



## Report to Pinewood CLG

<b>Date:</b>	25 March 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Evolution of the Community Liaison Group
<b>Relevant councillor(s):</b>	Peter Strachan and Arif Hussain
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	Andrew Smith OBE, Corporate Affairs Director, Pinewood Group and Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director Planning Growth and Sustainability
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Iver
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>To note the contents of the report and the new format for liaison with Pinewood Studios</b>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	The Group was set up by Pinewood Studios following the grant of the Pinewood Studios Development Framework (PSDF) in 2012 to share updates with the community about the construction programme. Pinewood has worked closely with the local unitary councillors and members of Parish Councils over the last year where exchanges of information, thoughts and actions were frequent and transparent, and Pinewood have put forward a proposal to build on this positive relationship and stop holding CLG meetings.

### 1. Executive summary

1. The development programme at Pinewood Studios has been significant and may increase if Pinewood proceeds with the development at Phase 3, PSDF and Pinewood South. Liaison with the local community (in its widest sense) is important for corporate reputation and neighbourliness. The current CLG established voluntarily by Pinewood for PSDF has run its course and is not fulfilling the engagement role that is needed. It is important to understand that the CLG is not required by any planning permission condition or legal obligation and is ready for change.

2. There is a need for a more dynamic, proactive, progressive and constructive activity that serves all parties better.
3. This report details how Pinewood would like to engage with local communities which would be a replacement for the CLG. This has been agreed by the two Cabinet Members Peter Strachan and Arif Hussain. The Corporate Director for Planning, Growth and Sustainability has confirmed that the terms of the CLG are not defined or bound by a Section 106 agreement and therefore can be open to variation and commented that he could see the merits of the changes suggested by Pinewood and is therefore in agreement.

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 The CLG is an entirely voluntary arrangement not required by any planning permission or legal obligation. The CLG has met quarterly, under a Chairman appointed by Buckinghamshire Council with a Member of the Council's Democratic Services Team circulating the agenda and minutes of the meeting. In the past year there has been a fundamental change in engagement with parish and unitary councillors which has been positively received. Pinewood is keen to build on this by extending that trust and improved relationship with the wider community.
- 2.2 Pinewood outlined in its proposal dated 9 August 2023 that a new form of community engagement should be guided by the following planning principles/objectives:-

### **(1) Trust**

The overriding objective is to establish a relationship of trust between Pinewood and the community.

### **(2) A dynamic process**

The process should be reframed as a 'live conversation'. This would be a dynamic route for conversation that establishes a working relationship rather than set piece, over formalised meetings. An entirely different approach/process would be needed to achieve this. It requires new thinking, new attitudes and some new people.

### **(3) A constituency of the wider community beyond political structures**

Pinewood wants and needs to connect with the wider/widest local community and relevant local stakeholders. The key is to achieve maximum representativeness. Currently there is insufficient representation from the whole community.

### **(4) Achieving best development and operation**



The strategic output of a new liaison should be the highest achievable standards of development and operation. This will require genuine collaboration with all contributors accepting that the studios will continue in operation and grow in accordance with planning permissions granted. The engagement activity is not a forum to process or legitimise objection. This does not exclude a role of resolving problems and complaints, which would be critical, but it is not an activity/process for resisting the operation or expansion of the studios. This has other routes for those who wish to make that case.

**(5) Sponsored by Pinewood with shared leadership**

The responsibility for establishing the liaison activity should be with Pinewood as would be its continuing operation. However, to succeed, the leadership should be seen to be shared. The shape of the liaison activity should be led/initiated by Pinewood but refined and developed by a leadership group.

**(6) Values: courtesy, respect, honesty and integrity in all dealings**

The liaison activity should be made subject to a behaviour code that requires high standards of courtesy and respect in all dealings. This is not always being achieved by the current Pinewood CLG.

**(7) Pinewood's commitment to be wholehearted**

Pinewood's commitment to a genuine community liaison operated under a new process and within the guidelines established will be wholehearted, providing employees time, funding and having an open-mind to develop solutions that meets the 'best' achievement and operation principle above. Achieving agreement would always be an ideal but it is unlikely to be achieved on all matters in practice. Where the requests/outcomes of the community cannot be agreed there should be full reasoning and explanation. In summary the new liaison is a genuine commitment not token.

**(8) A replacement for the current CLG**

The new approach would replace the CLG in order to provide clarity and maximise prospects of success.

2.3 A potential shape for the 'new conversation' applying the principles above is summarised below.

A. Set up/initiation



The set up phase would be critical to close down the past and give a vision for the future.

This phase would be Pinewood-led and aim to reach as much of the community as possible.

This would be achieved by the publication of a 'manifesto' starter which would set out the shape of the idea and seek community involvement and comment in its development and refinement.

The routes to reach people could be multi-stranded including:

- website
- social media
- virtual drop ins
- face to face meetings (at studios)
- community newsletter (paper)
- attending local groups

The purpose of this phase would be:

- to reach and 'sign up' as many local people and groups as possible
- to plant the new idea and gather further ideas and contributions
- identify a credible local leadership to join a small delivery group

This would be a critical phase and is likely to determine whether it will succeed ie. the demonstration of change and laying of foundations for the future.

Critically it should establish a credible leadership beyond the old way.

### **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 This new approach has already been agreed by the two Cabinet Members and is for information only.

### **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 This proposal has been agreed by the Corporate Director of Planning Growth and Sustainability and is within the planning framework. Due to resourcing issues

Democratic Services is also unable to continue to support the Pinewood CLG and therefore this new proposal also provides a good resourcing solution and is cost neutral to the Council.

## **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 There are no corporate implications. Liaison with Pinewood will continue but under a different format.

## **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

The views of local Members are as follows:-

Wendy Matthews

The Pinewood Liaison Group was originally set up by South Bucks when Pinewood East was being built to act as a liaison between the contractors, South Bucks and Bucks officers and the local community to keep them updated on progress and to address any issues that came up from the local residents. It was not a general community group and was therefore attended by representatives of the residents living close to the site and local members.

It was very effective in achieving what it set out to do but since the building works were completed there has been little for the group to discuss.

However, with the new phase of Pinewood construction starting up shortly it would be helpful if there was another such group set up with solely the aim of liaising between the contractors, officers and the local residents as before. It is clear that there is no legal requirement for this although I think the original group was as a result of a recommendation by the Planning Inspector and it would be down to Pinewood to facilitate it. I personally found it very helpful to understand the phasing of the work, when noisy work was going to take place, construction traffic routing agreements, when heavy loads were going to be delivered etc so that the community could be alerted.

Luisa Sullivan

I am aligned to the Pinewood proposals going forward.

Local Cllrs meet regularly with Pinewood executive and engage in comms and forward development discussions.

Pinewoods proposed commitment to continue digital dialogue and community liaison engagement directly will be beneficial and locally governed,

Paul Griffin

Firstly, I would like to say that in my opinion the relationship between Unitary and Parish Councillors at informal meetings held outside of the CLG are positive, enlightening and productive. I feel that if we could achieve that level of openness with a broader audience we would really be onto creating something useful.

The informal meetings have been an 'eye-opener' and a platform where I believe all parties have found synergy and agreement on both the smaller and more important aspects of how The Studios interact with the community. We do our best to take the positives from these sessions and communicate them more widely via social media and word-of-mouth. Making this process more robust and wider-reaching could only be a good thing for both The Studios and the community.

In fostering an atmosphere of openness and transparency it is easier for the difficult questions to be asked and responded to without the sometimes unfortunate 'them and us' formality of having 'Chaired' meetings. I welcome Andrew's initiative and look forward to my colleagues views and playing an active part in any transition that is agreed.

Trevor Egleton

My view is that it for Pinewood to decide how they wish to engage with the public and for officers to monitor how any planning conditions are implemented.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

Pinewood has made clear in its proposal that the effectiveness of the new engagement will be judged by the success of its communication in content, reach and degree of resolution (successful outcomes).

The suggested shape of this is:

- a Pinewood Community section on its website
- a dynamic social media stream (Twitter, Facebook)
- an 'open doors' initiative that invites the community into Pinewood for planned developments
- a real person face/contact who can respond on all matters quickly and effectively
- a series of 'meetings', virtual or real on a diary pattern and where necessary 'flash' meetings.

For example, in pilot year:

Leadership group – monthly

All community meetings – quarterly

One-off – as required

- a news hub/page (not a fixed newsletter publication)

## **8. Next steps and review**

- 8.1 Whatever liaison structure and process is agreed it should begin operation in a visible and hopefully effective way. This should be fully understood locally and give opportunity to 'get things right'. Adaptability should be built in.

## **9. Background papers**

- 9.1 Terms of reference of Pinewood CLG

