

STEWKLEY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF

(REVISED) STEERING GROUP MEETING

TUESDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2019 AT RED BARN FARM, STEWKLEY

Present:

Neil Dickens (ND) – Chair

Keith Higgins (KH) – Stewkley Parish Council (SPC) Chair

Gill Morgan (GM) - SPC Councillor

Paul Smith (PS) - SPC Councillor

Steve Nicholl (SN)

ITEM	ACTION/DECISION
<p>1 <u>Apologies:</u></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Janette Eustace (JE); Andrew Pryke (AP) was unable to attend.</p>	
<p>2 <u>NPSG Membership Reduction:</u> KH confirmed on behalf of the Parish Council the reduction in membership of the Steering Group for this final phase to those present plus JE and AP. ND confirmed that he had written thanking Jenny Wodey, Margaret Burgess and Laraine Chappell for their great contribution to this point.</p>	
<p>3 <u>Minutes of meeting on 15 May 2019.</u></p> <p>The minutes were accepted unanimously as a true reflection of the meeting.</p>	<p><u>Action:</u> Minutes to the Parish Clerk for the parish website. Action completed</p>
<p>4 <u>Matters Arising.</u></p> <p>a) <u>Progress of Soulbury Road development.</u> KH, as PC Chair, had had 2 exchanges with Steve Smith of Dennisons. Although AVDC have not yet signed off the revised drainage plan and Dennisons are still not in a position to announce sale of the site to the preferred builder/developer, work being done by Gigaclear is indicative of high confidence of resolution soon.</p> <p>b) <u>NP Site 13 – ND visit to site owners.</u> ND had spoken to the owners of Site 13 (Potash Nursery). The owners had understood the SG rationale for dropping Site 13 from the plan and had accepted it.</p> <p>c) <u>Drafting of Conditions Statement.</u> JE and SN have completed a draft. However, recent exchanges with AVDC mean that all references to the previous Aylesbury Vale Local Plan can be removed and some significant policy changes in</p>	<p><u>Action:</u> SN to complete update and forward to GM</p>

our NP need to be reflected. SN is to complete an update to reflect this meeting. The Basic Conditions Statement and send to GM for forwarding to our current consultant for comment and circulated to other SG members.

and SG members.

d) Consultation Report. GM has updated the Consultation Report up to, but not including, responses to the pre-submission circulation which closed on 28 July 2019. The Consultation Report will be updated once all those responses (some 130) have been considered and responses actioned.

Action ongoing:
GM

e) Paul Jobson (PJ). PJ has completed a version of our NP and his contracted work. However, the result does not meet the SG (or PC) view of what we need. Moreover engagement with a new consultant (and with AVDC) indicates considerable changes are required to achieve a successful formal submission and examination. Nevertheless, there is no urgency to close out the contract with feedback on the performance of the task.

PJ's final version has been produced in software (InDesign?) that we cannot use at present – although not overly expensive, no SG member is familiar with the software. This led to an extended discussion of how we would handle further changes to the current draft plan.

The Grapevine publisher had offered his services to produce the final 'glossy'.

Meanwhile, it was agreed that:

- i. We would work in Microsoft Word.
- ii. The most recent Word version of the plan (dated 14 May 2019) would be circulated to all involved in amending the document.
- iii. All recipients would be required to save the document with their name and 'Working Copy' so that there was no loss of configuration control.

Action: GM
(complete).

Action: ALL

5

SPC and NPSG Joint Meeting 17 Sep 2019 – Progress on work from Pre-submission Consultation.

- i. Conservation & Heritage – Completed by John Sheldon.
- ii. Roads & Infrastructure – Completed by Keith Higgins.
- iii. Housing – Awaiting AP post resolution of housing allocation, sites and policies. This is vital.
- iv. Nursery & Education – Completed by Pam Dickens
- v. Business – To be actioned by Phil Dellafield, who has said he needs help and background to the required changes.
- vi. Amenities – Almost all comments are on policies which

Action: KH and GM
to discuss with AP

Action: GM to sit
with Phil Dellafield
to resolve.

are being reworked by the new consultant, Neil Homer (NH). There is also an editorial requirement to rework amenity photos.

Action: GM

6 Meeting with Neil Homer (NH) & AVDC on 8 October 2019.

a) Decision on housing allocations (numbers).

Much of the meeting on 8 Oct was taken up with arcane debate by experts on interpretation of the precise words in national planning law, framework and guidance.

AVDC have changed their assessed housing need/allocations. They now assess Stewkley as needing 101 new homes above the (2013) baseline. Adding houses already built to those in-build at 'Cricketers' and the Soulbury Road development, on the cusp of full approval, our 101 allocation has been met precisely. AVDC representatives argued that, as a result, no need/allocation had been identified and Stewkley could not allocate further sites for housing unless the requirement was proven via an objective Housing Needs Assessment. (National planning rules specifically exclude subjective surveys such as our Village Questionnaire!)

Crucially, the protection afforded by a neighbourhood plan under the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) only applies if, amongst other things,

"the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement"

The plural "*allocations*" is important because it means at least two sites must be allocated to give the Neighbourhood Plan legal force.

Through NH, Stewkley argued that there is an allocated and identified housing need – for 101 homes. Moreover, Neighbourhood Plans are specifically required by the NPPF to provide at least the number allocated. The fact that current outline planning permission meets – just - this allocation does not undermine our right to add *at least* some additional housing. Moreover, the accepted tools required to produce an objective Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), of the sort AVDC say is necessary to justify any allocation, are macro statistical models that cannot sensibly be applied to a small parish like Stewkley.

Those at the 8 October meeting from AVDC did not alter their position and implied that it would ultimately be for the Examiner to decide if/when our Neighbourhood Plan was put forward.