

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

7.00pm Monday 20th February 2023 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room

Present: Cllr Douglas Hambly, Peter Cogley (Observer), Alex Crowe, Cllr Chris Bowley, Sally Lougher. Cllr Prana Simon, Cat Radford (Minutes)

In attendance: Cassandra Harrison, South Hams District Council, Affordable Housing Officer.

Apologies: Jem Friar

Public Session None

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above and sanctioned.
2. **Elect new members to the committee** 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** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23rd January 2023 were signed as an accurate record.
5. **Affordable Housing** *Discussion with South Hams District Council's Affordable Housing Officer*

The purpose of the Affordable Housing Officer's visit to the HNP Steering Group meeting was to learn more about the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and to share knowledge of development of affordable homes within the District. It was noted that the visit is made within the context of South Hams District Council's (SHDC) declaration of a housing crisis in 2022.

The Affordable Housing Officer described their teams' role to secure delivery of affordable housing in the district. She commented that SHDC doesn't hold any traditional housing stock since transferring its stock to Live West in the 1990's. The Council now collaborates with a number of different housing associations.

When planning applications come forward in the district, the Affordable Housing team works with colleagues in the Council to secure delivery of affordable homes within development. This is primarily in the delivery of affordable homes on site as part of a specific planning application, but if delivering housing units is not possible, the developer may make a cash payment to the local authority to enable the development of affordable housing elsewhere. This is laid out in a Section 106 agreement between the local authority and the developer. Funding from Section 106 may not be tied to specific parishes and that funding can be spent district wide.

Under policy laid out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) a financial contribution is required on developments of between 6-11 houses in rural areas. The Council cannot insist on a contribution for a development of under 6 homes.

The District Council also has access to its own capital funding and is using Council reserves to support housing delivery. For example, funding is given to Community Land Trusts to help bring land forward for development of affordable homes for local people. Funding can be provided from the Housing Capital Programme to buy the land.

In response to a query from Steering Group members about the definition of 'affordable housing' the Officer responded that affordable housing to rent is housing rented at below market level. There are also schemes for home ownership in which there is shared ownership, usually with a housing association. It was commented that this is a good way to help people to get a first step on the property ladder, with examples of this in Totnes, such as properties in Follaton Oak and Baltic Wharf developments. It was noted that there is a legal definition of affordable housing in the National Planning Portfolio framework.

There was a query whether the 'pipeline of local need' is understood, in predicting requirements of the population through school numbers for example. It was suggested that this is the purpose of the Housing Needs Assessment, which references data available through the local authority, such as numbers of people requiring affordable housing.

The Neighbourhood Planning Group gave a brief precis of the process to date, commenting that an update Housing Needs Assessment was produced by Aecom in 2022 identifying a need for affordable rented housing within the Harberton Parish. The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group would be interested in understanding ways that delivery of affordable homes could be facilitated on sites through working with the District Council or housing association partner.

It was commented that the majority of sites that have come forward in Harberton and Harbertonford villages are small and would be unlikely to support more than 6 dwellings. The Officer was informed that the Neighbourhood Planning group had experienced challenges from SHDC development management team on the sites that have been included in the plan to date, suggesting that many of them would not be considered by the District Council as being within the village boundary.

In response the Officer commented that there may be possibilities in speaking with housing associations to bring forward smaller developments, particularly with associations such as Live West and Sovereign who already have housing stock in the parish as they would already have staff and resources supporting properties in the immediate area. Proximity to Totnes was also considered an advantage.

The Officer commented that SHDC does provide a management service for affordable rented homes 'Sea Moor Homes' and has also invested in small scale development of affordable homes and is looking for a few more – although the number of homes they look to build will be capped.

The Steering Group commented that because some of the sites that have come forward in Harberton Parish are very small, there could be the possibility of working with the District Council or a housing association to bring forward 100% affordable homes on those very small sites. The Affordable Housing Officer agreed that this could be a possibility.

In response to a query from members of the Steering Group, the Affordable Housing Officer commented that other groups have made allocations within their neighbourhood plans predominantly for affordable housing. Neighbourhood Plans for Aveton Gifford, Stoke Gabriel and Marlborough offer examples of this.

It was commented that the JLP's policy TTV27 'Meeting local housing needs in rural areas' provides guidance for so called 'exception sites' in which insistence can be made for affordable housing, as long as it is outside the village boundary. The Affordable Housing Officer commented that exception sites still need to pass certain tests, for example in relation to highways access and safe pedestrian links.

It was queried that based on the evidence of housing need could the Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan allocate sites for affordable homes only. It was commented that it would be up to the planning inspector to decide, when the plan goes forward to inspection.

To conclude the discussion **it was agreed that** once the Site Options Assessment report has been produced, it would be shared with the Affordable Housing Officer to consider whether any sites that have come forward are suitable for affordable housing and to work with the Affordable Housing Officer to broker relationship with Housing Association to bring affordable homes to fruition, or seek investment from South Hams District Council in bringing forward housing stock.

6. Technical Package Updates

6.1. Report on actions from last meeting relevant to work on technical packages

- 6.1.1. Potential site near Old Police House **Prana** will seek to find out who owns the land next to the Old Police House as this could be a potential development site, for either housing or parking. Actioned. It was confirmed that owners had been found and written to. No response has been received to date.
- 6.1.2. Potential site at Packs Close **Chris** agreed to make contact with the owners of the land at Packs Close to confirm if the site is available or if it has definitely been withdrawn. Ongoing.
- 6.1.3. Correspondence from Aecom SEA consultants **Cat** to ensure that the email from the SEA team at AECOM has been forwarded to all Steering Group members. Actioned.
- 6.1.4. Sharing highways information with Aecom **Peter** to forward most recent research on Highways for information. Actioned.

6.2. Design Codes A meeting had been held with Aecom consultants to kick off work on the Design Codes package. As part of the work the consultant was due to make a site visit look at locations in the Parish that demonstrate good and bad examples of residential design. It was commented that 'design' does not only refer to what housing looks like, but also how it functions, for example in the availability of parking, flood resilience and materials used. The consultant would be open to hearing from a diverse collection of voices as part of this site assessment. **ACTON: Cat** agreed to circulate dates for a potential Design Codes visit in order to make a proposal to Aecom.

- 6.3. Site Assessment Process Update (if any) No further information has been received from Aecom.
- 6.4. Strategic Environmental Assessment Update (if any) It was reported that correspondence had been received from Aecom confirming that the Scoping Report will be ready soon. Cat will circulate the report for comment as soon as it arrives.

7. Consultation Event Planning

7.1. Report on consultation event planning actions from last meeting

- 7.1.1. Email reach **Prana** agreed to speak with John McKay with regard to his email reach and if he would share information about exhibition and a link to the material on the Parish Council website, once published. Ongoing. **ACTION: Alex** agreed to also make enquiries on this issue.
- 7.1.2. Consultation questions **Alex** offered to look at the questionnaires used in 2015 and give a broad view of the questions asked then and how this may inform consultation questions asked in 2023. Alex commented that he had undertaken a review of the material available to consider how well the existing draft of the plan is based in evidence of what the community wants, asking is credible of a consultation process and is still up to date, as things have moved on since the last consultation in 2015.

Alex shared his view that the current draft doesn't present itself as a solid voice of the community. His proposal is to expand the April consultation event to be broader than consulting only on the site assessment process and use this opportunity to relaunch the Neighbourhood Plan to get widespread interest in the whole endeavour. By holding a broader consultation event, the Neighbourhood Planning group would have much more up to date information to work with to inform a much more solid draft plan, and have evidence of a credible and up to date consultation process.

His view is to hold an initial event with broad themes to get the conversation started before going into the next phase in which to focus in on some of the more controversial topics. He can see a way that this could be timeline-d so that the consultation process and the outcome of the Strategic Environmental Assessment arrive at roughly the same time and all that information goes into an updated draft plan, drafted against the backdrop of community consultation.

Cat suggested that the 'Annual Parish Meeting' within the Parish Council's annual meeting cycle could provide an opportunity to do a big visioning day for Harberton Parish. There was discussion on the necessity to hold these kinds of events really well so that they are productive and vibrant and avoid becoming overly negative in tone. **ACTION: Cat** agreed to research opportunities to combine a visioning event with the Annual Parish Meeting **Alex** agreed to do further work to scope out plans for a 'Your Village, Your Future' consultation event (or events plural) with Cat's input.

- 7.1.3. Hall bookings for consultation events **Sally** offered to make 'fall back' bookings with halls in both villages on dates between 13th -20th May just in case it is necessary to delay April's consultation. It was confirmed that hall bookings have been made for Harbertonford Village Hall on the 13th May and Harberton Parish Hall on the 20th May. It was agreed to keep the date of 22nd April in Harbertonford.
- 7.1.4. Public awareness **Cat** agreed to draft a small trailer/teaser piece for Village Life to update on the actions taking place around developing the Neighbourhood Plan and to indicate that a consultation is coming in April/May, dates to be confirmed. Actioned.

- 7.2. Consultation planning discussion No further discussion was held as the main issues were discussed under the agenda items above.

8. Draft Plan updates

8.1. Report on actions from last meeting relevant to plan draft

- 8.1.1. Housing allocation figures **Cat** agreed to seek advice of the South Hams Neighbourhood Planning Officer to confirm whether development that has been approved in recent years counts towards housing allocation figures, and how these developments should be referred to within the Neighbourhood Plan document. It was reported that no response has yet been received from SHDC however the Aecom consultant leading the Site Options Assessment work had given the advice that:

"[development] sites that have received planning permission but not yet built are considered to be 'committed' development until the permission expires and the number of homes permitted would be taken off the overall housing requirement for the neighbourhood plan, depending on whether the site already had permission at the time the NP housing requirement was set. In terms of whether it should remain in the plan, a neighbourhood plan would not usually 'allocate' a site that has planning permission as it already committed – but the [Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group] may feel it is worth allocating so that weight can be given to future planning applications for the site, if the current permission is not implemented. [The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group]

would just need to make sure that the housing figure is not double counted in the Local Authority housing monitoring figures.”

Action: Cat volunteered to chase SHDC for a response, to include the advice given by Aecom and to ask specifically about double counting in the Local Authority housing monitoring figures.

- 8.1.2. Village boundaries **Prana** to follow up SHDC Neighbourhood Plan Officer's offer to make an introduction to a member of staff who could help to identify a boundary for NP development. **Cat** to include on the next Parish Council agenda and for Prana to introduce to cllrs for discussion by Full Council.

It was noted that a response had not been received with sufficient time to include on the Parish Council's meeting agenda, but there had been correspondence with SHDC's Neighbourhood Plan Officer who commented that the Steering Group can suggest a village boundary to put forward in the plan. It was clarified by the Officer that it is at the discretion of the NP Group to identify a methodology for what will and won't be included, and a rationale for where the line is drawn. If the NP is allocating sites, the NP group will need to consider wrapping the line around sites to be allocated, but not others. It was suggested that the NP hand draws this line on a printed map and if help is required to formalise this work onto a digital map, a member of the SHDC team could be asked to assist.

There was discussion in which it was discussed as to the advantages of drawing a tight boundary so that exception sites outside of that boundary could deliver 100% affordable homes, or if it were more advantageous to draw a wider boundary that has the potential to include larger development sites that could bring forward 60% affordable homes.

ACTION: Chris agreed to undertake the first draft of a boundary map for both villages.

- 8.1.3. Preservation of public views **Peter** agreed to forward his most recent research on preservation of public views to AECOM for input. Actioned. Aecom had responded with advice on how preservation of views could appear within the Neighbourhood Plan document.

- 8.2. Consideration of SEA high level policy comment on draft plan For discussion and new actions going forward. As not all members of the Steering Group had reviewed the information received from Aecom **it was agreed** to carry this item over to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

- 8.3. Plan draft discussion No further discussion on this item was held.

9. Any other business

Cat had circulated the January 2023 edition of Locality's Neighbourhood Planning Newsletter to all members of the steering group.

10. Summary of actions before next meeting

- Email reach **Prana and Alex** agreed to speak with John McKay with regard to his email reach and if he would share information about exhibition and a link to the material on the Parish Council website, once published.
- Potential site at Packs Close **Chris** agreed to make contact with the owners of the land at Packs Close to confirm if the site is available or if it has definitely been withdrawn. Ongoing.
- Consultation events **Cat** agreed to research opportunities to combine a visioning event with the Annual Parish Meeting **Alex** agreed to do further work to scope out plans for a 'Your Village, Your Future' consultation event (or events plural) with Cat's input.
- Housing allocation figures **Cat** agreed to seek advice of the South Hams Neighbourhood Planning Officer to confirm whether development that has been approved in recent years counts towards housing allocation figures, and how these developments should be referred to within the Neighbourhood Plan document. It was agreed to include the advice given by Aecom and to ask specifically about double counting in the Local Authority housing monitoring figures.
- Village Boundaries **Chris** agreed to undertake the first draft of a boundary map for both villages.

11. **Date of next meeting** 7pm Monday 20th March 2023, Harbertonford Village Hall meeting room.