

**Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)**  
**Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group**

7.00pm Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room

**In attendance:** Peter Cogley (observer), Alex Crowe, Cllr Douglas Hambly, Sally Lougher, Cat Radford (notes) Prana Simon.

**Apologies:** Cllr Chris Bowley

**Not in attendance:** Jem Friar

**Public Session** *No members of the public were present.*

**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.  
It was noted that Prana has begun a new job with Tamar Community Energy.
  - 3.2. No interests were declared on items on the agenda.
4. **Approve Minutes** the following minutes were signed as an accurate record:
  - 4.1. Meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, with minor amendments
  - 4.2. Meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

5. **Update on actions**

Following discussion it was agreed that actions attributed to Cat and Alex in relation to approaching consultation with landowners and noted as 'ongoing' on previous action updates would be closed for the meantime, and picked up down the line.

It was commented that there had been a past action to review and write up the work that Chris Bowley had done in assessing availability/lack of parking in Harbertonford, noting that a similar exercise should also be done in Harberton. **Peter** offered support to undertaking this.

6. **Update on AECOM Technical Support packages**

- 6.1. Site Options Assessment Receipt of final draft and summary changes document from AECOM It was reported that a revised Site Options Assessment report from AECOM had been received that addressed comments made by the Steering Group, and to respond to letters forwarded by land owners or site promoters.

It was noted that AECOM had amended factual inaccuracies raised, commenting that any other information presented in the letters can be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan site selection process.

Trusting that this now addresses all issues raised, AECOM will now submit this report to Locality for their review and a final version will be forwarded to the Steering Group once that review has taken place.

The following list summarises the changes that have been made:

<b>Steering Group comment</b>	<b>AECOM response</b>
<u>Land at Tristford Road, Harberton, Totnes site reference SH 23 22 08/13.</u> As this site had not come forward in the 2022 Call for Sites contact had been made with the agent to ascertain if the land was available for development. It was confirmed that the landowner does not wish the land to be put forward for development and it was requested that this be noted and highlighted in any upcoming public consultation.	Noted. Change to unsuitable.
<u>Ford Farm site reference SH 23 17 16, CfS4, NP4 'Land East of Harberton'</u> The MoP attending as a representative of the site at Ford Farm commented that the density proposed by the Site Options	Noted. Changed to 9 homes throughout report.

<p>Assessment is outrageously high and queried whether the calculations within the Site Options Assessment were correct – noting reference made within the report to calculations based on 80% of the area of the site didn't appear to tally with the calculation made. It was commented that this site has a lot of mature trees, hedgerows and a flood zone. The site much smaller than it first appears, making it impossible to achieve 24 houses. A constraints plan was included with the landowner's response to the 2022 Call for Sites which detailed this. A preapplication has been submitted to the local authority proposing development of up to 9 houses.</p>	
<p><u>Winsland House site references SH_23_15_08/13, SH_23_15_08/13/16 , CfS5, NP5</u></p> <p>A letter had been received from Eden Property Group, co-signed by the landowner raising a number of points under three headline themes: inaccuracies in the draft report, response to the assessment of the site, clarification on the role and purpose of the draft report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) the availability of the site (the SOA comments that availability is 'not known' when it was confirmed that the land was available for development on response to the 2022 Call for Sites</li> <li>B) the size of the site given as 5.31 hectares as assessed by the 2017 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and not the c3.9ha area, reduced following the sale of Winsland House and its curtilage from the site.</li> <li>C) the housing yield of 149 is calculated incorrectly, commenting that appropriate density would be far lower than the 35 dwellings per hectare figure used in the SHAL and copied in the draft report, owing to the site's location and characteristics.</li> <li>D) Further comments were made in response to errors and assumptions made within the report with regard to specific constraints, giving further clarification with regard to heritage, landscape impact, sustainability, highways, site levels, trees and availability. Full responses suggest that none of the potential constraints identified represent a fundamental challenge that would serve to prevent residential development on the site, commenting that all the issues are material planning considerations that would need to be considered when development proposals are prepared in detail.</li> <li>E) The letter concludes with comment on the clarification on the role and purpose of the draft report, commenting that to conclude in this report that so many of the 17 sites assessed are not appropriate for allocation at such an early stage of the is premature. It was commented that to state that a site is not appropriate should mean that it has at least one fundamental obstacle which is unlikely to be overcome at the planning application, suggesting that this is not the case without considering more comprehensive details. <b>It was AGREED</b> that the letter should be forwarded to AECOM Site Options Assessment team as if there are inaccuracies within the draft report they should be corrected. <b>ACTION: Cat</b> agreed to forward the letter. It was noted that the letter from Eden Property Group is very detailed in its comments and therefore should bring forward a clear response from AECOM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Noted. Updated in report.</li> <li>B) Noted. Updated in the report.</li> <li>C) Noted. Please note that the 149 dwellings referenced are presenting the 2017 SHLAA conclusions. We have added a note to confirm that this figure was calculated using the larger former site area.</li> <li>D) Noted</li> <li>E) We've gone through and amended any factual inaccuracies raised in the site promoter letters and are content with our approach.</li> </ul>

Trusting that all previous comments had been actioned, the HNP Steering Group would make no further comment on the draft Site Options Assessment prior to it being forwarded to Locality for sign off.

6.2. Design Code Update on progress of final draft It was reported that Cat had met with the AECOM consultant to go through the Steering Group's most recent comments on the draft and to redraw

the 'Harberton Character Area' map to include Harberton Manor. The final report will be received shortly.

- 6.3. Strategic Environmental Assessment *progress in establishing a meeting with AECOM*. **ACTION:** **Cat** would seek to arrange a meeting with AECOM consultants at 3pm on a Thursday afternoon as this would be the most appropriate time for those members of the steering group who wished to attend.

## 7. **Update on progress of redrafts of the Neighbourhood Plan**

- 7.1. Housing chapter Prana reported that whilst undertaking a review of the Housing Chapter she has started to build a chart to compare the 2011 census data used in the Housing Needs Assessment with data now available from the 2021 census. She is planning to meet with the Affordable Housing Officer to discuss what could be done with small infill sites, like the one identified as being potentially suitable for development. It was noted that the Affordable Housing Officer may also be interested in some of the sites that had not been deemed suitable for development within the Neighbourhood Plan, such as the site at Country Gardens, as this could provide an opportunity for self-built homes.
- 7.2. Energy chapter It was agreed to move on to the next item, on the basis that discussion on a clear process for how chapters of the plan are to be edited needs to be agreed first.

## 8. **Discussion on proposal for undertaking review of Plan Chapters**

Alex introduced the item by reflecting on his experience of reviewing the narrative of the 2020 draft Neighbourhood Plan and the process he has gone through in seeking to establish a framework for revisions.

He commented that:

- the chapters on housing and energy are those that need most work, as has previously been identified
- the heritage chapter requires a review but not as significant rewrite as the chapters above
- he has adopted an approach that celebrates the community more and showcases community initiatives, such as the community owned shop
- he has included some quite aspirational initiatives within the main body of the narrative
- much of the factual information that was previously in the main narrative has been placed in the annex instead

Having undertaken this work, he now needed members of the steering group to give a view on the structure proposed and to agree the approach going forward.

Alex continued to comment that the 2020 narrative included several goals and community aspirations such as changing speed limits, providing safe crossing areas on the A381 that were not related to planning policy and where there is a lack of clarity as to how supported these initiatives are in the community and whether they have been adequately thought through.

Alex proposed that the Steering Group seek input from other members of the community to refine what initiatives to include in the plan and how they are articulated.

During discussion it was commented that it would not be affective for the Steering Group to attempt to undertake this level of detailed work during monthly Steering Group meetings alone and that monthly meetings would be better used to oversee work undertaken between meetings.

It was proposed to invite people in the community who have good knowledge about key issues (such as the example given of road speeds and safety) to participate in 'task and finish' groups to review and sign off on specific sections of the plan to which their experience relates.

It was commented that some 'task and finish groups' may only be made up of one or two people, and some may only need to comment on narrative that has been drafted, or attend a short meeting to review a specific section, when some might be more involved.

It was noted that Cat, as the Clerk, would have a fair idea of those people in the Parish who have interest or expertise in many of the areas highlighted for further discussion and review.

After discussion it was agreed that:

**ACTION:** **Cat** will review the plan rewrite draft as prepared by Alex focusing on the areas highlight in yellow as 'substantive question(s) for committee to find answers to, ideas/research needed' indicating who could be approached to provide specific insight and expertise and be invited to task and finish groups.

**ACTION: All members of the Steering Group** to read the plan rewrite draft and bring specific comments back to the group focusing on the broad direction of travel of style and approach to the whole draft.

This item was closed with broad discussion about the capacity of the Steering Group noting that members are giving time voluntarily to the process. There was discussion about how members could work most effectively together whilst managing preferred working styles.

**9. Consultation plans**

- 9.1. Consultation on Energy There was brief comment on taking an approach similar to the Future Energy Landscape event, noting this is still all open for discussion.
- 9.2. Consultation on Site Options Assessment It was noted that dates for consultation on Site Options Assessment report will need to be pushed into the future to enable the Steering Group to consider the best approach. **Prana** and **Alex** both expressed interest in designing the consultation event, with Alex commenting that his preference was to do this after seeing a draft of the housing chapter. It was suggested that consultation event could include a walk of the local area, and set the stage as to why there are so few good parcels of land for development. Cat suggested that it could be helpful to have comment from that the Strategic Development Management Officer at South Hams District Council on whether SHDC is broadly in agreement with the findings of the Site Options Assessment, or if there are any 'red' sites that only had minimal constraints that could be overcome.

**10. Finance/Budget matters**

- 10.1. Agree process for authorising payments There was discussion in which it was agreed that it would be good practice to preauthorise any payments prior to them being made, however that in some circumstances this cannot be possible. In cases in which opportunities would otherwise be missed, a request could be sent by email for authorisation by the Chair of the Steering Group and Parish Clerk. Individuals could take a risk on spending that had not been authorised, on the basis that reimbursement may not be approved.

It was noted that payments would first be approved by the Steering Group before they would then be presented to the Parish Council for authorisation at the Parish Council's next meeting. It can therefore be possible for payments to take 30 days before presenting to the Neighbourhood Plan committee and receipt of reimbursement.

10.2. Signing off reimbursements

- 10.2.1. **It was agreed** to reimburse Alex for printing costs associated with the consultation event in June, totalling £58.60
- 10.2.2. **It was agreed** to reimburse Prana for attendance to an online energy webinar at a cost of £16.00.

**11. Any other business**

Flooding Following recent flood events in Harberton and Harbertonford it was queried whether there was, or would be, a specific section within the Neighbourhood Plan that would address flooding. Peter volunteered to lead on flood specific issues within the Neighbourhood Plan should this be required. There was some discussion on reviewing development policies to consider the potential flooding implications.

**12. Summary of actions before next meeting**

<b>231016 6</b>	Seek to arrange a meeting with AECOM consultants at 3pm on a Thursday afternoon to discuss next steps for the Strategic Environmental Assessment technical package.	<b>Cat</b>
<b>231016 8</b>	Review the plan rewrite draft as prepared by Alex focusing on the areas highlight in yellow as ' <i>substantive question(s) for committee to find answers to, ideas/research needed</i> ' indicating who could be approached to provide specific insight and expertise and be invited to task and finish groups.	<b>Cat</b>
<b>231016 8</b>	Read the plan rewrite draft and bring specific comments back to the group focusing on the broad direction of travel of style and approach to the whole draft.	<b>All Steering Group members</b>

- 13. **Date of next meeting** As members of the steering group would not be available for a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November it was agreed to seek to rearrange for 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 if possible.