

Notes of PPC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the Village Hall
15th March 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Nick Beaumont (Joint Acting Chair and Chair for the meeting), Catherine Dampney, Simon Farmer, Catherine Jackson (Joint Acting Chair), Denise Miller, Paul Stevens (Secretary), Simon Ward.

Members of the Public: 6

1. Apologies for absence

Tony Hutson, Reg Stone, and Estelle Maisonnial (LDC).

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Previous minutes

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

4. Updates on sites

- NB provided an update of recent developments in the plan process, the most significant of which was the arrival of the Nolands proposal. This site had previously been considered but excluded from the plan on the basis of a lack of a suitable site access. That had now been resolved, and the developer had commenced informal discussion with LDC regarding the site. On that basis, the SG was obliged to reconsider the site.
- NB reported that the developers plan was now in its third iteration, and had been scaled down significantly from the initial proposal as LDC had advised that development east of the Sun Close site was outside the development boundary that LDC was working to.
- Despite being scaled down significantly, the site proposal was still for a significant number of units, which raised concerns with the SG as it clearly exceeded the policy of small scale developments (defined as 10-20 units), distributed around the village, in line with previously stated preferences. However, against other criteria, the site had merits.
- NB stated that this left the SG with the option to revert to the villagers with a short questionnaire to assess whether, with the passage of time, the preference for distributed small scale developments was still a key policy requirement. This was conditional on the advice of LDC, but Estelle had been unavailable due to holiday, so a meeting was scheduled for 08:00 tomorrow (Thursday 16th).
- If LDC advised that interim consultation was necessary, then the intention would be to have a very short and simple questionnaire inserted into the Parish magazine. However, NB emphasised that this may not be required.
- In addition to the Nolands issue, the Newick decision had been overturned on the 14th March, but that did not mean the end of the matter, and advice would

be sought from LDC on any implications for the Plumpton plan.

- To further complicate matters, an appeal in Wivelsfield for a developer to create a 95-unit site had been declined. PS noted that the judgement was extremely long, and required LDC consideration as the developer's case included a challenge on the viability of LDCs 5 year land supply. Again, advice from Estelle would be taken at tomorrow's meeting with her,
- In view of the above, NB advised that the next two agenda items would be skipped, but an update would be included in the Parish magazine.

5. Site assessment and SEA review - progress

- This agenda item was considered moot given the meeting with LDC the following morning.

6. Project Plan status and update for Residents

- This agenda item was considered moot given the meeting with LDC the following morning.

7. Questions from members of the Public

- It was requested to confirm the number of houses proposed for the Nolands site. NB confirmed that the latest figure was 50.
- The status of the Site Assessment was queried, in particular whether they had been updated in line with all consultation feedback. NB confirmed that was the case, and they would be published as soon as possible. NB stated that LDC was operating to planning best practices and wanted to maintain development boundaries to all sides of the village. The sites to the south were notionally outside that boundary, but one had now been withdrawn, and the racecourse was being considered as a reserve on the basis of assisting a significant local business, and possible additional amenities for the village. The northern sites were not considered as sustainable as the central sites, and maintenance of the 'green gap' had been advised. CJ confirmed that the current position had meant that the draft plan had to be revised.
- Late inclusion of the racecourse in the plan was questioned. SF pointed out that whilst it may have been a late arrival, details of the site had been part of the consultation exercise.
- The form of the questionnaire was queried, especially given concerns over one aspect of the original exercise that was regarded as leading. SF stated that in light of the current position that question was no longer relevant, and therefore the issue had gone away. NB re-emphasised that the questionnaire might not even be necessary. PS stated that a core principle would be to keep it short, clear and objective, and ensure a level playing field. NB said that the core issue would be to ascertain whether the strong preference for smaller scale developments still prevailed, but any decision on this would need to be mindful of the implications to other sustainable central sites if Nolands was permitted to develop to a number in excess of that discussed with the previous sites.

- The issue of the purpose of a reserve site was raised, particularly in relation to the racecourse site. PS noted that the logical purpose would be to substitute for a primary site in the event that it could not be developed, but that LDC should confirm.

8. AOB

- None

9. Dates of future meetings

18th April, Village Hall.

Meeting closed 20:10.