

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW STEERING GROUP (NPRSG)

MINUTES OF MEETING

MONDAY 4th MAY 2020

By Zoom due to Coronavirus

IN ATTENDANCE: Parish Council

Sheena Overington (SO), Andrew Jackson (AJ), Steve Rollinson (SR)
Louise Davies (LD)

Community Members

Keith Charman (KC), Jill Sutcliffe (JS)

SO opened the meeting at 7.00 pm.

1. **Apologies:** All present.
2. **Declaration of Interests:** There was no change to the interests previously declared and recorded.
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2020 were approved as an accurate record.
4. **Local Plan Update:** Questions had now been forwarded to Andrew Frost (CDC Director Planning and Environment) but no response to date.
5. **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** AECOM advised that the next stage was to consider 'reasonable alternatives'. There was possibly scope to also undertake some work to support the site selection process, and the development of alternative strategies. However, to effectively do this, AECOM would need to have an idea of housing number. It was agreed that with the Local Plan delay, it was not possible to confirm the housing allocation number at the present time, so the next stage would need to go on hold. **Action: LD**
JS had recently attended a Westminster Forum webinar organised by Cornerstone Lawyers which was discussing the Planning Whitepaper to December 2023. It provided some useful information; she would circulate the key features and relevant information when the meeting papers had been released. **Action: JS**
6. **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA):** As agreed at the last meeting, the assessment by AECOM had now been paused pending confirmation of the housing allocation number and sites. LD advised that depending on the length of the delay, it might be necessary to re-apply for this support package.

7. **Site Selection:**

a. **Public Consultation Report:**

Site Selection Consultation Report: The completed report was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the percentages were rounded down. The content and layout were approved by all.

Site Selection Consultation Executive Summary Report: Circulated in advance of the meeting. A few comments were noted relating to terminology used to ensure consistency and amendments required to explanations. AJ commented that the conclusion could be expanded further to include other variables; agreed. AJ to prepare for inclusion in the report and SO to alter wording of responses as agreed. Report to be approved at the next meeting. **Action: AJ/SO**

SO provided details of the variables that would potentially influence the selection process, advising that this information was required before the process could be progressed to further consultation. This information would be detailed in the main 'Consultation Report' to show the evidence and decision trail for the selection process.

JS thanked LD for the Key Documents report which was helpful.

b. **Access Assessment:** Laurence Shaw Associates had been engaged; the report had been delayed by Coronavirus but was expected soon. KC advised that he was available to meet if required.

8. **Local Green Gaps:**

Local Assessment: The draft document had been circulated for comment. JS had provided some slight re-wording with reference to the NPPF which was noted. The format for the individual site assessments was approved; SO/LD would update the document with inclusion of the remaining gap information for approval at the next meeting. **Action: SO/LS**

Gap Definition: A map was displayed which showed the existing 'bow tie' gaps and a proposal to define that gaps using existing field/property boundaries to give clarity; each gap was considered and agreed. In addition, it was agreed that the northern field for Songhurst Meadow should be included in the Park Gap, having road frontage and being adjacent to the new development. To avoid any confusion and for continuity, it was agreed that the gaps and policy should be referred to as Local Green Gaps. Map to be updated. **Action: LD**

It was also agreed that a glossary should be compiled to give clarity. **Action: LD**

9. **Policy Amendments (Community Questionnaire):** Having reviewed the results in detail, SO advised that there was sufficient evidence for policy amendment/new policies. She was currently in the process of picking up this work and would circulate an update for future discussion. **Action: SO**

JS advised that the Parishes Wildlife Group was due to undertake a map survey to distinguish wildlife and botanical species in the gaps; unfortunately, now delayed due to Coronavirus. The Sussex Biodiversity Centre would be providing an updated desktop biodiversity report to aid this survey which she would forward to support the NP. However, this was a generic study and with biodiversity and the gaps being an important element, JS suggested engaging an independent consultant to assess the authentic biodiversity in each gap. In terms of bats, JS advised that they used the hedges as roads and then foraged over fields. With the proximity of The Mens and Ebernoe Common, it was likely that European protected species did use the village and as such, it was important to identify and acknowledge within the NP. **Action: JS**

Whether there was a need for a further detailed report was briefly discussed. LD advised that grant funding was limited, and the remaining allocation would need to complete the NP process through to referendum. The need for further consultant reports/evidence and additional expenditure to be given consideration at a future meeting. **Action: Future Mtg**

10. Grant Funding:

- a. 2020/2021: Grant funding for this year had now opened. To be discussed following a response from Andrew Frost, CDC, as this would hopefully confirm the Local Plan timetable and provide guidance for the NP process. **Action: Future Mtg**

11. Any Other Business:

- a. Next Ad Vincula Article: It was agreed that there was no further update to provide at the present time.
- b. SO advised that the circumstances for one promoted site had now changed; she would follow up in due course. **Action: SO**

12. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 1st June 2020 at 7.00 pm, by Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.