

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**
on Thursday 14th March 2019 at 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Bill Hatton (Chair) (BH), Ian Weir (IW), Frances Gaudencio (FG), Nick Owens (NO), Mark Higgins (MH).

Co-opted Members: Virginia Pullen (VP)

Dowsett Mayhew Consultants: Dale Mayhew (DM)

DRAFT MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies received from David Withycombe (DW).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Declarations of Interest from Nick Owens (NO) and Virginia Pullen (VP) in respect of land in proximity to their residential properties.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on 29th November 2018 were considered, approved, and signed by the Chairman.

4. REPORTS

- 4.1 DM circulated the paper summarising the feedback received from local residents, stakeholders and interested parties to the statutory consultation of the Regulation 14 Pre-submission Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan that took place January - February 2019.
- 4.2 DM explained that the summary of comments had been subdivided into four categories, for the ease of Members of the Working Group to review. These were stakeholders/general comments; comments by agents/landowners in respect of the proposed designation of land as Local Green Space; statutory/local Government feedback, including Mid Sussex District Council; and comments by landowners, developers and their agents.
- 4.3 DM noted that in total some 63 responses had been received to the consultation. A little over half supported the Plan, many specifically noted their support for the inclusion of land at Friars Oak Fields as a Local Green Space.

LOCAL GAP

- 4.4 DM summarised the paper that had been circulated to Members in relation to Policy 1: Local Gap. This set out the background to the identification of land in the parish as a Local Gap, and the associated approach to development in such areas as detailed in Policy 1.

The paper noted the feedback that had been received from statutory bodies and interested third parties, and specifically from MSDC. They recommended further assessment be carried out in respect of the extent of the gap and the contribution of areas to the purpose of the policy.

- 4.5 The paper set out that in light of this feedback it was recommended that a review of the Local Gap policy be undertaken in accordance with the scope identified in the paper. It was proposed that upon completion of this work a further paper be presented to Members of the Working Group to consider any changes to Policy 1 and its physical extent, as part of the preparation of the Regulation 16 Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.6 BH set out that he had discussed the proposal to undertake the review work with DW and VP, given their qualification as Landscape Architects, and their role in preparation of background papers that supported the gap policy. He confirmed that they were able and willing to undertake this further role.
- 4.7 IW noted that the policy was already supported by a background paper that set out reasoning for the policy. However, he noted the comments from MSDC, and in light of this, supported the recommendation to undertake further work.
- 4.8 BH proposed the further work be undertaken as set out in the background paper and this was seconded by IW. All voted in favour.

LOCAL GREEN SPACE

- 4.9 DM summarised the paper that had been circulated to Members in relation to Policy 2: Local Green Spaces. The paper set out the background to the inclusion of the designation of eight areas within the parish as Local Green Space as detailed in Policy 2 of the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan. The paper noted the feedback that had been received from a number of statutory bodies and interested third parties and specifically from MSDC. They do not consider the background paper that supports the policy to have sufficiently demonstrated why LGS1, LGS2 and LGS4 satisfy the tests for designation as an LGS as set out in the NPPF and NPPG.
- 4.10 The paper sets out that in light of this feedback, it was recommended that a review of the Local Green Space designation policy be undertaken in accordance with the scope identified in the paper. It was proposed that upon completion of this work a further paper be presented to Members of the Working Group to consider any changes to Policy 2, the number of Local Green Spaces and their physical extent as part of the preparation of the Regulation 16 Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.11 NO set out his view that the designation of LGS is an important component of the Neighbourhood Plan and has been positively supported by a number of local residents throughout the Plan preparation process. Given this, and in light of the feedback received from MSDC, NO supported the recommendation to undertake further appraisal work.
- 4.12 BH proposed the recommendation, seconded by NO. All voted in favour.

COMMENTS OF MSDC – POLICY 7: DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

- 4.13 The feedback of MSDC in relation to Policy 7: Development in Conservation Areas was noted.
- 4.14 Members resolved that the policy be amended in accordance with the recommendations of MSDC.

COMMENTS OF MSDC – POLICY 15: HASSOCKS GOLF CLUB

- 4.15 The comments and feedback of MSDC in relation to Policy 15: Hassocks Golf Club were noted. In particular that the intention of the policy was to refer to prohibition of residential development not extending into the surrounding Local Gap.
- 4.16 Discussion took place regarding the current wording of the policy, and in particular noting that the first line of the policy specifically notes that the wording and subsequent criteria relate to residential development proposals.
- 4.17 Notwithstanding this, Members agreed to consider clarification of the wording of Policy 15 to address the comments of MSDC.

COMMENTS OF MSDC – POLICY 17: LAND WEST OF LONDON ROAD (SAXON MILLS)

- 4.18 The comments of MSDC were noted, and in particular their recommendation that the policy be deleted given that consent has been granted on the site and development is underway.
- 4.19 Discussion took place regarding the background to the decision to include Policy 17 in the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan (January 2019); in particular the history on this and other sites for initial grants of planning permission for residential development to be followed by subsequent applications for amendments and intensification of that scheme.
- 4.20 Notwithstanding this, and noting that development is now underway, Members resolved to agree to delete the policy. It was agreed that the Plan should retain amended text that relates to the land allocation, in the interest of completeness.
- 4.21 As part of this discussion, consideration was given to the designation of land around the development as open space (Policy 10).
- 4.22 Members questioned whether the description of both the Policy 17 development site and Policy 10(b) open space site should be referred to as 'land at Ham Fields' or an alternative, including 'Saxon Mills.'

COMMENTS OF MSDC – POLICY 18: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 4.23 The comments of MSDC were noted, and in particular their recommended changes to the wording of the policy.
- 4.24 Members considered the merits of this. Discussion took place regarding the background to the wording of the policy as set out in the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.25 FG set out the long held aspiration for the policy to support the delivery of affordable housing for existing residents of the parish, and those who have a local connection to the parish. She expressed concern at MSDC's recommendation for change to the fourth criterion of the policy.
- 4.26 BH expressed sympathy with the views of FG, but noted the conflict this would have with the higher tier policy of exempting affordable housing associated with large new residential developments (250 homes or more) from the requirement to give preference to a local connection to applicants for affordable housing. BH considered it would be difficult to challenge this position as it was an expression of higher tier, adopted policy.
- 4.27 NO expressed sympathy with FG, but reluctantly agreed it would be necessary to accept the recommendations of MSDC. Members agreed to amend the policy in accordance with MSDC's recommendations.

COMMENTS OF SDNPA

- 4.28 The comments of the SDNPA were noted, together with the verbal update of DM in particular, the receipt of email confirmation that a number of the comments originally made by the SDNPA had been rescinded. DM noted that the email update would need to be included within the Consultation Statement that would accompany the Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.29 In light of the email, it was noted that the SDNPA no longer requested changes to Policy 1: Local Gap.
- 4.30 Consideration was given to the SDNPA's comments in relation to Aim 5.
- 4.31 NO noted that Aim 5 was not intended to solely relate to land that fell within those parts of the parish that were within the SDNPA.
- 4.32 IW noted the terms of paragraph 8.3 and 8.4 which supported Aim 5. He considered the nature of upgrade would appropriately need to be bespoke to any given circumstance. For example, the upgrade may be different within an urban area as compared to a rural area of the parish.
- 4.33 BH recommended that the wording of Aim 5(2) be amended to note that the upgrade was intended to be a reference to 'physical' changes rather than any categorisation of the route.
- 4.34 BH set out his view that the wording of Aim 5(5) was acceptable; noting that it would be intended to be bespoke to each given circumstance and that this could be clarified further through amendments to text in paragraph 8.3 and 8.4, rather than a change to the policy.

COMMENTS OF WSCC

- 4.35 The comments of WSCC were noted.
- 4.36 Consideration was given to WSCC's comments in relation to Policy 13: Education Provision. FG considered that the request to endorse the provision of additional facilities should not be included within the policy. She drew reference to support offered for additional educational facilities is already addressed, and set out within Aim 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.37 The comments with respect to Policy 15: Hassocks Golf Club were noted. However, Members considered the wording of the Neighbourhood Plan should not be amended. Attention was drawn to the wording of Aim 5: Non-Car Routeways, which it was considered satisfactorily addressed this comment.
- 4.38 The comments in relation to Policy 16: Land to the North of Clayton Mills and Mackie Avenue were noted.
- 4.39 Members considered the merits of amending the policy in order to more clearly highlight the desire and benefits of improving non-car routes north and south of the proposed development site between Burgess Hill and Hassocks village. Members agreed to support amended wording.
- 4.40 Members also considered the merits of amended wording to support the provision of an east-west bridleway. In considering the necessity and relationship of this enhancement in relation to the proposed development, it was considered that this change was not justified.
- 4.41 The comments in relation to Aim 7: Traffic and Accessibility were noted, in particular with reference to the Aim being 'less specific.'

- 4.42 Members considered the merit of this approach. It was resolved that Members felt it was important that Aim 7 retained the specific detail of transport works that were to be supported, in order to maximise the prospects of such changes being identified and brought forward. It was considered particularly important in light of the significant housing developments which Members felt would impose additional burdens/demands on junctions that were already of concern.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY - SHELAA SITES

- 4.43 Members noted Appendix 3 issued with the Agenda which identified the South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2016) Appendix D which detailed 'sites with potential by settlement' and those that fell within the parish of Hassocks.
- 4.44 BH set out his view that he considers a response should be issued to the SDNPA to note that the two sites within the document which were identified as having residential development potential, are not considered by the Parish Council to be appropriate for housing.
- 4.45 Queries were raised as to the relationship of the SHELAA document with the emerging South Downs Local Plan.
- 4.46 DM confirmed that the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage following hearings that have been undertaken by the Examiner, and that consultation was running on Made Modifications to the Plan up until Thursday 28th March 2019. In light of this, feedback by the Parish Council to the SHELAA would sit outside of the Local Plan process.
- 4.47 IW set out his concern at the potential visibility of residential development on the 'land at South Downs Farm.'
- 4.48 VP considered that the landscape sensitivity that has been attributed to each of the potential sites (medium sensitivity for land at South Downs Farm and medium-high sensitivity for Streamside) are contradictory. She considers that the land at South Downs Farm site is arguably more sensitive in landscape terms.
- 4.49 VP recommended that any feedback by the Parish Council with respect to the two sites should have regard to the Parish Housing Land Availability Assessment which considered the comparative merits of the sites in landscape sensitivity terms.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 5.1 None.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Provisional - Thursday 28th March 2019.