

Minutes of the Meeting of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
held in the Green Tye Mission Hall
on Tuesday 10th May 2016, at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Ian Hunt (Chair), Cllr Ian Devonshire, Martin Adams, Michael Byrne, Neil Clarke, Bill O'Neill, Mark Ashwell, Lynne Mills and Penny Taylor

Action

1. **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed the six residents to the meeting. He reported on the PC Election on 5th May, when amongst the three councillors elected was Bill O'Neill. According to the NP SG Constitution only two nominated councillors may vote on the NP SG, therefore Penny Taylor volunteered to relinquish her voting rights, whilst remaining on the NP SG as Secretary. Ian Hunt and Bill O'Neill are the nominated councillors with votes.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Hugh Labram, Mari Fleming and Ken Howlett.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12th April were accepted as an accurate record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

6. **LOCAL PLAN – VILLAGE POLICY UPDATE**

The draft of the District Plan is due for presentation on 15th September followed by a 6 week consultation period, then submitted to the Draft Inspection Team who are expected to report by the year's end.

IH reported on the meeting he attended on 5th May regarding the District Plan – Village Policy Discussion Paper, which had proposed to abandon village development boundaries and instead assess applications against village-based sustainability criteria

At the PC meeting on the 3rd May the discussion held with the residents was confused at times and IH admitted his draft Response paper for it had been too complex. However the PC meeting mandated IH to uphold the status quo and he submitted a short paper along the lines agreed, to the EHDC.

At the 5th May meeting there were ~45 representatives many of whom held the same view as us. EH are stuck between Government dictates and village requirements.

The Village Policy Paper will be presented by EH in July/August. Small developments in small villages/hamlets seemed to be wanted by most villages including the hamlets.

If the village boundary is abandoned so may the target number of 54 new houses. We will need more clarity on policy before deciding where and what development can take place.

IH

7. TIMETABLE / IT UPDATES

MA reported the milestone for this month is to arrange Consultation Meeting which is currently on track. Due to Mari's absence, there was no IT report or news on the NP website.

8. POLICY LEADER UPDATES

Development Land:

MB is keen to investigate sites at PG/GT as well as within the current village boundary, just in case the District change the rules.

Even though the consensus is to restrict development to within the boundary, it may prove very difficult to identify enough sites without expanding to the fringes. MB requested permission to explore brownfield sites in the Hamlets as a backup plan. It was deemed more realistic to include the hamlets as they are keener to have some development than none at all.

"Sustainable" housing appears to mean development within easy reach (walking) of facilities, eg church, shop, school etc, ie. as close to the centre of MH as practicable.

If an idea was obtained of those people prepared to have their land development within the village boundary, then it may not be necessary to look to the hamlets. To this end, it was suggested making a leaflet drop suggesting people think about the possibility of development on their land, together with an invitation to the consultation event on 18th June.

MB/BO'N

MH proposed that he and BO'N be allowed to extend their search for development land outside the village boundary, in case the District Plan abandoned the existing village boundary, and all criteria were changed. All in favour. RESOLVED

MB/BO'N

There was a recommendation for a set of metrics to rank sites for development, listing possible sites in the hamlets as least suitable.

MB/BO'N

Housing Options

In the absence of both KH and HL, it was reported that KH had raised the subject of what is "affordable" housing. Government proposal for "20% off market price" should only be available through social housing monitoring system, ie Housing Association. Of the 7 houses being built in Walnut Close, 2 will be "affordable", which should not be confused with "smaller/cheaper" houses.

9. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident strongly advised a mix of housing and density, even including multiple-occupancy properties for rent. A resident enquired whether EHDC would take the villages' opinions more seriously if supported by professionally assisted opinions. A resident enquired whether the 3 parcels of land referred to by Strutt & Parker at the April PC meeting were inside the village boundary. Any development applications put forward to EHDC would have to go through due process, so no guarantee that these areas would be developed. A resident requested an alphabetical list of times, dates and content of all discussions that members of the NP SG had had with possible stakeholders, past and future. The NP SG assured one resident that the NP SG had not considered any of the three sites referred to by Strutt & Parker, as they were outside the existing village boundary as provided by EHDC.

10. USE OF CONSULTANTS

The Chair asked members of the SG to consider the type of Consultants we might need:

1. Surveys and consultations
2. To produce the actual document
3. Developing site options
4. Policy adviser, critical advice on content.

Other suggestions were legal advice to draft the report; help with assessing housing needs; help with Project Plan to get more detail; help with website depending on how Mari was getting on. All consultants should have very definitive, narrow briefs, to avoid over spend.

LM would circulate suggestions received from Isabel Haddow.

MB & BO'N agreed to co-ordinate lists of consultants.

MB/BO'N

11. WRITING THE PLAN

MA and HL feel the need to start, however briefly, on writing the plan, and to have a basic outline of chapters/contents list, by the time of the Consultation Event.

ALL

PT agreed to collate the information into a basic format.

PT

12. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 27TH MAY

It was agreed that if suitable maps in larger size could be produced, then a small display could be put up for the APM on 27th May, including a Parish Boundary map.

13. CONSULTATION EVENT – 18TH JUNE

MA reported that the meetings on Monday evenings had made good progress and the main task was the content of the display boards.

ALL

IH would arrange timings for attendance by SG members throughout the day 10.0am – 4.00pm depending on everyone's availability.

IH

14. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Production of matrix for assessing sites.

MB/BO'N

15. CLOSING COMMENTS

The chair thanked everyone for their co-operation and constructive discussions.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of next meeting will be TUESDAY 14TH JUNE in VILLAGE HALL GREEN ROOM

14th June – Village Hall Green Room

9th August - Village Hall Green Room

13th September - Village Hall Green Room

11th October – Bowls Club

8th November – Bowls Club

13th December – Bowls Club