

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

Meeting of the Steering Group

7.00pm Monday 20th May 2024 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room

In attendance: Cllr Chris Bowley, Peter Cogley (observer), Alex Crowe, Jem Friar, Cllr Douglas Hambly, Cat Radford (notes)

Apologies: Prana Simon

Members of the public: 3. Tom Lowry and Oliver Del Mar, Origin Land and Michael Drake, Eden Land Planning.

Public Session

- I. Representatives of Origin Land commented that they had attended the meeting to listen to committee discussions and were keen to understand the overall timeline for plan completion.
- II. The representative of Eden Land Planning commented that the company is working with the landowner of Winsland House Farm and had come to the meeting keen to hear more about the upcoming public consultation.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** No formal apologies had been received.
2. **Elect new members to the committee** There were none.
3. **Declaration of Interests**
 - 3.1. Register of Interests: Steering group members were reminded of the need to update their register of interests if they have changed.
 - 3.2. No interests were declared on items on the agenda.
4. **Approve minutes** of the meeting on 15th April 2024 **It was AGREED** to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Update on actions

Ref	Action	Owner	Update
240415 7.1	Review the draft housing chapter and provide comments to Alex by 28th April.	ALL	Some comments from Steering Group members had been received and absorbed in the updated draft.
240415 7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorporate comments from committee members on draft housing chapter as appropriate, taking responsibility for overall drafting approach• highlight any substantive issues, eg about policy or principles, arising from the comments and present these to the next committee meeting for discussion.	Alex	An updated chapter draft is circulated with meeting papers for discussion.
240415 7.1	In parallel to the action above, seek external advice on draft policies/key issues from SHDC (as already agreed); and also a Neighbourhood Planning expert from the South Hams Society.	Alex	A meeting is being held between Alex, Cat and the District Council's Neighbourhood Planning Officer in the coming week. The Officer has received a draft copy of all plan chapters on which to respond. It was confirmed that a member of the South Hams Society has agreed to provide comment on the draft plan this coming week, on a voluntary basis.
240415 7.1	There was general agreement to identify conditions or mechanisms that could retain affordable housing in perpetuity. ACTION: Prana would check to see if there was any	Prana	The following update had been provided by Prana by email: <i>[I] checked wording on 'affordability in perpetuity' in the old Housing Chapter on the current HNP from 2020. There's a relevant bit of who the</i>

	useful wording from the 2020 draft plan regarding covenants.		<p><i>affordable housing in a scheme gets allocated to (ie persons vetted for affordability criteria) p16 'Devon Rule' but <u>no mention of being in perpetuity</u>. The CLT has in its bylaws for allocations with OTF scheme a 'perpetuity clause (I have not checked for any changes since 2014) 'In perpetuity' is therefore an asset lock on the properties' resale and I believe this is important to retain a balance of tenures in the parish.</i></p> <p><i>Relatedly I link here to a blog post 'viable' villages for reference. Official definition: none--It seems a term out-of-fashion now and been replaced with other descriptors eg 'sustainable' and 'regenerative'.</i></p> <p><i>NB: Developers so routinely use the term financial viability, that it has become confused recently with living viably in a village which can sustain multi-generations and income levels.</i> https://blog.journeyman.cc/2018/07/the-minimum-viable-village.html</p>
240415 7.2	Undertake a review of the draft SPD. A request was made that a future draft include a reference to examples of SPD documents in other Neighbourhood Plans made elsewhere, to provide examples of what Neighbourhood Plans can say about community led housing.	Prana	<p>PARTIALLY COMPLETED</p> <p>Two examples of Neighbourhood Plans have been provided to cross reference with proposed SPD for Harberton Parish.</p> <p>Prana had emailed members of the committee the following:</p> <p><i>On Supplementary Policy Doc for Housing, ie finding other example that can be compared with ours-- I attach a general SPD from Chippenham, Wiltshire that has on page 11 a table (4.1) that helps with outlining SPD policy. I also attach the current draft that has gone to referendum....written 6 years later. It incorporates many of the same issues we wish to address. I hope that helps. It's long and I don't see a point in making our SPD this long just for clarity. Appendices can add clarity to definitions. What needs to happen is perhaps feedback from those I wrote to about 6wks ago now to comment. I have not had time to them chase up since 15th April, apologies.</i></p>
240415 8.1	Make booking enquiries with venues for the consultation dates identified	Cat	COMPLETED
240415 8.1	Alex to draft copy for Village Life and Cat to forward for inclusion	Alex/ Cat	COMPLETED.
240415 8.1	Set up an Eventbrite link for the event, and a poster. It was commented that images from last year's Community Consultation could be used.	Jem	It was reported that Jem had started this process but sought more clarity on the format. It was agreed to discuss this during the meeting.
240415 8.1	Peter volunteered to put up posters in Harberton when ready. It was commented that posters should be put up in Parish hamlets as well as in the two villages.	Peter	Ongoing.
240415 8.1	Make enquiries regarding a distribution of fliers in early June.	Cat	Yet to be actioned.

6. **Housing Chapter review and updated chapter draft** An updated draft of the housing chapter had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Amendments had been made in response to detailed comments received. A series of 10 issues/policies had been flagged for discussion by the committee in order to help clarify if the committee agrees with the current wording and approach, and whether the committee's view is representative, or if further consultation is required:
- 6.1. Issue 1: Are the overarching objectives right? It was confirmed that the overarching objectives to 'Maximise provision of affordable housing for local people while contributing to regional housing targets' and 'Provide a suitably diverse housing mix for a socioeconomically sustainable community' were right. It was agreed to remove reference to 'both primary villages and surrounding hamlets' in the second objective. There was discussion on the availability of affordable housing in the Parish, noting that the land at Winsland Farm is at the edge of the Parish, not within either village centre. It was commented that some who grew up in the villages have had to move out of the parish to Totnes, Newton Abbot or Torbay in order to find affordable housing. The representative of Eden Land Planning commented that, generally speaking it is larger developments that are able to provide affordable homes, which is why they tend to be found in larger communities, such as in Totnes and the other towns mentioned.
- 6.2. Issue 2: Should Oak Tree Field be allocated? It was noted that planning permission has already been granted for the site but development has not yet begun. There was discussion in which it was commented that the project should be protected due to the community led nature of the scheme and because of the high proportion of affordable homes. There was consensus to allocate Oak Tree Field, but to invite public opinion on the site.
- 6.3. Issue 3: What is the committee's view on how the indicative target of 50 homes should be met. Following discussion it was agreed to see what AECOM says about this in relation to the SEA process. It was AGREED to ask for a formal response from the Planning Authority by raising the query with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at the upcoming meeting.
- 6.4. Issue 4: Does the committee wish to attempt to include a Principle Residence Requirement? Sample policies from other local plans had been provided for comment. It was noted that the committee had discussed this in January 2023 and had agreed that Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan should follow the Kingsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Lead and draft similar narrative that supports the principle of the inclusion of a Principle Residence Policy should evidence arise in future that justifies such a policy. It was noted that the Dartmouth and Kingsbridge Neighbourhood Plans had referred to a 20% threshold commonly used as a benchmark figure in relation to the inclusion of a principal residence provision in a plan. Following discussion the following actions were agreed: **ACTION:** to find out where the 20% figure comes from and the evidence base on which it is founded. It was queried whether Harberton Parish could choose a lower threshold. **ACTION:** To ask residents what they feel is appropriate. There was further discussion about balance, i.e. if the villages are not attractive for development there is a risk there could be no development.
- 6.5. Issue 5: Policy on carbon negative exemplar development After discussion it was agreed that a policy on carbon negative exemplar development would be appropriate in relation to providing support for exceptional sites and to include such a policy within the emerging plan. In addition it was agreed to include a policy in support of self-build exception sites as modelled by the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, including this under the affordable housing policy.
- 6.6. Issue 6 What should our approach be to specialist provision for older people? It was noted that there is little clear from consultation or quantitative housing needs analysis that the mix of sizes and types of homes in the parish needs to change. Policy is a very broad one generally welcoming mixed-generation, mixed-sized developments. Suggestions were made on the wording of the narrative in response to queries raised.
- 6.7. Issue 7: Approach to implementing the Housing Need Assessment's recommendation on affordable housing It was agreed to carry forward this item to a future discussion on the basis that some useful advice has been received in response to sharing policies with informal consultees for comment, and in order to raise the query with the Local Authority at the upcoming meeting.
- 6.8. Issue 8: General approach to evidence base/data. **It was AGREED** that given the limits on the time and expertise of the steering group membership, to take the approach to rely on AECOM reports and defensible evidence, and not to try to update or rework them unless there is very clear reason to do so. **It was AGREED** that the exception is to **ACTION:** ask AECOM if they are willing/able to update figures relying on 2011 census data in conjunction with their SEA work.
- 6.9. Issue 9: Approach to affordable housing integration with market housing on same site Policy wording was discussed. **It was AGREED** that the policy should read: *"Where affordable homes form part of a proposal, the development should be designed and laid out so that open market and affordable homes are all of equally high quality design, are suitably mixed in with, one another"*. This updated policy removed the words *"and indistinguishable from"*.
- 6.10. Issue 10 Approach to setting the local connection definition It was agreed to use the criteria from SHDC's Local Allocation Policy (2017) as other Neighbourhood Plans have done, rather than attempting to define our own.

7. **Consultation plans** *Consideration of format of exhibitions, structure of in-person and online events (see proposed online event schema*), budget allocation, roles of committee and support required of AECOM and from the community*

During discussion it was agreed that the purpose of the exhibition and consultation event was two-fold: to build confidence in the Neighbourhood Planning process and to collect quantitative data that shows people's support for details within the plan.

It was proposed to design the consultation event around a questionnaire, which was tabled for comment. This concept was broadly supported on the basis that an agreed objective is collect quantitative data.

There was discussion about how an event approximately 2-3 hours long could be facilitated, and queries raised about the relationship between the live event, online event and exhibition. **It was AGREED** that a sub-group meet to discuss approach and capacity in more depth outside of the meeting and report back. It was noted that support maybe needed from outside of the group to increase capacity of the current steering group membership.

8. **Response to AECOM on next steps in the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) process** It was noted that AECOM consultants had written to the Steering Group to outline a proposed approach. The SEA Environmental Report is the key output of the SEA process and will accompany the Neighbourhood Plan at Regulation 14 consultation.

The correspondence laid out three key sections of the Environmental Report, specifically:

1. Summary of SEA Scoping, including the responses from the statutory consultees and how these have been considered and addressed through the SEA.
2. Consideration of reasonable alternatives, including appraisals of growth scenarios "options" to inform the preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Appraisal of the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies.

AECOM's approach below focuses on section 2 of the Environmental Report and suggested "options" AECOM intends to appraise, informed by AECOM's understanding of the wider policy context for the neighbourhood area, primarily with respect to housing distribution and the site assessment findings (to date):

An initial set of options will consider the relative sustainability merits of the following three options which focus on housing distribution, specifically:

- **Option A:** Align with the local policy housing distribution to deliver the housing target (i.e., 30 homes in Harbertonford, 20 homes in Harberton).
- **Option B:** Facilitate higher growth in Harberton village in comparison to Harbertonford village (i.e., to deliver up to 50 homes).
- **Option C:** Facilitate higher growth in Harbertonford village in comparison to Harberton village (i.e., to deliver up to 50 homes).

AECOM's intention will be to undertake the assessment of these options in time for the upcoming community consultation, delivering an 'Interim SEA Environmental Report' which can feed into the Steering Group's wider decision making with respect to the preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan. AECOM understands that this is likely to be Option B.

Following the close of the community consultation, the SEA will then look to consider an additional set of options to assess different housing numbers across the possible sites in Harberton village. One of the options will need to be the Neighbourhood Plan's likely preferred approach (i.e., what sites in Harberton the Plan will look to allocate, and for how many homes). **The Steering Group AGREED** with AECOM's assumption that this would be firmed up after a review of the community consultation responses.

AECOM notes that there may be a bit of time between the close of the community consultation, the Steering Group's selection of the preferred approach, and the finalising of the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies, and had asked whether the Regulation 14 consultation is likely to take place before August 2024. If Reg14 falls after this, AECOM may look to close the existing package of technical support and asks that the Steering Group reapply in due course at a time when DLUHC/Locality's position on technical support funding has been confirmed.

The Steering Group noted this comment and agreed that it was unlikely that Regulation 14 consultation would take place before August 2024 and **ACTION:** to respond to AECOM accordingly.

9. **Next steps** *Includes agreement of next chapter for Parish Council review*
It was AGREED that the Parish Council review the environment chapter at its June meeting.
10. **'Check in' on steering group focus** *To ensure effective use of time in delivering a completed Neighbourhood Plan* This was discussed and it was agreed that the steering group maintain focus on what's in scope for Neighbourhood Planning.
11. **Any other business**
It was AGREED to purchase an up-to-date survey from Devon Biodiversity Records Centre at a cost of £120.
It was AGREED to invite South West Water to comment on a section of the plan that relates to flooding and sewage, in order to check narrative for accuracy.
12. **Summary of actions before next meeting**

Ref	Action	Owner
240415 8.1	Put up posters when ready. It was commented that posters should be put up in Parish hamlets as well as in the two villages.	Peter
240415 8.1	Make enquiries regarding a distribution of fliers in early June.	Cat
240520 6.4	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> find out where the 20% threshold commonly used as a benchmark figure in relation to the inclusion of a principal residence provision in a plan comes from and the evidence base on which it is founded. query whether Harberton Parish could choose a lower threshold. to ask residents what they feel is appropriate (by including in consultation) 	Unattributed <i>Cat/Alex in speaking with the Local Planning Authority</i>
240520 6.8	To ask AECOM if they are willing/able to update figures relying on 2011 census data in conjunction with their SEA work	Unattributed. <i>Cat when replying to AECOM's correspondence</i>
240520 7	Arrange a meeting of a consultation event sub-group to discuss approach and capacity (and the potential to increase steering group capacity).	Cat
240520 8	Respond to the queries raised by AECOM to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree that selecting what sites in Harberton the Plan will look to allocate, and for how many homes will be firmed up after the upcoming consultation event. That it is unlikely that the Regulation 14 consultation will take place before August 2024. 	Cat

13. **Date of next meeting** 17th June 2024

Meeting closed at 21:05