



Steypning Parish Council,
The Steypning Centre,
Fletcher's Croft,
Steypning,
BN44 3XZ

13 June 2019

Dear John Fullbrook (Clerk to the Parish Council),

UPDATE ON THE STEYNING COMMUNITY PLAN

As you are aware, Squires Planning are instructed by Steypning Parish Council to assist the Steypning Community Plan (SCP) Steering Group with the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. We considered this an appropriate moment to update you on the current state of play and bring one matter to the attention of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood planning provides local communities an opportunity to shape development in the parish over the years to come.

Work is ongoing and has been progressing well thanks to the efforts of the volunteers on the Steering Group (and other sub-groups). The Steering Group are currently progressing the SCP on the basis of community feedback to date, the current intention is to address the following topic areas:

- Biodiversity
- Character & Design
- Climate Change
- Development Allocations (primarily to meet the identified housing need)
- Infrastructure
- Open Spaces & Local Green Spaces

A neighbourhood plan should be prepared by the local community and Squires Planning have been supporting the volunteers to progress the plan. However, we felt it important to highlight to the Parish Council that work has slowed on all parts of the plan, and that over the last month the volunteers involved are becoming disillusioned and disenfranchised with the process. We have observed that volunteers are increasingly uncertain of whether their efforts have the support of the Parish Council and aware that recent discussions are fuelling this dubiety.

As independent advisors to the Parish Council (& Steering Group) we have refrained from becoming involved in these discussions. Our involvement/instruction is to support the preparation of a robust neighbourhood plan in a timely manner. The SCP is currently working to a timeline which requires the Regulation 14 Consultation to occur in September 2019. Unless the current 'turbulence' is resolved very soon and volunteers are able to re-engage with the process we advise that this target may not be achievable.

We understand that the current upheaval may be centred around the question of whether the SCP should allocate sites for development. As you can see from the list above, site allocations only form one part of the SCP currently being progressed. Regarding sites, site promoters have presented their proposals at a public meeting and work is ongoing to assess the sites that have come forward. We consider it vital for a decision to be made on this point with haste to enable volunteers to reconnect with the process, resume efforts on all topic areas and avoid abortive work.

The Parish Council are the Relevant Authority with the responsibility for the preparation of the SCP. As such, any plan prepared by the Steering Group will in due course need to be approved by the Parish Council prior to consultation or submission. It is suggested that the Parish Council provide the Steering Group with clear instruction on whether the plan should, or should not, include development allocations.

Such an instruction will ensure work on the SCP can continue with the Steering Group and other volunteers knowing the scope that has the backing of the Parish Council. It will also ensure efforts are focussed avoiding potentially abortive work. Whatever the decision of the Parish Council regarding development allocations, Squires Planning will continue to work with all involved to deliver a robust plan the community can be proud of.

I hope that this letter will provide some focus for neighbourhood plan related discussions at the Parish Council. Should you or any Councillors have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Metcalfe

Director | MPlan MRTPI