

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEETING

31 October 2013

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Present:

Phil Applin (Deputy Chairman)	Harry Nicholls
Tom Baxter	Richard Rose
David Bowie	Dave Savage
Carol Chollerton	John Scampion
Elizabeth Dixon	David Stephenson
Trevor Honychurch	Sarah Summers (Clerk)

One member of the Public was present

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1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Charles Bates, Andrew Dow, Peter Emmerson, Mark Haselden, Martyn Luscombe, Roger Matthews, Neil Pearce and Moira Tsolakis.

2) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013 were approved as a correct record.

3) Chairman's Report

The Deputy Chairman, Phil Applin, reported that since the last meeting:

- NP work in progress has mainly focused on infrastructure and the town centre.
- David Stephenson has been refining the format of the Neighbourhood Plan to make it clearer.
- Simon Purfield from SDC has now collated the comments from the consultation into thirty-two categories. These free form comments have concentrated on specific issues which appear to be visceral heartfelt concerns.
- David Stephenson is assessing these and linking them to the policies that appear in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that a summary statement would be prepared by the Management Group in order to update the website. Additionally it was considered that the actual results should also be published as soon as possible.

#### 4) Core Strategy/CIL

Phil read out an SDC press statement on the Lighthorne/Gaydon development. Alternative sites are under review and further consultation is necessary, all of which will result in a delay to the Core Strategy.

Although the article in 'Bridging the Gap' announced that the Neighbourhood Plan was on course and will proceed to referendum in the spring of 2014, without a Core Strategy in place, it was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot proceed.

A discussion ensued with various opinions being voiced that we should proceed regardless, but caution was advised by David Stephenson and Phil Applin. David cautioned that the Inspector would 'throw out' any Plan which didn't conform with its Core Strategy. It may be possible to conform with a Village Design Statement, but these are now outdated, and any resultant Plan would only have planning guidance status, as opposed to becoming planning policy.

It was felt advisable that the Management team prepares a statement in order to explain why the Neighbourhood Plan referendum is likely to be delayed, particularly as this sorry state of affairs was beyond our control. It was agreed that this will be discussed further when the Management team meet.

Concern was also raised that there was a credibility issue creeping in, especially as there has been no communication since the major consultation Open Days earlier in the year. It was felt that there should be constant communication through the website and the various associations, generally represented on the Steering Group. If there are delays, a positive approach would be to use the opportunity to communicate and test the Plan's policies, well before it reaches referendum stage.

David Bowie requested that a progress statement is issued in readiness for the Voice AGM on 11 November. Phil agreed to contact Neil Pearce to draw up an appropriate brief.

With regard to the relationship between CIL, S106, and S278 Phil advised that the date when further limitations on the use of pooled planning obligations will apply will be moved from April 2014 to April 2015.

On a positive note, the Core Strategy has fully adopted the strategy for the regeneration zones. This is a very encouraging result and a Press Release should be formulated to promote this achievement being as a direct result of the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 5) Work In Progress

### **Transport/Infrastructure**

Phil outlined findings from the Draft Transport Strategy. The complete report written by Kevin Bond forms part of these minutes and is circulated as **Appendix 'A'**.

It was agreed that the Steering Group should consider the report and an opportunity to debate the findings will be included on the agenda for the next Steering Group Meeting in November.

### **Town Centre**

John Scampion advised that an exercise needs to be done to bring the different sections of the Plan together, for there is definite overlap between the town centre and infrastructure which can be drawn from the findings of the Transport Group, parking being just one example.

A meeting is to be held next week to discuss access and moving around the town. Once that meeting has been held we should be able to finalise the document. Issues under review include:

- Shared space which is a critical part of the Plan – High Street, Wood Street, Sheep Street, Greenhill Street, Bridge Street;
- Specify and explain what we mean by shared space;
- The shopping offer should be a consolidation of existing shopping – high street retailers, independents with a concerted effort to improve Town Square;
- We should avoid a major new shopping site but as the Plan is set to span a twenty year period, we would be remiss if the document made no provision for an additional shopping site if it was warranted.
- Rother Triangle could be developed for shopping, a hotel, and a conference facility, should a need be determined.

Once the Plan has been finalised, a public exercise should follow in order to consult. We need to encapsulate all the other interests in the town, and identify any sticking points. There must be no surprises!

### **Housing Numbers**

At the last Steering Group Meeting, David Stephenson and Neil Pearce were charged with quantifying what level of development across the district will be required in order to reach the five year land supply.

David Stephenson tabled his findings and gave a verbal explanation at the meeting. His findings form part of these minutes and are circulated as **Appendix 'B'**.

David stressed that Stratford-upon-Avon is now experiencing, and can only expect further, massive increases in housing development in comparison to the rest of the District. This was never intended in previous drafts of the Local Plan (or Core Strategy) for the District. This unstructured and developer-driven housing development is undermining, and will further undermine our aspirations for the Neighbourhood Plan.

As reported in the 'Herald', Nadhim Zahawi MP is making public statements about developers 'rapaciously exploiting the planning system', though so far restricted to proposals in Welford and Tysoe.

Whilst the Steering Group is a-political and has correctly avoided politicising its activities and deliberations, the Group considered it time that our elected Westminster representative is alerted to what could be a far more serious problem for Stratford town itself, and to press for Government action to mitigate the worst effects of the consequences of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which they brought in.

### **Sustainability/Environmental Hub**

Tom Baxter gave a verbal presentation which included details on:

- 20% of car traffic between 8:00-9:00am is caused by the school run;
- Each car omits 20lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> per gallon of petrol;
- According to the World Health Authority, diesel engines are a major cause of cancer;
- A bus experiment in Wiltshire where you could ring a bus which came to your doorstep, could perhaps be expanded;
- There should be car pools and car sharing;
- The effect on traffic congestion is reduced by 17% if houses are built in close proximity;
- In London, 80,000 homes are empty.

Tom called for the Neighbourhood Plan to make a commitment to create an environmental hub and create a website where people can sign up and pledge that in order of priority they will:

- 1) Walk
- 2) Cycle
- 3) Take a bus
- 4) Take a train
- 5) Use a car as the last resort

In general the Steering Group felt committed to a sustainable approach and encouraged Tom to take the matter further and in particular liaise with Roger Matthews at Transition Stratford.

6) Updates from the Planning Consultant

Neil was absent from the meeting.

7) Public Participation

Mr Eric Brookes reiterated his offer to present his ideas to the Infrastructure Group. On behalf of this Group, Elizabeth Dixon agreed to meet Mr Brookes so that she can familiarize herself with his proposals in order for her to convey the findings at a forthcoming meeting.

Mr Brookes was thanked most sincerely for his interest, but was advised that the Group is no longer open to additional membership, as they are now trying to consolidate all their findings in order to complete the Infrastructure Plan.

8) Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9) To Note Date of Next Meeting

6:30pm on 28 November at the Town Hall.

*The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:56pm.*

**Action:**

Management Group/Neil Pearce

- Prepare statement explaining delay
- Publish statement and results of Open Day consultation
- Press Release – Core Strategy adopts regenerations zones
- Write to MP

**Attachments:**

Appendix 'A' – Transport Strategy – K Bond/E Dixon

Appendix 'B' – Housing Numbers – D Stephenson