

Minutes of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting 21st July 2015

Attendees: Ian Credland (Chair); Nick Owens; Bill Hatton; Justine Fisher; Sue Hatton. Parish Councillors: Ian Weir and Leslie Campbell. Mid Sussex District Council Head of Planning Claire Tester; Dale Mayhew (Consultant); and Jane Bromley (Administration)

1. Apologies: Frances Gaudencio; Virginia Pullen; David Withycombe; Adrian Batchelor; Georgia Cheshire; Judith Foot; Geoff Copley; Victoria Standfast.
2. Declarations of Interest: Nick Owens sites 1, 2, 15 and 17. Ian Credland sites 1 & 2. Justine Fisher site 7 & 8.
3. During the meeting on 25th June 2015 the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Plan Pre Submission Draft Document was discussed and there was an action of writing to MSDC with comments on the plan.

Claire Tester from MSDC Head of Planning responded to that letter in person at the meeting as follows: CT noted that the letter from HPC covered three areas: a) those policies to be removed from the MSDC Plan; b) suggested changes to some of the MSDC Plan policies; and c) understanding of housing numbers. a) The policies to be removed from the MSDC Plan CT had no problem with the HPC Neighbourhood Plan saving these policies specifically KH4, 5, 6 and 7 which were former District Policies relating to Keymer and Hassocks.

b) With regard to the concern regarding the policies specifically DP10,11 and

12. These policies have been included in the draft and not changed for at least two years and CT felt it was a little late in the date to request policy changes.

IC explained that this area was recently highlighted given the appeal decision (Land at London Road, dated 2nd July 15) which commented on the Local Gap and the policy currently in force in the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 C3 (also C1 & C2). He felt that the MSDC Plan policy of anti-coalescence was too general, it left a burden of Parishes to produce sufficient and robust evidence to support their inclusion of Local Gaps in the Neighbourhood Plans.

CT commented that this was a result of Localism that it passed down the burden or responsibility to a lower level. She felt that the evidence need not be 'too high a bar' but sufficient to suggest the importance of the gap to the area. HNPWG Minutes 21st July 2015

IC asked what CT thought of the appeal decision?

CT felt the two areas for dismissal were both areas to affect allocation of sites within the Neighbourhood Plan. The presence of the Local Gap may preclude sites from the west side of the village and was not possible to overcome in respect of diminution. The air quality issue at Stonepound is an area that cannot be quantified with regard to new developments and therefore the HNPWG were within their rights to use that as a reason that a site may not be deliverable, although this might change subject to new evidence.

IW asked when the HNP site selection would have an impact on planning decisions.

CT confirmed that would be when the draft plan was undergoing public consultation under Reg. 14.

c) With regard to housing numbers varying between the HEDNA and MSDC Plan this could be explain by the fact that the MSDC Plan does not include housing figures for the National Park. The 630 housing need figure apportioned from the District wide figure also takes into account the housing need allocation of the South Downs National Park.

IC stated that the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (HNPWG) Housing Need figure would be produced using the working groups methodology.

CT highlighted the fact that this was an area commented upon by inspectors. The mathematical figure apportioned for Hassocks should be the starting point to which HNPWG could then apply constraints from sound reasoning and evidence to reduce this figure to the level of need calculated by the group.

There was some discussion as to what would ensue should all parishes within their Neighbourhood Plans calculated a lower than apportioned need for their plans. Where would the shortfall come from? CT replied that this was unlikely but in that event MSDC would have to prepare a Small Scale Housing document and allocate numbers to Neighbourhood Plan areas itself which would override allocations set out in Neighbourhood Plans.

IW commented that it appeared there would be a lot of capacity in the first five years and would that create difficulty for later on and would phasing need to be applied.

CT replied that this was not the case District wide and that MSDC have only just been able to allocate the first five years supply. HNPWG Minutes 21st July 2015

CT reiterated that 1500 was the District wide need for housing from Neighbourhood Plans and that this was the position from June 2015 when the HEDNA was published taking into account prior commitments which meant planning applications which had succeeded by that time.

CT went on to explain that she felt it was important that all Parishes showed a united front with the District plan as everyone needed to establish the five year land supply as quickly as possible

BH confirmed that Hassocks, along with all Parishes, he suspected, wanted the District plan agreed but not at the expense of Hassocks Parish agreeing to numbers that were confusing and at odds with other reports.

IC advised that the deadline for responses to the District Plan was 24th July and there was now no time to alter the HPC comments on the Plan even if they wanted to. In his view the comments in the letter, previously sent, still stood.

IC informed CT that a meeting will be held in public to allocate sites on 22nd September 2015 and did CT know when the Shepherds Walk appeal was to be heard?

CT advised that it would not be before the September DPC (District Planning Committee).

IW asked whether regard would be taken to adjacent parishes Neighbourhood Plans when considering Local Gaps.

CT hoped that in producing Neighbourhood Plans adjoining parishes would have spoken to each other and matched their Gap Policies.

IC thanked CT for attending the HPCNPWG meeting.

IC confirmed he would write the constraints document and that Geoff Copley was refreshing the housing number document. ACTION 1. IC and GC

The minutes of 25th June 2015 would be recommended for approval at the meeting on 30th July 2015.

4. July Consultation Event. This event had been well attended and feedback had been given from over 1000 individuals. This was now being collated and would be available for reporting to the group at the end of the month.

LC asked why there had not been a formal Q & A sessions

IC advised that this was because the group had wanted to keep both sessions completely the same however informal questions had been raised but these had been dealt with. HNPWG Minutes 21st July 2015

NO asked what was the position with regard to availability of site 17?

IC confirmed that those who appeared to have authority had advised the group the site was available.

5. Achieving Time Frame

DM advised that three documents needed to be ready for the 22nd September site selection meeting, being: Methodology for Assessment of Site Suitability; Local Green Space Designation document; and Housing Needs Methodology document which would encompass completion of the PHLAA (Parish Housing Land Availability Assessment) and the sustainability report.

DM confirmed he would need to run a sustainability test for each site although this could also be done spatially i.e. between North and South of Village which would be simpler and he would probably carry out both tests.

He anticipated this would take between 5 and 6 weeks and he had the capacity to deliver these documents before the 22nd September and indeed before the deadline by which time the Parish Council would need to have the documents for review being 15th September. DM advised that his office would print the documents for the Parish Council Members. ACTION 2. DM These documents prepared the technical view for the Neighbourhood Plan and then it was up to the decision makers to take into account public view from the consultations.

IC advised due to his interest in two sites he would not be able to present the sites to the Parish Council and Bill Hatton had agreed to take on this task. The commentary needed to be prepared for each site together with that for housing numbers and green spaces allocation and IC took on this task ACTION 3. IC

There was some concern that 22nd September 2015 would be too soon to achieve all of this and should the date not be set back?

IC advised that even if the site selection does go ahead on 22nd September then the referendum was likely not to take place until Easter and any delays at this stage set that date back even further.

It was agreed to proceed with 22nd September for site selection but to review this date in line with the information being prepared over the summer. ACTION 4

IC confirmed that the site selection meeting was to take place at Downlands and that it needed to be made clear by the Chairman that there was no public participation. The documents before the Parish Council would not be presented in a power point presentation at the meeting but a map with site numbers would be displayed so the public could see which sites were being discussed. HNPWG Minutes 21st July 2015

IC further considered that the Chairman should explain the extreme importance of this event to the Parish Councillors and that they needed to be well prepared for the meeting and any comments that could be made to the Working Group before the meeting for clarification should be made to avoid unnecessary comments during the public meeting. ACTION 5. IW to discuss with Chairman.

6. Policy Options. The timetable for bringing forward policy options would be discussed at the informal meeting tomorrow 22nd July 2015.

7. Correspondence. IC advised that a large amount of correspondence had been received which had been circulated to the Working Group as had the replies.

8. Date for the next meeting 30th July 2015 7.30pm

ACTION POINTS:

- 1) IC to write the housing numbers constraints document and GC to refresh housing numbers calculations.
- 2) DM to print off the documents for the Public Meeting.
- 3) Commentary to be prepared for each site together with that for housing numbers and green spaces allocation. IC
- 4) The progress of preparing the documents and information for the 22nd September site selection meeting to be monitored to ensure the date does not need to be set back.
- 5) IW to discuss consultant procedure with the Chairman of the Parish Council.