

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting held on  
Thursday 23 January 2014 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra  
Park, Hassocks**

Present: Paul King (Chairman) Judith Foot  
Steven Ecroyd Peter Gibbons  
Bill Hatton Penny Wadsworth  
David Cumberland Geoff Copley

Assistant: Pat Elliott

Also present from item 6 were Dale Mayhew and Peter Young of Dowsett Mayhew Planning Partnership.

- 1. Apologies for Absence.** There were no apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest.** None.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 December 2013.** The minutes were taken as read, agreed by the meeting, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
- 4. Resolved that items 5 to 10 should be treated as confidential and the public be invited to withdraw.** There were no members of the public present.
- 5. Proposed scope of Town Planning Advice and fee proposal outlined in the letter from Dale Mayhew (DM) dated 9 January 2014 and agreement on approval and payment of invoices.** Paul King confirmed that he had emailed some amendments to DM's Letter of Engagement and Terms and that these had now been incorporated. It is agreed that an estimate is to be given for each piece of work; the estimates to be authorised by David Cumberland, Paul King and Linda Baker; and invoices to be approved by two of the above.

**Hassocks Amenity Association Involvement.** Following the meeting with members of the HAA Neighbourhood Plan Group on 19 December 2013, some members of the HPC NP Working Group had received a response from Roy Ticehurst stating that instead of joining the HPC group, HAA will offer pro bono consultancy. Paul King agreed to respond to Roy Ticehurst in order to clarify exactly what is proposed.

PK

## 6 to 9. Meeting with Dale Mayhew and Peter Young of Dowsett Mayhew

- It was confirmed that the letter of engagement is now ready to sign and that following receipt of this DM will provide a chronology of the steps involved in producing a NP, with indicative timeframe.

### **Evidence base for NP**

- DM reported that very few Neighbourhood Plans are at adoption stage and that the process is a constant learning curve. It is now evident that Examiners are looking carefully at the story behind the policies and that from the outset it is essential that policies are firmly rooted in a strong and credible evidence base with full documentary support.
- DM commented that evidence base is broken down into two basic elements: 'Empirical Data'- factual information about the parish that underpins the analysis and policies in the NP; and a 'Subjective Element'- what the local community and stakeholders believe is important and want, which is based on substantial consultation.
- Public consultation must include businesses, residents, community groups, landowners and developers (as well as statutory consultees) and must begin before the Scoping Report is submitted for consultation with MSDC and other statutory bodies.
- DM has the expertise to lead on collecting, analysing and presenting the empirical data for Hassocks. The subjective element will be provided by the results of the consultations carried out by HPC. These should be clearly recorded, analysed and fed into the NP drafting process, demonstrating that they have been appropriately considered and where relevant incorporated. To the extent that they are not, then there should be clear evidence and analysis to support this.
- DM asked the NPWG what consultation steps had been taken so far and Paul King reported that in May and June 2012 a questionnaire had been handed out at various public events, but the response had not been great and no further public consultation had been carried out since then, the NPWG prioritising other tasks for the time being. The original responses are to be sent to DM. In 2013 local planning applications have resulted in local people becoming more interested in the NP process and it is evident that there is not a far stronger community appetite to offer views and opinions on how Hassocks should change over the next 20 years and to actively contribute to the NP consultations. It is now the right time to pick up public consultation and that is the plan.

### **Scoping Report**

- DM commented that at present the Scoping Report requires further work, principally on the supporting evidence base, and should not be sent to MSDC until that is available. That means both collating and incorporating empirical data and picking up the earlier community consultation on people's vision and aspirations for Hassocks and re-engaging and consulting on this again, to provide the subjective element.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- DM commented that the Sustainability Appraisal, which will run in parallel with the NP throughout the process, should demonstrate that all reasonable options have been considered and tested at each stage and provide a reasoned analysis, supported by empirical data and subjective evidence, as to why particular options have been followed through into policies. The SA is a living document, being reviewed and amended continually until the Neighbourhood Plan is complete.

### **Options and consultation**

- As an example, DM advised that it is necessary to identify all potential sites for development before the public consultation on housing is carried out. It is vitally important to be open and transparent in consultation which should include landowners and developers, as well as residents and community groups. The consultation process must avoid any risk of showing favour to a particular viewpoint, i.e. development vs anti-development; one developer vs another developer. The 'long list' of potential sites should be put to public consultation, inviting comment on such factors as location and numbers, in order that a 'short list' can be created which will then form the basis of the NP, and stand up to Sustainability Appraisal.
- It was agreed that the Parking Survey is an excellent example of the sort of consultation required and it, itself, can be used as part of the evidence base. Similar surveys are needed as part of the consultation process e.g. on housing, social issues, economic activity and countryside/environment, some of which could be combined. DM recommended that in his experience housing generated most interest and was worthy of a standalone exercise, whereas the others might be combined into a single consultation process. He also commented that the Village Design Statement could form part of the NP's policies relating to housing.

- Geoff Copley volunteered his services to create the questionnaires and DM can provide suitable examples based on other NPs.

GC

### Designation

- The designation area for the NP has been agreed by MSDC, but we need to double check that the SDNP agreement. DM agreed to find this out and resolve it.

DM

### Timing of NP process

- DM and PY commented that past experience shows that the whole NP project is likely to take 18 months to 2 years, from initial designation to passing at referendum. HPC is past the initial designation stage and into the next stage of initial consultation (albeit that it has already made progress towards elements required at later stages, which now need backfilling to support the evidence base). In any event HPC is realistically looking at completion, assuming no significant problems and impediments, in late 2015/early 2016 at the earliest.

### Role of Dowsett Mayhew

- DM will provide technical guidance and support, e.g. pulling the evidence base together, and checking it.
- The Working Group will carry out public consultation.
- As an immediate next step, DM will raise a set of questions asking for information from the working group and when this has been provided, DM will review and recommend the next steps and approximate chronology of what should happen and costs, including statutory periods for consultation.
- In future, either Dale Mayhew or Peter Young will attend meetings of the NP Working Group although past experience has shown that it is unlikely they will need to attend every meeting.
- It was agreed that for ease of convenience all communication between DM and the NP Working Group will be with Paul King, David Cumberland and Linda Baker, who will pass on to other members (unless concerning mundane matters).

DM

**10. Co-option of others to the Working Group.** It was noted that one member of the public had recently volunteered to join the NPWG to assist and that the Clerk and Paul King had replied, explaining how this would work. They have yet to have a response as to whether he is still interested and as such his nomination was not considered at the meeting. One other person is to be contacted again to see if she remains interested in joining.

**11. Date of Next Meeting.** 27 February 2014 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

Chairman..... Date.....