
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Working Party Held on Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7pm at the Steyning Centre

Present: Cllrs Bell (Chair), S Alexander, Hanson, Linfield, Ballance, Trundle, and resident members Barnes, Cotton and Knowles.

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Consultant: James Halls from Squires Planning

Members of the public: 0 {Not a public meeting}

Meeting Commenced: 7.04 pm

NOTES TAKEN CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS

ACTIONS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sharp, M Alexander, and Resident members Murry Van der Poll, with Russell Barnes arriving 6 minutes after start of the meeting.

2. CHAIRMANS STATEMENT {Summary}

The Chair spoke about new planning arrangements, and the current need for more homes and especially in Sussex. Planning controls being normally dependent on a local plan being in place. The absence of a local plan means there will be more difficulty in refusing applications. Water neutrality is still a significant issue, but southern water are doing a sustainability study which may change things and Natural England are being pressured to change their position.

Neighbourhood plans are impacted by the pause in examination because of; Lack of clarity in policy framework; Uncertainty around housing numbers and sites; and no-one wants to waste time. (Doing something that might later be changed)

There will be standard elements in any local plan, and these will not need to be reflected in a neighbourhood plan. For example, conservation of historic assets, promotion of high design standards. Neighbourhood plans do not have to allocate sites for development, but in this instance it will be left to the local planning authority to determine.

So Is it worth going ahead?

This is why there is reason to continue –

- Local development plans are key and locally these are still to be completed
- Neighbourhood plans are an integral part of local plans
- Devolution is unlikely to affect the neighbourhood planning process

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Each member was asked to introduce themselves, as there were several new faces on the committee. Members also stated what they hoped to offer the group, any relevant background, and what they hoped to gain personally from the experience.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING AND PLANNING REFORM

Members had been given a six page document distributed by Horsham District Council which attempted to summarise what was currently happening and what difference it would likely make to the planning system moving forward.

There is now a house building target of 1.5 million houses across the country in the next 5 years.

Surprisingly, there are currently no changes to the role or status of Neighbourhood Plans within the planning system, and parishes with a plan will continue to receive 25% of CIL funding.

There continues to be funding for Neighbourhood Plans.

5. QUESTIONS WERE POSED TO THE CONSULTANT

A number of questions were posed to the consultant both prior to the meeting and during the course of this item in relation to timescales for work needing to be completed, as well the general state of the planning system, in the light of the production of the planning reform document, and the news that the Glebe Farm project is moving forward at pace.

This is a summary of that discussion:-

HDC are currently paused on the preparation of the emerging Local Plan, and it is unclear what the future of the emerging Local Plan will be in light of the devolution situation. It may be that at the moment policy officers have some spare capacity to assist with helping to progress the plan and so that would positively impact timescales. However, the developer at Glebe Farm has indicated that they aim on submitting the reserved matters application at the end of April / early May which puts a bit more pressure on the committee. As a major application, the statutory deadline is 13 weeks following receipt of a valid application but there is no guarantee that the deadline will be met, depending on whether any consultees request further information. The application would therefore unlikely be determined until at least the end of July / early August. This is slightly ahead of the proposed timescales. However, the updated neighbourhood plan can still hold weight even if it is not made. How much weight it holds depends on what stage of the review process is completed. Even if the plan is not made, the design codes could therefore still hold weight in the determination of the application. Whilst the developer has indicated that they are open for discussion around the design of the scheme, there is nothing to force them to adopt certain principles.

6. TASK LIST

Members considered what needed to be achieved and the priorities associated with getting the plan review completed given the time constraints noted. The Consultant was asked to complete a list of tasks and for this to be sent to the Clerk for further distribution.

**CLERK
&
Consultants**

7. DESIGN CODE WORK

Members considered the work completed so far on design code assessments via the review of the Glebe Farm outline plan and associated design code document, plus walk round with the design code consultant. The Clerk needed to redistribute the Design code live document currently being worked on.

CLERK

The Clerk also stated that the new Glebe Farm developers {Vistry} were seeking community engagement opportunities with local groups and individuals. Clerk to arrange for these meetings to happen, with dates for full day of engagement being the 15th March at the Steyning Centre.

CLERK

8. INFORMATION / CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 5th March 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Meeting ended at 8.54 pm

Signed by the Chair: Date: 5th March 2025