

Notes - Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on Wed 14th Dec 2016

Present: Sandra Gamble (Chair), Chris Thorne, Paul Rayner, Su Newson, Mike Page, Steve Coxhead, Julia Ford.

Apologies: Eileen Hinton. James Miles Hobbs and Steve Barr had previously stepped down. No other apologies received.

Minutes of meeting on 21st June 2016 were agreed and signed.

The three recommendations from that meeting were considered and adopted at the full Parish Council meeting on 7th July 2016.

Chairman's update

Chris Thorne's (Core Group) report "Issues affecting the way forward" highlighted that the NP is now entering its fifth year, several main members of the core group have left and more volunteers with specific skills set are urgently needed with a commitment for probably the next two years. Technical work including applying for a grant for the required SEA report by a consultant, organisational work for printing leaflets, arranging meetings, collating results and attending any Enquiry, all before the referendum. The community have been consulted and given their views but there are still more processes to go through to get the plan through to the referendum stage.

SG said we have been so very fortunate to have had both Peter Baxter and Chris Thorne to do so much of the work to date, and it was important that we demonstrate that we have tried our best to get more volunteers to help in the final push to referendum. CT is willing to guide but is unable to commit as much time in the future.

The Core group had met in September with the owner of Site 7 to discuss the site and their views as to how it might be developed. The meeting was most satisfactory in that it was felt that there was a genuine wish on the part of Gaigers to develop the site in a manner which would meet the community's aspirations and the policy and brief agreed by the Parish Council. Gaigers did express concern that the Plan process was taking a considerable time.

Vicky Burvill our link has confirmed that Wiltshire Council are about to finalise a Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) for Consultation in January (now slipped to June 2017) and will also consider SHLAA sites and would allocate those suitable for housing – no comment if Site 7 is included. Also more detailed Regulation 14 consultations are required and a possible housing needs survey. The Core Group believes that the principal objectives of defining the housing growth levels and the site allocation preferred by our community have been achieved. There is also the further issue from the recent High Court case brought by a developer in Sussex which found the Henfield Plan to be deficient on four grounds and quashed it resulting in case law that has wide implications for other NPs. As a result, Urchfont has been required to prepare another piece of work for their own consultation.

SG has spoken with Market Lavington who haven't yet been asked to do a SEA, although WC instructed them to undertake two housing surveys.

Discussions by the meeting then took place on the Core Group's recommendation that the Parish Council be advised of its serious concerns about the ability to progress the Plan to its conclusion unless further volunteers with appropriate skills and time commitment came forward. Potential implications (e.g. PC reputational, financial and/or legal impact; community consultation influence (if any) on planners, site 7 owner and other landowners/developers; value of community views without a plan) should the Plan not progress were raised by members and would need early consideration regarding handling. However, it was agreed to recommend that every effort be first made to advertise immediately and widely for new suitable volunteer Steering Group recruits to enable continuation of the plan process.

Discussions about possible alternatives also took place by the Steering Group e.g. could the Plan as it stands (i.e. Community decided on small boundary changes and Site 7 for development) be able to be used as a "Village Plan" in the future? To produce such a document could be done by addition to the first Draft Plan of the results of the consultation and subsequent papers, prepared and recommended by the Steering Group and adopted by the Parish Council, but this would have no legal basis and other landowners or developers might not agree this was a fair process.

It was agreed, as a second - pronged approach, that the Core Group's recommendation to advise Wiltshire Council of the concerns and seek their support for the community's already expressed views (as well as advising the owner of site 7 of all recommendations) be adopted as recommendations to the Parish Council. CT and SG would ask Vicky Burvill for a meeting as soon as possible in January to flag up our concerns so we can find the best outcome for our Plan and our community.

The situation overall must be well managed and correct communication will be very important.

Recommendations

1. To advise WLPC that the Steering Group has serious concerns about its ability to progress the plan to its conclusion unless further volunteers are to come forward with appropriate skills and time to make a commitment to finalise the Plan. Efforts should be made to advertise widely as soon as possible for volunteers with relevant skills (a skills set will be prepared) and personal time to commit.
2. To advise Wiltshire Council of above concerns and seek their support for the Community's views as expressed in the draft Plan, community consultation and approved papers.
3. To advise the owners of Plan Site 7 in the same terms.

JCF

16/12/2016

Vs4

Core Group "Issues affecting the way forward" report attached.