

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting held on 26 February 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Present: Paul King (Chairman) Ian Credland  
Steven Ecroyd Frances Gaudencio  
Peter Gibbons Virginia Pullan  
Bill Hatton Adrian Batchelor  
Penny Wadsworth (for items 1-12)  
Georgia Cheshire (for items 4-15)

In attendance: Dale Mayhew, DowsettMayhew, Sue Hatton

Clerk: Linda Baker

Also present were four members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from David Cumberland, Judith Foot, Geoff Copley, and Justine Fisher.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** Ian Credland declared an interest in Ham Fields, Frances Gaudencio, Land East of Ockley Lane, Peter Gibbons, Land North of Clayton Mills, Virginia Pullan, land at Pattendens, and Adrian Batchelor, Land South of Dale Avenue.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2015.** The minutes were taken as read, agreed by the meeting, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
4. **30/31 January 2015, Public Consultation Event:**
  - a) **Feedback.** The events had been well attended and in general the feedback had been positive.
  - b) **Learning Points.** The learning points from the event were:
    - to plan for greater numbers, there had been insufficient documentation for the event for the number of attendees
    - if tasks were assigned to group members, they should have the authority to take decisions and not have to refer back, which causes delays
    - the group needed to respond more fully to people who provided feedback
5. **Questionnaire and Other Responses.**
  - a) **Initial Analysis of Questionnaire Results.** 429 response forms had been completed and the figures for, against or neutral for the sites identified had been collated and an initial analysis had been circulated. Thanks were expressed to Tracy Bates for the work she

had done inputting the results, and to Geoff Copley for analysing them so quickly.

- b) To consider how Questionnaire Comments and Individual Responses would be dealt with.** It was suggested that a small group, drawn from the housing group, should consider, in consultation with Geoff Copley, how all the comments included in the questionnaires could be analysed. With regard to individual responses from landowners, stakeholders and residents, a holding letter had been sent indicating that a fuller response would be sent by 13 March 2015.

It was agreed that the Housing Workstream would consider what further responses were required, and would seek advice from Dale Mayhew before any responses were sent. Dale Mayhew advised that the site assessment methodology should be agreed and published so that it would be easier to respond to specific questions by referring to the agreed methodology on for example issues such as flooding.

It was agreed that it was not possible to deal with all the general comments which had been received, but that questions of fact or approaches from landowners or developers should be addressed individually.

Dale Mayhew would prepare a list of FAQs and answers which would be included on the HPC website under the Neighbourhood Plan section.

- 6. Parish Council Protocol on Meetings with Developers.** The Parish Council, at its meeting on 24 September 2013, had agreed a protocol for meetings with developers, which provided for all councillors to attend such meetings if they wished. This did not provide for developers to meet the NPWG which included members who were not parish councillors. There was no statutory procedure to cover meetings with developers, it was a matter for the parish council to decide how these meetings would be dealt with. It was suggested that the council should adopt the approach taken by Hurstpierpoint Parish Council where the Clerk met developers who wished to speak to the council, or the full Neighbourhood Plan group met developers if they wished to present to the group.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the council adopt two procedures, one to cover meetings between the council and landowners or developers, and one for meetings between developers or landowners and the NPWG. The two draft procedures are attached.

- 7. Housing Site Assessments and Housing Workstream.**

- a) Protocols for Councillors and NPWG Volunteers Involved in Site Selection.** Advice had been received from the MSDC Monitoring Officer and Solicitor that councillor and non-councillor members of the NPWG with a prejudicial interest should not take part in the site selection process to avoid any conflict of interest

and to ensure that the council maintains proper standards of conduct. In discussion it was suggested by some members that providing the interest was disclosed and minuted, the process would be transparent, and it was also suggested that all members if they lived in the village would have some form of pecuniary interest wherever development took place. It was therefore suggested that members with a pecuniary interest should be involved in the site selection process, and that a blanket dispensation could be issued. The majority view of the committee was to recommend to full council that a dispensation should be granted and the mechanism for doing this should be investigated. The Clerk would take further advice from the MSDC Monitoring Officer and a recommendation would be made to the parish council based on his advice.

Dale Mayhew commented that, in his opinion the site selection process had not yet started since the activities so far had been the factual gathering of data rather than evaluation. He also commented that given that full council would make the final site selection decisions, this created a distance from the selection activity in the NPWG offering independent scrutiny and evaluation of the selection recommendations, particularly if members with a prejudicial interest remained involved.

- b) Method of Working with the Parish Office, Resources and Budgetary Implications.** The staff in the parish office had limited time to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan in addition to the normal work of the parish council, so there needed to be a balance between the work carried out by NPWG members and the tasks allotted to the parish office. In terms of expenditure, it had been agreed that the Parish Council Chairman and the Chair of the NPWG would give prior approval to any expenditure, and it had been agreed that overtime could be funded if staff were available to do it.
- c) Site Selection Process.** Dale Mayhew advised that it was necessary to agree a methodology that was robust and defensible, and to establish whether the sites selected were available for development. The NPWG could call for sites, but it was not necessary to seek out owners if they did not put their sites forward. It was sensible to have more sites included in the assessment than were required so that sites could be assessed against reasonable alternatives. There was a need to engage with developers before the site selection so that everyone had an equal opportunity to put forward proposals for their sites.
- d) Report from the Housing Workstream.** The consultation responses would be analysed. The housing chapter was being drafted, and similar policies to those used by Hurstpierpoint would be developed for affordable housing, design, layout, environmental

considerations etc. Dale Mayhew would review the final list of policy areas which would need to be tested against the Sustainability Appraisal.

**8. Other Topic Workstreams.**

**a) Membership and Working Protocols.**

The Workstream leaders were as follows:

Housing: Bill Hatton

Transport: Geoff Copley

Economic Development: Frances Gaudencio

Amenities: Paul King

Environment: Virginia Pullan.

It was agreed that each workstream leader would provide a briefing paper on the work of their workstream for each NPWG meeting, to be circulated with the agenda.

**b) To Agree a Method of Working with HPC Office and Protocol for External Liaison.** This was not discussed.

**9. Report from Topic Workstream Drivers.**

**a) Confirmation of Membership.** Ian Credland had circulated an email with the group membership.

**b) Suggested Remit and Planned Approach to Take Forward the Workstream.**

The Economic Development workstream had met earlier in the day and were going to conduct a survey of businesses and the self-employed in the village. Dale Mayhew advised looking at the existing evidence base, the 2011 census, employment data etc. It was important to identify what the NP was looking to achieve, growing the employment base, increasing opportunities for manufacturing, office space etc.

Transport; Geoff Copley had circulated a draft paper and a further meeting would be held in April 2015.

Environment. A meeting would be held next week.

Amenities. Paul King had written to WSCC to request a meeting on education provision.

It was agreed that the full NPWG should meet every two weeks and a list of additional meeting dates would be circulated.

**c) What Workstream Plans to Achieve in the Next Month.** As above.

**d) Specific Help and Pre-Approval of Expenditure required from Council.** To be discussed at a future meeting.

**10. Village Centre Redevelopment.** A report from the HAA had been circulated. It was agreed that the Housing Workstream would look at the proposals.

**11. Scoping Report.** Dale Mayhew reported that the Scoping Report was out to consultation with Statutory Bodies. He would forward a copy of the report to the parish office so that it could be put on the parish council website.

- 12. Letter from the Department for Communities and Local Government on Further Funding for Neighbourhood Plans.** The letter dated 10 February 2015 was noted and it was agreed that the details would be investigated to see if HPC could apply for a further grant.
- 13. Updated District Plan.** The letter dated 23 February 2015 from MSDC was noted. It was noted that on a percentage basis based on population, MSDC had included an indicative figure of 602 new dwellings for Hassocks in the plan period.
- 14. SDNP Dark Skies.** The parish Council's Planning Committee had asked the NPWG to consider the letter from the SDNP on Dark Skies. It was agreed that the Environment Workstream would look at this.
- 15. Date of Next Meeting.** 26 March 2015 at 7.30 pm.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.07 pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP 26 FEBRUARY 2015.  
PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS WITH DEVELOPERS.

When a request is received from a developer or landowner for a meeting with the parish council regarding a possible development site, the Clerk will inform the Chairman of the Parish Council. A meeting will be held between the Clerk and the developer/landowner. The meetings will be commercially confidential, and not open to councillors to attend. The Clerk will make a minute of the meetings, which will be confidential. The minutes will be circulated to councillors and the meetings will be reported to the NPWG. The Clerk will record the items of discussion, but will not comment on the proposals to the developer/landowner.

The fact of the meeting will be recorded in the minutes of the NPWG, but the content of the meetings will not be detailed in the minutes of the NPWG, or made public.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP, 26 FEBRUARY 2015

PROPOSED PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS OF PROMOTERS OF SITES OR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS WITH THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP.

As part of the process of site selection for the Neighbourhood plan both developers/promoters of sites and those stakeholders (i.e. community groups) opposed to development of a site will be given an opportunity to present their views to the NPWG

When a request for a meeting is received, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will be informed.

All stakeholders will be given the opportunity to address the NPWG

All members of the NPWG will be invited to attend the meeting.

Meetings will be closed (i.e not open to the public to attend) but minutes will be taken and will be a matter of public record and form part of the NP evidence base

A notice to this effect will be published on the PC website

Any stakeholder who has made "in confidence" presentations to any part of the PC will be invited to make a presentation to the NPWG

Such meetings to be at the reasonable convenience of the NPWG

The purpose of the meetings is to give stakeholders the opportunity to bring forward the potential benefits of their scheme, it is not for the stakeholder to question the NPWG as to their requirements

Presentations should be of no more than 10 minutes with a further 10 minutes for questions and answers