

Harberton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

Meeting of the Steering Group

7.00pm Monday 18th March 2024 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room

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

Apologies: Jem Friar, Prana Simon.

Members of the public: 2: Tom Lowry, Oliver Del Mar, Origin Land

Public Session

Representatives of Origin Land, land promoters working with owners of land at Ford Farm attended the meeting and confirmed that the Permission In Principle Planning Application for 9 dwellings on land at Ford Farm has been withdrawn. Representatives remarked on the number of comments that had been made during the consultation period in relation to the desire for affordable housing on site. Discussions are therefore in process as part of a pre-application process with South Hams District Council (SHDC) for a development of more than 11 homes that would see the delivery of affordable housing on site. It was commented that options such as affordable self-build plots are part of that discussion. Affordable Self-Build plots are not a new concept, but relatively uncommon in the South Hams. The representatives commented that as part of the pre-application process they are seeking feedback from the Local Authority with regard to the number of dwellings considered appropriate for the site. It is expected that this will be somewhere between 11-17, in line with the outcomes of AECOM's Site Options Assessment but of a density sufficient to bring forward affordable housing. In response to questions asked it was confirmed that the development under consideration will be within the same 'red line' site as previously seen. Conversations are being held with the adjacent landowner, but it is understood that those landowners are looking to submit their own application with independent access from the highway. The design of the Ford Farm site is not currently proposing to cut a hole in the hedge. When asked, the representatives responded that it is not up to them whether they will pause their application if the adjacent landowner is willing to collaborate, as they are working to their instructions of their immediate client. It was noted that there was no confirmed nor indicative timeline on which it was expected that a full application will be made, as this will be subject to the length of time it will take to go through the pre-application process.

It was asked if this HNP committee can be involved at all in the pre-application process. The representatives commented that they are engaging with the committee by attending these meetings and will listen in order to inform their work with their client, the landowners.

It was asked if there was the opportunity for the community to have a role in giving a collective view on the number of houses developed. Representatives commented that they will be looking at a scheme that would deliver affordable housing on site and is waiting to hear what the Local Authority have to say on the matter. It is likely that they will stick with whatever number suggested by the Local Authority. During discussion it was commented that for Origin Land the focus is firstly on whether the site will obtain planning permission or not, and that it is still too early to have detailed conversations about the plan itself. There was, however, openness to some collaboration around community consultation to identify some shared feasible aspirations for the community and landowners/promoters that could be put forward within an application. Examples given were around the creation of a permissive path connecting the church to Daynes Farm, or creative ideas about ways that the wetlands around the stream could be developed and managed with community support. It was noted that consultation could be around broad aspirations, not technical detail (such as the specifics of a flood scheme for example).

It was put on record that it is commendable that land promoters for the Ford Farm site have listened to comments made on the site and responded accordingly.

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received 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 on 19th February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

It was AGREED to take item 10 out of order to enable members of the public present to participate.

10. Consultation plans

10.1. Consultation on Housing Sites *Consideration of proposed dates, structure, budget allocation and support offered by AECOM**

It was noted that the housing consultation subgroup (Prana and Alex) had met on Friday 15th March and following the meeting had tabled outline plans for housing centred consultation for discussion.

The paper was introduced commenting that consultation is proposed to focus on two key issues:

1. Possible allocation of the sites east of Harberton and perhaps also the 1 dwelling site in Harbertonford and the CLT site if appropriate.
2. A selection of key draft policies that would affect not only the allocated but any future sites.

It was proposed that the **principles** for the consultation would be to identify precise questions to ask that will directly inform policies/stipulations in the NP, actively present only the key information people need in order to provide informed responses to the questions to avoid overload, but also make available all the detailed information informing the current NP draft for anyone who wants to look at it (Site Options Assessment, Housing Needs Assessment, SEA scope, etc)

The proposed **format** would be to prepare an exhibition for a week each in village churches, with one workshop event per village and the exhibition be accompanied by questionnaires. The Harberton workshop event could be complemented by a walkabout of Harberton sites if landowners agree, and with landowner involvement. The exhibition and questionnaire would also be made available online in suitably adapted form.

It was suggested that policies be refined in April, the event advertised in May, during which time further discussion would be held with landowners and exhibition materials developed. The event itself would be held in June.

During consideration of the paper:

- It was confirmed that the proposals had taken into account the offers of support from AECOM, and that the offers of support are a good fit to need.
- There was discussion on whether consultation should focus solely on the land east of Harberton on the basis of the outcome of the Site Options Assessment indicating the suitability of sites for development. It was noted that the amber site in Harbertonford does not meet the minimum threshold for inclusion. It was agreed to seek guidance of the Neighbourhood Housing Officer before confirming this focus. It was noted that owners/agents of sites that have been deemed unsuitable for development in the Site Options Assessment have indicated a desire to provide supplementary information at time of public consultation.
- The timeline was queried. It was commented that the HNP committee had expected to have received a draft Housing Chapter ahead of the meeting in order to discuss policies and the consultation timeline allocated time for a review of policies. In response, it was commented that it had been discussed by the subgroup that it was unlikely to be possible to consult on all potential policies in the plan meaningfully, and therefore a task ahead of the consultation sub-group is to select the policies to consult on by going through a process of prioritisation. It was also commented that the subgroup would like the reassurance of first consulting with experts, such as officers at the Local Authority, to ensure that the wording of policies is optimal before putting them before the community for comment. **ACTION: for Alex/Prana** to liaise with **Cat** on asking SHDC Officers to comment on draft Housing Chapter policies.
- Following queries raised, it was confirmed that the policies included in the consultation paper had not been drawn from a draft Housing Chapter and it was unknown when a Housing Chapter would be forthcoming. After discussion **it was AGREED** that **ACTION: Douglas** would ask Prana to hand-over the draft Housing Chapter in whatever state it is now, to give active assistance to bring the chapter to completion. Alex confirmed that he would be willing to give support, on the basis that Prana would continue to be available to provide comments and input. It was suggested that should the draft be shared with Alex by Friday 22nd March, he would be able to support the process to bring a draft forward ahead of the next meeting.
- Members of the Committee were supportive of the draft. **It was AGREED** that the committee endorse the consultation document and the sub-committee move forward with actions.
- Prior to leaving the meeting, representatives from Origin Land commented that they would be happy to talk about being involved in consultation at any point.

5. Update on actions

Ref	Action	Owner	Progress
231218 7	Contact South Hams District Council's Senior Strategic Planning Officer to receive a formal response to the Site Options Assessment, asking if any conditions would enable the development of 'red' sites.	Cat	Complete. Item 7 on agenda.
240219 6.1	Arrange a meeting between members of the site/housing consultation sub-group and land promoters/owners of Harberton sites to discuss collaboration on consultation event	<i>Not attributed</i>	<i>Discussed under item 10.</i>
240219 7.1	Circulate draft housing chapter in approx. 10 days (i.e. before 29 th February 2024)	Prana	Expected for circulation on Friday 15 th March. Discussed under item 10.
240219 7.1	Meeting of housing/site consultation sub-group at 6:30/7pm on Monday 11 th March.	Prana/Alex	Completed. The meeting was re-arranged for Friday 15 th March. Papers arising from the meeting were tabled at the HNP meeting on 18 th March.
240219 7.3	Schedule a meeting with school representatives, sharing the draft social amenities chapter and chapter 1.	Cat	In process. School leaders have been contacted for comment on the draft and to request invitation to others.
240219 7.3	Circulate social amenities chapter and chapter 1 to TRAYE, HPFA and Harbertonford Playground Improvement Group and invite comment/offer Zoom meeting.	Cat	Ongoing.
240219 7.3	Engage Chairs of Harbertonford Allotment Society and Harberton Allotment agent with question on need for more/different allotment capacity, sharing draft Environment chapter (highlighting allotment section)	Alex: Harberton Agent Cat: Harbertonford Allotment Society	Cat: Completed.
240219 8.1	Ask the school if fliers advertising the Energy Consultation Event can go home in book bags and if a social media link could go on the school Facebook page and reference made in the upcoming newsletter.	Cat	Completed.
240219 8.1	Forward the Energy Event invitation to a contact in the ramblers society.	Alex	It was confirmed this had been pursued.
240219 8.1	Forward event information to any groups, clubs and societies in the local area with whom you have a connection.	ALL	
240219 8.2	Feedback Prana and Alex's availability to AECOM in order to set a date and time for a meeting to discuss next round of consultation on housing/development sites.	Cat	Completed. Meeting confirmed for 11am 27 th March, Microsoft TEAMS

6. **Energy consultation workshop** *Report on outcomes of February event* Update is that Alex and Jem have written a write up of the event that will be circulated to event attendees before it is made public, and form the basis of the Energy Chapter of the draft plan. It is expected that this will be put to the committee at the next meeting.

7. **Receive Local Planning Authority Response to Site Options Assessment** *Update and review*
It was reported that the Local Authority's Neighbourhood Planning Officer, who is also a Senior Strategic Planning Officer had been forwarded the AECOM Site Options Assessment for comment. Having looked at this in detail, he commented that overall, the site assessments are comprehensive and the conclusions are justified – in his opinion. Having been through each of the site assessments, he would agree with the conclusion reached for all of the sites. Having said that, he would comment on some of the sites as follows:

- "Land at Tristford Road, Harberton. The SHLAA concluded that this site has only limited constraints. Was it shown as a Green site in the draft AECOM report? I recall that 2 sites were

concluded to be suitable for allocation in a previous iteration of the report. If the landowner has confirmed recently that the site is not available, the conclusion that it is a Red site is valid.

- *Land east of Harberton (land at Ford Farm). The report concludes that this site is suitable for allocation. Whilst agreeing with this conclusion in principle, the actual deliverable capacity of the site appears to remain in question – so some further detailed site assessment work is likely to be required.*
- *Old Road, Harbertonford. The report assesses the capacity of this site to be one dwelling. As such, it is too small to warrant a plan allocation. Is the NP going to define a settlement boundary for the two villages? If so, this site would be within the Harbertonford boundary, so its development would be acceptable in principle and any proposal would appropriately come forward through the planning application process.*
- *Part Preston Farm, Harberton. The report's conclusion is that this site is suitable 'in-part for allocation' – provided that the site to the west (Ford Farm) comes forward. This conclusion appears to be sound. It would be good if these two adjoining parcels of land could be looked at collectively"*

It was noted that the Officer had been asked whether the constraints of the 'Red' sites can potentially be overcome. His response was as follows "The Red grading of a site using this methodology usually indicates that there are one or more constraints that cannot be overcome/mitigated against – i.e. there is a 'show stopper'. This certainly appears to be the case for the sites assessed in the AECOM report. Perhaps the most fundamental issue is that of location. The sites are in un-sustainable [sic] locations, in some instances 'remote and isolated in the countryside'. Clearly this is not a characteristic that can be changed or overcome. Other key factors present in some/most of these sites informing their 'Red' grading include topography (steep slopes), flood zones, aspect and lack of connectivity.

*The cluster of sites in the area of Plymouth Road/Dorsley would represent a 'large new settlement' separate from Totnes. The allocation of such large sites would be a strategic planning decision to be taken in a local plan, and would be outside the remit of a neighbourhood plan. Also, the provision of dwellings in accordance with the indicative figures given to the Sustainable Villages in JLP Policy TTV25 (and Fig. 5.8) needs to be met **at** those villages, not at some geographically removed location (please refer to my colleague Denise Vigers's e-mail to you dated 10 March 2023)."*

Having received this report there was a discussion about the value of drawing settlement boundaries. Opposing opinions were discussed, in which some members saw advantages of creating settlement boundaries to prevent open market housing outside the settlement area, with others taking the view that without a settlement boundary, each application would be made on a case-by-case basis. It was suggested that as there are contrary opinions within the committee, that it consult with the community on drawing settlement boundaries within the Neighbourhood Plan.

8. Reviewing Neighbourhood Plan draft

- 8.1. Housing chapter Update and review It was noted that a draft had not been received. This had been discussed at item 10 (discussed between items 4 and 5).
- 8.2. Draft Supplementary Planning Document for Oak Tree Field For review A draft paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A comment was made in support of the document and the policies within. It was noted that comments made by the Secretary of the CLT would need to be reviewed as they were now out of date. It had been reported that discussions with housing associations had been taking place since the statement by the CLT Secretary had been requested, and the situation was dynamic. **It was AGREED** to carry discussion over to the next meeting. **ACTION: Cat** request that Prana, as author of this chapter, could provide some context ahead of discussion as to what the supplementary planning document is for, what this committee is being asked to do and what it has to do with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.3. Plan chapter task and finish groups Any actions, updates, inclusion of comments in chapter redrafts It was noted for the minutes that:
 - comments on the Transport Chapter had been made by three members of the Community Speed Watch Group. No comment has yet been made by the District Councillor.
 - comments on the Environment Chapter have been made by the co-chairs of Harbertonford Allotment Society, who also provided a response to the question of need for more or different allotment capacity.
 - The person that drafted the 'Green Spaces' policies has been asked to review the chapter and indicated that comment could be expected shortly.
 - Staff at The Link Academy Trust have been asked to review narrative written about Harbertonford CE Primary School to make sure that it is up to date, and to make specific comment on the issues that may affect the school in the future. It was commented that the Department for Education is projecting a reduction in pupil intake over the next few years, due to decreases in population, and therefore the school may wish to highlight ways in which the Neighbourhood Plan can help it remain competitive and retain its current intake.

- Members of Sustainable Harbourne Valley have given feedback on the draft Environment Chapter, and some more comments are expected via the organisation's upcoming AGM.
- A leading member of the Harberton and Harbertonford Historical Society has read the draft Heritage Chapter and has comments to make. Alex will be chasing this.

9. Update following March meeting of Parish Council *Response to note from Neighbourhood Plan Committee paper: Implementing our Neighbourhood Plan: what role for the Parish Council?*

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan committee had laid out a number of options (A-F) on the Parish Council's role in implementing the Neighbourhood Plan. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would agree to the following options, for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Option B: *"Keeping a prioritised list of potential community initiatives, published on the parish website, to help spot relevant funding opportunities and other sources of support for them, and to galvanise local people to take them forward"* It was commented that the list of community initiatives that become published in the Neighbourhood Plan could be reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (in May), or Ordinary Meeting in May, and publish the reviewed list on the Parish Council's website.
- Option C: *"Conducting an annual NP Implementation Assessment at a PC meeting, perhaps at the time of the Parish Meeting in April, on the basis of the planning implementation checklist and list of community initiatives. A simple summary to be published on the parish website."* Noting this option would be combined with the review of community initiatives as described above in Option B
- Option E: *"Organising a regular parish gathering to celebrate our parish, and consider the issues we face. This could be run along broadly similar lines to the NPC's Community Conversations event last year, which was well attended, attracted positive feedback and produced clear and useful evidence of local needs and aspirations. (This could be an example of "active facilitation" as mentioned above [Option D].) It could also incorporate public discussion of the year's NP Implementation Assessment above, and checking the prioritisation of the list of community initiatives."* It was agreed to support this option every two years.

There was discussion in which the HNP committee considered means of encouraging deeper engagement from the Parish Council on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, on ensuring that the Parish Council is in support of policies within the draft plan before they go to consultation and to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is implemented once approved.

It was AGREED to request that the Parish Council give feedback on draft chapters of the Neighbourhood Plan over a series of successive meetings, proposing the Parish Council provide a response to the 'consultation template' as has been used with task and finish group consultees. **It was AGREED** that the Transport Chapter and Heritage Chapter be the first two chapters to share with the Parish Council at the April meeting. **ACTION: Cat/Alex** to liaise on compiling documents.

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting is due in April, and the Clerk would be preparing for this in the coming weeks, should the HNP committee wish to use the opportunity to consult on any specific topics.

10. Consultation plans *Discussed out of order, between items 4 and 5.*

11. Payments *Review payments for approval* It was noted that a budget of £300 had been approved for the energy consultation event. It was **AGREED** to approve Jem's reimbursement request of £122. **It was AGREED** that the committee sign off on expenses that Alex incurred for refreshments, provided the cost be less than £40. **ACTION: Alex** to provide **Cat** with receipts.

12. Any other business

It was noted that Peter and Jem had been given access to the Parish Council's cloud based mapping software for testing, and that the committee would be able to use this to produce maps for the emerging plan.

13. Summary of actions before next meeting

Ref	Action	Owner
240318 10	Liaise on asking SHDC Officers to comment on draft Housing Chapter policies.	Alex/Prana liaise with Cat
240318 10	Ask Prana to hand-over the draft Housing Chapter in whatever state it is now, to give active assistance to bring the chapter to completion. Request the draft is shared by Friday 22 nd March.	Douglas

240318 10	Give support to the completion of the draft Housing Chapter to share ahead of the next HNP Committee Meeting.	Alex
240318 9	Requesting that Prana, as author of the draft 'Supplementary Planning Document for Oak Tree Field', could provide some context ahead of discussion as to what the supplementary planning document is for, what this committee is being asked to do and what it has to do with the Neighbourhood Plan	Cat
240318 9	Liaise on compiling Transport Chapter and Heritage Chapter and consultation templates to share with the Parish Council ahead of the April meeting.	Cat/Alex
240318 11	Provide Cat with expense receipts for refreshments	Alex
240219 7.3	Circulate social amenities chapter and chapter 1 to TRAYE, HPFA and Harbertonford Playground Improvement Group and invite comment/offer Zoom meeting.	Cat

14. **Date of next meeting** 7pm Monday 15th April 2024, Harbertonford Village Hall. *Sally gave apologies in advance.*

Meeting closed at 20:48