

**MEETING OF THE STEYNING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (SNP) STEERING GROUP COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 29TH AUGUST 2019 AT 7.30PM IN THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Present:- Cllrs Paul Campbell (PC), Georgia Saunders (GS), and Trevor Cree (TC)

Members: - Sally Johnstone (SJ), Murray Van de Pol (MV)

Clerk: Evelyn Stanford

Parish Clerk: John Fullbrook

Consultant: Andrew Metcalf

Members of the Public: ? plus Cllrs ?

Meeting started at: 7.30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

At the start of the meeting Murray Van de Pol, Vice-chair, asked members of the committee to introduce themselves to the public.

1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Richard Bell (RB) and Paul Maidment (PM)

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest from the committee

3.0 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Rob Mathison – Is the steering group committee willing to underline the credibility of entire draft neighbourhood plan document by allowing the blatant misuse of the LGS designation process by seeking to designate private land as Sweetland, of which I am the owner, in attempt to subvert legitimate and emerging plans by the planning authorities which may or may not develop this site in the future. This is against specific guidelines which say the obvious interest must not be used in this way; can Cllr Campbell or another member of the committee explain that if this not the ploy of this nature, why after months and years of work on the SNP has this designation only been sought after the plan lost its chance in being instrumental in deciding on housing numbers and site allocation only a few weeks ago. Further more on the list of sites proposed, Sweetland in particular, stands out as an obvious anomaly and far from satisfying National Policy framework and criteria, it fails in most respects. I, my consultants and the option holder believe it will be rejected comprehensively, furthermore, since the LGS guidance states that landowners should be consulted at the earliest opportunity and the supposed ethos of the council and the committee is of transparency and engagement, would perhaps the chairman or Cllr Campbell explain why no-one has consulted me about this proposed designation, I think I am owed an apology, nor have any of the named people on the steering group accepted or asked for a site visit, in fact throughout the Neighbourhood Plan period no-one has ever been on this site with the exception of Russell Barnes, and in SWAB days, Nick Muggridge and Nick Mills arranged and came onto the site. People who would seem

involved don't want to survey this site looking out from Steyning, rather than being on it to see a very different picture because it suits their purpose, the assessment process is therefore inherently flawed at the start, I am asking and advising with immediate effect that the Sweetland site be deleted from the list of sites proposed for LGS designation in the draft local plan documents.

MV asked about the other owner of the site is in the same vein.

Richard Goring – I am at the stage we don't know about the LGS, certainly have had no engagement from the committee to engage our thoughts about the green space, as mentioned last week the whole point is to get away from particular interests and get a broader sense of the feeling of the whole of the community and it is actually this, the group that was made up of people either live within 50 metres of one of the sites, Baynards, who strongly against anything happening on that land, lots of impartiality going on, expressed again about the Parish Council decision made on 24th July which has given cause for concern that the wider community has become less involved than it should be.

MV at this point without responding I would like to put this into context as we are the Steering Group Committee for the Parish Council, there has been huge number of volunteers because of the workload and lack of progress, so all the evidence has been documented by volunteers not on this committee. I just wanted the public to know that the current committee is fragmented and most of the documents here tonight were not seen by the committee, certainly the LGS document needs to be looked at by the committee and discussed under the next agenda item, please don't think that this has been brewing for since the beginning because it certainly hasn't, we are talking about weeks.

Member of public – why is designation being sought now when we have been in this process for years, suddenly up it pops to be part of the council loss to HDC, stripped away the housing site numbers from the plan and lo and behold up pops a plan about LGS designation, its being misused.

PC it is an important point that LGS has always been part of SWAB plan also part of this plan, so it is not that it has suddenly appeared, what has been really unfortunate is the compression of the timescale which arose because of the letter from HDC of 13th March. That has concentrated everything down and has meant that the sort of engagement which was expected, has not taken place and for that reason, and that reason alone, the consultation with the landowners is necessarily going to have to take place during the consultation period. The points which both of you have made are matters which both the Steering committee and the council will have to take into account very carefully in the process of Regulation 14 consultation that is what it is there for, to consider representation and I agree that it is very unfortunate that we simply did not have the opportunity to discuss matters with the landowners in the timescale we were presented with. The point has been made that there has been no viewing of the green space from within but because there is no public access it would be improper to be assessing the site on the issue of beauty or anything else from a position that the public do not enjoy.

RM – one of the key criteria for the designation, the public have no real engagement with that site using it for the community, so basically the committee are falling down at the early stage about the criteria. You mention Green Spaces going back to SWAB ironically the point is in promotional time we stressed that public open space would be created if the development went ahead.

MV – I would like to apologise for not consulting with the landowners, the proposers who put forward those plans for development had been targeted for lack of green space, and we need to consider the process should be included in the plans. The criteria used is subjective and it the purpose of the Steering Group to consider that, there hasn't been time so basically propose that the plan gets put in, that would be a major consideration.

RM – is the committee really willing to undermine the creditability of the whole Neighbourhood Plan by voting for something that is flawed in very important aspects

Member of public – leaving out of site allocations seemed to forcing HDC to pick Glebe Farm, it precludes them selecting sites outside their jurisdiction, there is still three months to the deadline should the best use of that time to lobby proposals to HDC demanding more time and also indicate that they were prepared to go to the local ombudsman

TC – no point in going to HDC as they are very firm on the deadline

Member of public – if their time is unreasonable we can go beyond them

GS – there are issues within the Parish Council and issues with HDC's deadline but we can't blame HDC for imposing a deadline or the Parish Council for the vote that we take to enable a Neighbourhood Plan to be created by the end of November

Paul ? – majority of residents in Steyning expected the Neighbourhood Plan to be a opportunity for housing of some sort, if a plan could include housing with the sites that have been notified and valuated would the Consultant be able to provide a proper Neighbourhood Plan

AM – the issue with the timeline is six weeks is needed to allow consultation for Regulation 14, then a further number of weeks to take comments into account, the time is very tight to get plan in place to submit to HDC by the end of November, there are other things to be considered, if you bring housing there are additions requirements, a document called Strategist Environmental Appraisal has to be completed, the deadline is the deadline

Member of public – asked about the grant

AM – one of the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan in place is that the tax which comes with new builds, without the plan the Parish Council would receive 15% to spend on infrastructure, with the Neighbourhood Plan being one policy it would increase up to 25%, this was considered by the Parish Council. HDC will be looking at a number of options across their district to deliver their revised housing figure, whether this will be one or more sites in Steyning or could be none, is not at this point in time.

Public – why does it seem that there is a lot of focus on Glebe Farm.

AM – the landowner and promoter have been active in working out the plans, but the important thing is that the Parish Council have made the decision not to include housing so that a plan can be delivered by the deadline

Public – the important thing that is not what people wanted and has cost a lot of money

AM- that matter has to be taken up with the council

MV – asked for prices of consultation and what happens next to take us up to Regulation 15

AM – if the Steering Group approve the documents tonight, they will go forward to the Parish Council meeting on 2nd September to discuss and decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan can go out for Regulation 14 consultation, the document will be made public and consultation will last 6 weeks, during that period the public will be able to write in with their comments. The Steering Group will look at the comments and respond, where appropriate the plan will be updated to reflect the comments made, the Steering Group will then meet again to decide

whether to revise the plan or send it to the full Parish Council who will meet to decide whether it should be submitted.

TL – it is a community plan and there is section for LGS, there is a potentially Government issue due to the people involved in writing the LGS document having interests in various areas. It is also made clear at the presentation that unlikely that LGS would be granted for Sweetlands and Baynards, both those sites were excluded from the SWAB, yet to see any analysis which it was thought would be attached to this plan about how the destination was arrived at, so when this plan is discussed, it is not in the public interest to vote on it as a community plan.

MV – asked AM to comment on the Inspector's role on assessing the plan

AM – when the examination takes place to consider whether the plan meets the basic conditions that it does the Neighbourhood Plan conform with National Policies, there would then need to be a view as to whether to recommend that the LGS to be included in the plan meets the tests. The document which was considered is on the website, all the sites in LGS have assessed so the examiner will have to view whether the document is good enough for assessment.

Mr Fuggles – the Green Space application for Baynards was prepared in 2017 submitted to the South Downs NP, presentation made to the Inspector, the result was that it was thought to be a very sensitive site, the Parish Council were asked to consider a LGS application for that site.

MV – the South Downs NP are stakeholders, the LGS has been put together without consulting the NP, at meetings with them neither Baynards or Sweetlands were discussed as part of the LGS

Mr Fuggles – the SDNP required the council to consider the application for LGS

Member of public – understand that PC was aware of the letter from HDC in March which set out the time frame, also people need better to understand as to why after the Parish Council elections, there was a need to appoint new Neighbourhood Plan committee which wasted several weeks and then roughly the same people appointed to the committee with the addition of double the number of Parish Councillors which meant that they had their work cut out to meet the deadline for the Neighbourhood Plan.

PC – agreed that he knew about the letter and at meeting of the Steering Group committee was given to understand that some of the members were in discussion with HDC to deal with it and as far as he was concerned they had dealt with it. After the elections he stated that he had no idea that the letter was current, the understanding that the council had was that they were asked not to reappoint the committee, no-body told the council that this letter of the 16th March was outstanding. When the council delayed the appointment of the committee they did not know that the letter was still pertinent; the letter was following up a conference in January where there was one representative who did not report back to the previous council, the new council did not know about it until the 15th June after access to a site that this letter of the 13th March had not been responded by either the council or the Steering committee, two deadlines had expired for response and a new deadline of 1st July had been given to make the decision. The Steering committee met on the 1st July and voted to carry on with the Neighbourhood Plan including the housing development because it was understood that at time it was still possible for it to be done, it transpired that it was a Regulation 14 requirement that had to be satisfied by the autumn but it turned out to be Regulation 15, also on the 1st July the committee did not know that the grant application had failed, no-one had said that the strategic environment assessment appraisal had not been commissioned, on the 10th July when the consultant wrote to say that it was no longer possible to have a Neighbourhood Plan with a housing element included.

Member of public - the question still has not been answered as to why the old Steering Group committee was disbanded.

PC – when the Parish Council term of office ends all the committee are disbanded and then reformed, that includes the Steering Group as it is a council committee, not all Parish councils have committees, under SWAB it was not a committee as it refused to allow the public to attend any of its meetings. The Parish council set up the Steering Group committee to enable the public to attend the meetings.

SJ – the email received should have been a advisory one to tell the committee to carry on with what they were doing

MV – the result is that there has been upwards of eight weeks delay

RG – there were two options but I wasn't clear as to the options that the councillors were choosing could the consultant explain the situation and offer guidance

MV – there is a strategy to be met on the 30th November, understand the arguments about the housing allocations the maybe other options that should have been considered

AM – we are operating under the Parish council decision to exclude the housing from the plan and proceed with a pared down plan

RG – is there no advice from Steyning to HDC as where they would like the housing to go

AM - could there be a policy in the plan which says that there are preferred sites, but it would have to be carefully done to achieve that the plan does not include anything that will trigger the need for a strategic department assessment

4.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN DOCUMENT

4.1 To consider whether the Steering Group recommend to the Full Council that the draft plan and its associated evidence proceed to consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

MV – the plan is on the website, all the committee have read it and its associated documents, the committee were asked to give their views

SJ – not happy about passing the plan and would turn it down

GS - a lot of work has gone into the plan but there are issues with LGS so am torn about it

TC- huge amount of work in a very little timescale, concern about LGS, end of the day an Independent Examiner will be the one who will decide on the designation, it's a very comprehensive document which the residents have six weeks to give their feedback on

PC – asked everybody to read the documents, which area valuable on the website, they have been prepared with great care and under the auspices of the Consultant, the voting should be based on evidence, some may be tempted to vote against the LGS element because they don't like the evidence produced. Designation of LGS doesn't prevent building it just raises the bar higher, the MPF says there could be appropriate development on LGS. There also could be a misunderstanding about the effect of the Neighbourhood Plan, if the plan had gone ahead with housing it seems that it would likely to have been development on the three sites that were presented. The vital thing to bear in mind is that Neighbourhood Plan can only put forward a minimum number of houses not a maximum, the developers presented the site in the best way to sell that site to the community but when it comes to planning permission it is likely to be a higher

number houses, so whatever was voted on it was always like to be different when it reached the planning stage.

MV – RB and PM both expressed their views on the plan subject to the LGS being rational they would support it but feel as MV does that it has not been assessed properly. No chance to consider all the sites, so couldn't support the plan without discussing the LGS further, as the plan includes all these sites it has to be decided what to do next; so proposed that the committee voted on the plan with LGS omitted from it with a caveat that working party be formed to look properly at the LGS and sites
PC – it isn't open to this committee to exclude Green Spaces, the terms of reference state that this plan must include Green Space

JF – minutes of the full council 24th July 2019 where it is stated that Neighbourhood Palm Steering committee continue with the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan now excluding housing site allocation as follows; aimed at achieving the minimum necessary to have MP which qualifies the community to have the enhanced rate of ? but aiming to achieve as much as is practical and evidence based beyond the minimum, secondly, prioritising policies based on evidence that is complete by 2nd August in particular the Parish Council would like to see policies to, 1st LGS designations, character assessment to include village design code if possible and housing mix, no of bedroom per dwelling, lastly the authorisation is conditional on the NPSC remaining satisfied that it can submit the plan under Regulation 15 by 30th November, lastly, operating to financial controls and other procedures including its terms of reference which the responsible financial officer/clerk continues to be satisfied with

MV – the item we are trying to consider is whether Regulation 14, the draft plan is suitable in its current state or not, the proposal tonight is that it should not be submitted to council in its present state,

AM - LGS is the hot topic, if it does not go to the full council and more work is carried out on LGS, if that is to happen the plan would not be submitted to by the 30th November which will pose another problem, it is apparent that there is a lot of concern about LGS, logical thing would not to do the whole thing which would mean the plan would be lost and the sill, or consider the individual sites that are suggested for LGS rather than stopping the plan in its entirety

MV – it is an interesting concept but there hasn't been the time to consider LGS, there are other sites that aren't included so it's an impasse at this moment

GS- at what point would the cut-off date be today

AM – it is today, working backwards from the end of November if you squeeze it any more it will be unrealistic,

MV – if we can't take out the Green Spaces then we are not able to recommend the draft plan

AM- the council would like to see a policy relating to Green Space, but doesn't say has to, HDC will be doing their local plan review and the gift of where they allocate sites is theirs, so even if there is a policy in our plan which said it wanted to see developments spread out realistically any large scale development would come forward through a plan and allocation, it was questionable if another policy in our plan would influence any decision made by HDC, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development

plan which used to inform planning decisions, the policy in this document will not have any legal power over what HDC where to do in their next plan

MV – there is a consultation statement which is being prepared which is not included in this plan, this is an important document as it does set out the proceedings since January 2018 would it not make sense to have another supporting document

TC – there isn't time

GS – sure it could be within a day or so if it is important to the community plan with a bit of hard work

TC – there is six weeks of consultation which is when there will be feedback, there may be changes

AM – full council meeting on Monday 2nd September any supporting documents should go public tomorrow

PC – read the email from PM in which he gave his views where he would abstain from supporting the plan in its current form, without LGS he would support it; RB endorsed PM's views

MV – proposed the motion that we exclude LGS from the current Neighbourhood Plan

PC – before we vote can there be a discussion on what elements of the evidence of what is objected too

MV – LGS is the plan as it is a highly contentious and important part of the plan so can we vote on keeping it in when we haven't looked at the site selection process, considering the plan is hinged on a policy which prohibits further housing or makes it more difficult to add housing within the South Downs National Park in particular it should be kept in abeyance

AM – guidance was set up with regard to consulting landowners, the land does not have to be public ownership but the Parish Council or relevant body should contact the landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as LGS, landowners will have an opportunity to make representation in respect of proposals in a draft plan. On the point of not being contacted so far, condensed timeline so this is the first time that the LGS document has been completed, so if the Steering Group were minded to approve the plan as it stands including the LGS, the Parish Clerk will send out letters to all landowners to advising them that their sites have been considered by the Steering Group and should set out as a proposal for designation for LGS. That will be the first time that the Steering Group will have made any type of formal decision to actually designate sites as LGS. The guidance says that there is opportunity for the landowners to make representation in respect of the proposals in the draft plan, it doesn't say at what point the representation will take place it also says it is perfectly reasonable that the opportunity is during the Regulation 14 consultation. The areas that were looked into have come from previous consultation statement, so topics were derived from previous consultation and the themes that came out of that, the vision statement identified key areas.

RM – question of designation of LGS hasn't emerged at all till after the council lost its ability to influence housing allocations, there have years to bring the LGS designations to the fore and is against planning guidelines that LGS designation should not be used to as a way of interfering with potential future development.

AM – that is a separate point

MV – PC asked for a debate on the reasons why LGS should be included or excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan, there has been quite a discussion on this topic and he proposed that a vote should be taken by the committee to exclude the LGS from the plan.

JF – is the whole plan going to be agreed with the exclusion of LGS

The proposal is – that the Steering Group committee recommends to the full council that the draft plan and its associated documents proceed to full consultation in accordance with Regulation 14, the Neighbourhood planning general 2012, but to exclude the Local Green Space from the current community plan, exclude paragraph 6.29 – 6.13

MV proposed with SJ seconded

2 in favour

2 against

1 abstain

Chair's casting vote

Motion was carried – the procedure will go forward to the full council

4.2 SPC NP consultant to update on Confirmation of further dates of Consultation events and Submission dates for the regulation 14 process

AM – the plan is going to forward to the full Parish Council meeting on the 2nd September 2019, after considering the document they will decide whether to proceed to regulation 14 consultation, if agreed, the consultation process will start next week which will last for six weeks. All members of the public to be encouraged to inspect the documents which will be available for viewing; this will end 16th October, the Steering Group will then meet to go through the responses and consider if the plan needs updating. The Steering Group will then meet around the 15th November to sign off the document for submission to the Parish council around the 26th November (date tbc), they will sign it off and the whole of the plan will be submitted to HDC on the 29th November 2019

5.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 To discuss and agree the draft communication plan attached to these minutes for engagement and public consultation. Report from Paul Maidment with supporting papers.

PC – read the plan has AM approved it but it is vital that the communication is right, whatever is agreed needs to be signed off by the consultant, he is happy with as long as the format for the responses are in format that can be easily simulated, there could reservations about receiving feedback online.

AM – format will be created to receive the responses which should give a detailed feedback on the plan, as long as the comments give details of the area of the plan referred as the will help with the collation of the responses.

TC- will hard copies be made available as well as digital

AM – hard copies will be available in the library, post office etc. Digital may be more useful for the Steering group

MV – there is a working group meeting on the 3rd September who will look at the budget as that has to be finalised.

6.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th August 2019 – if available

JF – minutes have been received but as the Chair of the meeting is unavailable they have not been looked at in detail, they have been presented to the committee for reference rather than agreement.

7.0 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES

7.1 To confirm matters arising from the Meeting of the 20th August and report actions brought forward

7.2 Questions from the floor from the last meeting are contained within the draft minutes and there have been associated actions from the previous meeting which are dealt with on this agenda

MV - there were a lot of questions and answers that are in draft form and it is hoped to get those answers out. There are a lot of key questions from tonight's meetings and last week's meeting which the committee would like to respond to, the minutes will be published.

PC – all the questions have been answered apart from one, which should be more properly directed at the full council

MV – that is right as the committee is only an advisory committee of the council

JF – the minutes are not on the website yet as there were so many questions they need to be checked carefully for correctness

PC – if the draft minutes are not on the website could a link to the recording be made available

JF – that can be done

8.0 FINANCE

8.1 to receive the supporting paper from SPC Clerk giving overview cost of the SPC Neighbourhood plan (to include 'Actual to date' and future Estimation)

JF – supporting paper is fairly basic so that it is easy to understand, attention was brought to the grant; year 1 the grant of £9,000 was successfully obtained, this is almost spent, there was further monies available which were not required in that given time span.

Before going into year 2 there was an estimation made of what the total cost would be, £23,000 to be paid out this year; it was expected as part of that, there would be another successful grant application but there certain criteria for the grant but because the housing allocation was voted against this did not happen, so the expected £8,000 was lost. So the cost is still £23,000 with a shortfall of £8,000, this was taken to the F & G P committee as there was a need to extend from the earmarked reserves.

PC – look at the cost the plan had been budgeted at £16,400 but now is at £23,000, does that mean for 2018/19 it had been expected the whole plan to cost £1,400

JF – it had been thought that the grant would be in the region of £15,000 so then use the £1,400 to cover the cost

PC – it had thought that the whole plan would cost £16,400?

JF – that was the cost of year 1, it was not sure how far the everything would be at the end of year 1 but it was not as far on as expected and it was thought that there would further grant allocation for housing which could be sought, there was no estimate of the whole cost of the plan.

PC – what had gone wrong with the grant? It had been expected to get up to £15,000 then get £9,000 and another £8,000 but didn't receive anything, so the council is down AM - every Parish Council is entitled to £9,000 to help with the plan, if the plan is a complex one there is an additional grant which is £8,000. In 2018 it was thought that all the entitlement was £8,000 plus extra which would be a total of £15,000 in grants. In year 1 only the initial grant was applied for, the plan for year 2 was that the Parish Council would apply for additional funding which is available if you have a complex plan but as the plan is no longer a complex one the additional grant is not available. The SEA appraisal comes under technical support which is in additional to any grant money received, for example the ACON housing need report was delivered through the technical support with no cost to the Parish Council, but that is separate from the grant money.

9.0 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

10.0 INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

10.1 None at the time of publication

R Bell will communicate with the people who responded to the advert

11.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

