

Notes of PPC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the Village Hall  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 7.30pm

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

**Members of the Public: 4**

**1. Apologies for absence**

Reg Stone, and Estelle Maisonnial (LDC).

**2. Declaration of interests**

None.

**3. Previous minutes**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

**4. Questions from members of the Public**

None.

**5. Updates on sites**

- NB provided a synopsis of an update provided to the Parish Council the day before:
- The consultation exercise had resulted in a lot of responses, from residents, developers, and the statutory bodies (such as LDC and the National Park). It had been necessary to carry out a robust review of the site assessments in order to respond thoroughly, and this has taken a significant time and effort, but should be completed by the end of February.
- More significantly, there had been an apparent change in the political environment regarding planning and housing supply, and this had been particularly evident in the court judgments such as that for Newick where LDC was forced to override the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and allocate an additional 50+ houses on what was regarded as a sustainable development site that had not been adopted in the Neighbourhood Plan. The conclusion from these judgments was that the Neighbourhood Plan does not overrule accepted planning policy.
- The implications for the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan was that the site assessments must be rigorous otherwise the risk was that sustainable sites not adopted in the plan were at risk of being developed anyway, and would not count to the parish target, resulting in potentially substantial additional development than intended. This was considered particularly likely for sites already considered as viable in the LDC strategic planning documents.
- In addition, one of the key plan sites (2.5, South East of the railway) had reluctantly withdrawn the site from consideration, and the other southern site

(2.1, racecourse) was currently not considered deliverable by LDC and therefore could not be included as a primary site within the Neighbourhood Plan.

- To further illustrate the dynamic nature of the process, a site (Nolands) that had originally been excluded from the plan on grounds of access had now contacted LDC as the access issues had been resolved. That site must therefore be re-considered, not least because it is in the SHLAA.
- LDC has communicated that in addition to the ~6000 houses required for the 2030 planning period, a further 200 had been requested. LDC was having difficulty allocated these to the usual urban centres of Lewes, Seaford, Newhaven and the like, and it was therefore considered likely that rural parishes would have to contribute and Plumpton was regarded as having capacity to deliver beyond its initial target. In this context, it was considered that over delivering on the Plumpton target in the Neighbourhood Plan may provide some degree of protection against wholesale development in the parish.
- NB concluded by saying that it was now apparent that the position of the Neighbourhood Plan in planning consideration had been significantly weakened, but that the view of the group was that it was still better to have a plan than not, and to include the preferences of residents wherever possible with the framework of modern planning principles.
- CJ raised one point of clarification on the Nolands site – it was necessary to re-assess, but that did not automatically mean that it would have to be included.
- SF also pointed out that the current draft plan already exceeded the formal requirement, albeit by a modest number of houses, and that there were plans to appeal against the Newick decision.

## **6. Site assessment and SEA review - progress**

- DM reported that with the exception of the re-assessment of the Nolands site, the exercise was largely complete and should be reviewed by the SG before month end.

## **7. Project Plan status and update for Residents**

- SF reported that the plan was highly dependent on whether the considerations discussed previously would necessitate a second Regulation 14 consultation.
- If it were, the current target of April for submission of the plan to LDC would slip by 3-4 months, which was regarded as very late and vulnerable to planning submissions in the interim.
- NB stated that the position on a second Regulation 14 consultation was far from clear, though Estelle had previously indicated that it might not be required.
- SF stated that the opinion of AIRS might be useful; NB confirmed that there was still budget available to facilitate that.

## **8. AOB**

- CJ noted that 2 pages had been allocated in the Parish Magazine to allow a more detailed feature on the Neighbourhood Plan, and that she would draft based on the update to the Parish Council.
- SW highlighted that the website would benefit from being updated, and that additional communication channels such as Twitter and Facebook should be considered. The meeting noted that not all residents had access to these channels, but that the paper-based distribution would continue regardless of use of electronic channels. SW would liaise with Louise regarding a new Twitter account.

## **9. Dates of future meetings**

15<sup>th</sup> March, Village Hall.

18<sup>th</sup> April, Village Hall.

Meeting closed 20:00