

Notes from Public Meeting 25th March 2026.

Held At Harpole Bowls Club, 7pm.

In attendance Chairman Cllr Smethers, Clerk, and approximately 25 members of the public (including HPC Councillors Roberts, Hancy, Haynes, Starmer, Taylor, Wallace)

The session took the form of Questions and Answers

Q – Would it be possible for there to be a map produced that showed the extent of new developments approved, stage of build and timescales expected?

A – This is something the council will look into

Q – Do we have timescales for the new playing fields?

A – The council have been in ongoing discussions with the developer (Vistry) and the football club about this. The developer had suggested they would like to be on site by April, but were waiting for approval from Highways for the access off Larkhall Lane. The plan is that this will be built out by the end of this year.

Q – Are there still plans for the pitch to be all weather?

There were never plans for the new pitches to be all weather, but it is the desire of the football club that there is one on the existing land once the new pitches are available. New pitches need to be built to current FA standard.

Q – Did the Parish Council have any say in the closure of Nobottle Road?

A – We objected and asked if the closure needed to be so long. We were advised that due to Highway regulations and the works needed (provision of footpath and services) the road was not wide enough for the workers to work safely if one way traffic with lights.

Q – When will the Sandy Lane Link Road reopen? Why is it this can be closed at the same time?

This road was not adopted by Highways and is therefore still under the control of the developer so outside Highways regulations for closures. We have been told they will reopen when it is safe to do so. We will ask the question at our next meeting with the developer in mid April.

Q – What are the Parish Council's thoughts on the extra 110 houses being suggested for Harpole in the Local Plan?

A – The Parish Council have responded to say that with all the current developments we believe that this need has already been fulfilled. The Councils response is on the website if anyone wishes to use this as a template for their own response.

The idea of the plan is to ensure that building happens where it is needed and provided for. Any applications received for building outside of this will be looked at less favourably and developers will have more work to prove that this is needed. It is not guaranteed it won't be approved but it less likely. Once we know better what has been agreed for the Local Plan, Harpole can update our Neighbourhood Plan to give more protection. We can advise what building we would be prepared to accept and where.

There is a green wedge around the village of Harpole which will be protected to some extent to prevent urban sprawl.

The Consultation is open until Friday 27th if anyone wishes to respond. There is value in numbers.

Q – Are there penalties on the developers for missing deadlines?

A – Yes, in theory there are consequences. They have agreed to a legally binding document and there should be enforcement. Often if there are good relationships with developers and WNC / Parish Council, slips happen and there is no penalty. There are some issues that the Parish Council are looking to push harder on to ensure that obligations are honoured.

We are aware of breaches with the provision of the school and the Local Centre application should be approved by now.

Historically there are cases where S106 funds have been paid to WNC or their predecessors (Northampton Borough, South Northants or Daventry) but the obligations have not been fulfilled. There is a project trying to map this out to ensure that funding is available as appropriate.

Q – At what point do you say enough is enough?

A – This is something the council is starting to consider. There is case history in other counties where this has been taken to court for enforcement and stop orders have been put on developers.

Q – When will there be a footpath between Western Gate and the village?

A – The plans are that there will be footpaths around the country park on the North side of Larkhall Lane around the attenuation ponds. The obligation is on the developer to provide this by 900 homes, we are currently around 600. As such the council are pushing for this trigger to be met as there are safety concerns, especially for children trying to walk to school.

Access to Western Gate floods. The council are aware and have been speaking to the developer about this. As it is a bridleway it will be a Highways responsibility when adopted. It is unlikely that they will take it on in its current state.

It is thought that there will be crossing on Sandy Lane between this access point and the new country park when developed.

Q – Is there still going to be a Local Centre with shops on Norwood Farm SUE?

A – Yes there is and we believe that a planning application has been received but planning have asked for more information before validating it for consultation. We will publish this when available.

Q – Is the development at the top of Road Hill a done deal?

A - Part of this is within the N4 SUE outline, so is likely to get approved, but part is not. Not necessarily a done deal but likely there will be some housing there. There is no planning application at the moment so we are not aware of what is being suggested.

It was noted that the SUE's are intended to be an extension of Northampton, so connectivity is towards Northampton / Duston rather than Harpole, which is the village of the parish it is in.

Q – Do we know if the solar farm is still going ahead?

A – We have not heard anything yet. It is thought that they will not get road space whilst Nobottle Road is closed. There are also rumours that an alternative route for the works may be considered.

Q – When are pot holes on A4500 going to be filled?

A – This is within Highways responsibilities. Items should be reported on street doctor.