



Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: 15th January 2020 held at 6.30pm

Attendees: David Gibbons – Chair (DG); Christine Clavey (CC); Sally Gray (SGr); Cllr Ms S Thorne (ST); Neil Fearn (NF); Alan Winter (AW); Tracy Plunkett

Also present: Debbie Marsh (Corporate Services Manager- DM).

- 1) **Apologies** were received from Cllr D Abbott; Cllr S Goodchild; Cllr M Kennedy; Carol Butler; Cllr T Welch
- 2) **Declarations of Interest** – None
- 3) **Notes of previous meetings**

Members discussed and approved the draft notes of the following meetings:

- 15th August 2018
- 12th September 2018
- 10th October 2018
- 26th June 2019
- 17th July 2019
- 5th August 2019
- 4th September 2019
- 2nd October 2019

4) **New Housing Proposals**

DG informed members that following discussions with CBC, due to the inclusion of 5 housing sites within the Neighbourhood Plan, there would need to be a call in for sites exercise undertaken prior to the group going out to consultation.

Members were provided three options on the way forward.

- a) Keep the plan as is and justify why there are 5 sites in the plan
- b) Undertake a call in for sites exercise for potential inclusion of additional sites in the plan
- c) To not include any sites.

Members were advised that the five sites, as identified in the plan, had not been included following any outcomes of the previous public consultation and therefore they could be removed. If Members wished to continue with either option a or b then this would mean an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) would be required to accompany the plan. Members were informed that there was no requirement to provide additional housing in a neighbourhood plan, it was merely a suggestion that these sites (3 out of the 5) could be re-developed once vacated by the current users.

Members were concerned that the removal of policy 19 would remove protection of the towns open spaces.

It was then decided that a shorter version of the policy may be suitable. The following was agreed, via email between the group, based on the version DG proposed at the meeting.

Policy 19: New Housing

To preserve the open spaces, leisure facilities, and character of the parish, there is a presumption against further large-scale housing developments, over 30 homes, beyond those already approved. Smaller-scale developments of up to 30 homes, especially when they involve re-development of sites already built on or add housing to other provisions, will be encouraged, subject to the other policies in this plan.

DG – Call in should have happened at the start of the neighbourhood plan process.

TP – That would have helped to inform the plan

NP – No problem as long as we protect our open spaces.

DG – Agree. The idea of inclusion was to show we were open to development. Detailing it in the policy is the issue, it could be an aspiration.

AW – the whole document needs fully reviewing.

DG – Happy to go through to remove/reword.

DG highlighted the findings contained within a Town Benchmarking Report which was published by People and Places Insight Ltd. This report seemed to mirror the findings within the Neighbourhood Plan. The report measured and evaluated town centres by capturing data on Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in town centre management.

DG requested a copy of the report be sent to members along with the minutes of this meeting.

The group then went through the document highlighting other anomalies i.e. changes to road numbers and removal of all HTTP addresses as the links no longer work (AW). DG agreed to go through the document in detail and send the revised version to the group for checking.

Recommendation: To agree to remove policy 19 as currently worded providing a shorter version to be included to protect the towns open spaces.

All agreed.

5) Next steps

DG – to circulate a new version of the draft Neighbourhood Plan to members once Martin Small had agreed with the wording of policy 19.

DG to visit the graphic designer, in Milton Keynes, to go through all revisions.

DM – to invite Jemma McLean (BRCC) to the next meeting

Members agreed to the date of the next meeting – 12th February 2020 at 6.30pm