



Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: 24th January 2018 held at 6.30 pm

Attendees: Carol Butler; Cllr J Carroll; Christine Clavey; Neil Fearn; David Gibbons; Cllr Susan Goodchild; Cllr K Wattingham.

Also present: Martin Small (Neighbourhood Plan Consultant); Debbie Marsh (Corporate Services Manager).

- 1) **Apologies** were received from Cllr D Abbott; Cllr M Kennedy; Cllr Mrs T McMahon; Tracy Plunkett.
- 2) **Notes from the previous meeting held on the 15th November 2017:** Agreed.

Matters arising: None

3) **The Survey:**

- a) Results: 70 responses. Some of the questions could be tweaked to better help inform the answers. Biased as it only reflected those visiting Santa's Grotto in Bedford Square. 30% of those responding were aged 30's to 40's, fewer aged 45 to 54, then a spike again in the older age range. It was felt that this was due to the age of those taking children to visit Santa (parents and grand-parents). It was noted that there was no reference to ethnicity on the form. A question was asked as to how long it took to complete a questionnaire and how many questions were asked. The answer was not long, about 5 minutes and 15 questions in total. Not many who answered the questionnaire were from outside Houghton Regis.
- b) Next steps: Online, social media, via Alan's news desk, Town Crier, Clanger, Headteachers, visits to local groups i.e. youth groups, older groups, sports groups. Promote the online survey via the groups. **David G** to compile a list and send via email to others in the group with **others** providing suggestions of the groups they feel the group could talk to or approach. Revise survey. **Everyone** to look at the survey questions and recommend revisions. It was suggested that the questionnaire is not altered too much as it may conflict with the previous version and not dovetail with previous outcomes. Data received so far is a good basis for the working groups. It was agreed that **David G** would redraft survey, with input from others and place on survey monkey or suchlike. **DG** to liaise with **DM** before committing to survey monkey in order to establish costs.

Debbie to identify dates for deadlines for articles for the Town Crier.

- 4) **Update on the status of CBC Planning:** MS updated the group in regard to Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan. CBC had now issued a Pre-Submission version of their Local Plan. The key issues for the Town Council lay within the soundness of the Plan rather than legal compliance or duty to co-operate. Any comments will be passed to an independent examiner who will assess whether the document can be adopted. Deadline for receipt of comments is the 22nd February 2018. The plan confirms the planned development at HRN1 & 2. The timetable for adoption of the plan had been accelerated to avoid the higher

threshold of provision being placed on them by government. The group were advised that CBC could start the process of a partial plan review with 6 months of the plans adoption.

- 5) Schedule for the next few months:** MS – group should be working towards a working draft plan. This draft will need to be referred to the Town Council’s planning committee, for approval to consult. Aim for a working draft by Easter. DG – next steps are to establish focus groups. It is proposed that the focus groups would consist of between 6-8 people and to work alongside the SWOT forms which in turn would feed into the draft plan. It was proposed that the focus groups meet within the next 6 weeks. MS suggested the group use his services to re write the draft plan following the focus group meetings. SG – Education is now TP as lead, SG to support.
DG – Meetings to take place out in the community
CC – Credibility – I am a resident of Houghton Regis, I do not feel I have the authority when approaching businesses.
It was agreed that **DM** would provide CC with a letter of introduction.
DG – We have 6 weeks to get focus groups done plus online survey.
February meeting would be an update meeting.
March – Draft plan available.
A question was raised as to the whether the Town Council had applied for Neighbourhood Grant Funding via Locality. **DM** to enquire.

Date of next meeting: Date of the next meeting to be held at the council offices on Wednesday 21st February 2018 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.20pm