointing to see this proposal. No one is providing a strategic oversight so the current proposals could increase the size of Harbury by 25% to 30% in a very short time. The cumulative effect of this needs to be taken into account. Public transport, for example, is negligible. There is also concern that development is incremental and could creep across the fields between Harbury and Bishop's Itchington. Does Bloor have options on any other land in Harbury? Sarah Millward stated that Bloor Homes does not have options on land anywhere else around Harbury but does control some additional land adjacent to the proposed application site. Bloor Homes believe that the proposed development is the appropriate scale for the village.

Gemma Johnson will remain in contact with the clerk via email and will answer any further questions as they arise.

Meeting closed at 10.00am

Alison Biddle
25 September 2025