

Minutes of the Meeting of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
held in the Bowls Club
on Tuesday 8th November 2016, at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr Ian Hunt (Chair), Cllr Clive Thompson, Mark Ashwell, Hugh Labram, Lynne Mills and Ken Howlett.

In attendance: 6 residents

Action

1. Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Bill O'Neill, Cllr Ian Devonshire (EHC), Michael Byrne, Martin Adams and Neil Clarke.
2. Declarations of interest
None.
3. Chairman's announcements
Reminder to those present on the purpose of the Steering Group.
Reference made to the planning application submitted for Old Station Yard which will be discussed at the next Planning Committee meeting. The Chair highlighted that some of the Group members have been reviewing this and Cllr Ian Devonshire is expecting to call it in to DMC.
At the last Parish Council meeting, a motion to support Stop Harlow North was rejected. The implications for the draft District Plan and therefore the NP were outlined.
4. Minutes of the last meeting
The meeting minutes from 11th October 2016 were approved without amendment.
5. Reports on outstanding matters
Report on outstanding matters received.
6. EHDC draft District Plan consultation
Update from Cllr Ian Devonshire provided via the Chair. Draft consultation documentation available to review tonight, including how to access the portal to make comments. The Planning Inspector's review is likely to take place Autumn/Winter 2017 at Wallfields.
The Chair highlighted that any formal response to the draft will be from the Parish Council, bearing in mind that the consultation is only seeking to ensure that the plan has been properly prepared. No amendments to the plan will be made before submission to the Planning Inspector.
7. Policy Leaders' updates

Development Land-

Matrix is still being prepared and continuing to look at sites. Once matrix is complete, this will be subjected to a public consultation. Cllr Clive Thompson has had discussions with East Herts Planning Officers, and has sought dates to meet the Head of Planning, in respect of Old Station Yard. Ideal solution would be for the planning application to be withdrawn and re-submitted once NP in place.
The Chair reported that we continue to look at sites only within or on the existing village boundary in sustainable locations and we are feeling no need to look further afield to meet the housing target at this stage.

Housing Needs Assessment-

At previous meetings, it was agreed to broadly follow the process defined in the guidance from Locality that includes a toolkit for neighbourhood planners covering a series of steps and tasks. The precise path is for each parish to determine.

At the last meeting, it was agreed that there was no reason to calculate the housing numbers required as the Parish Council has been given a minimum target of 54. It is also known that this target can't be achieved within the existing village boundary. If a higher figure is sought, it would be at the expense of the Rural Area outside the Green Belt which the Parish Council is seeking to protect. The question is, therefore, given the minimum target, what type and tenure of homes should be planned for. Martin Adams has produced an in-depth report covering this which has been reviewed by Hugh Labram, Ken Howlett and Cllr Clive Thompson.

Martin's analysis in respect of affordable housing, however defined, concludes that the policies that East Herts has prepared in its District Plan should be applied and not set a separate target for affordable housing.

In terms of tenure, proportion of rented versus owned properties, it was noted that the existing tenure mix largely mirrors that of the district but in the rented sector, the Parish Council has a slightly higher proportion of social rented accommodation rather than private rented. This is not significant enough to warrant any policy of rebalancing towards the district averages so the recommendation is to follow East Herts' policies in this area and not seek to create separate policies for Much Hadham.

More work needs to be done on assessing whether enhanced policies to those developed by East Herts for accessible and adaptable homes are required given the parish's much higher proportion of residents with disabilities. It is possible the figures are skewed by St Elizabeth's residents, for example, therefore need to understand the census data in this area.

Other progress-

Hugh Labram – some progress has been made on the design element of the NP.
Ken Howlett- mix, style and size of properties needs to consider the number of extensions undertaken as these decrease the number of small properties. There have been 29 extensions in the last 4 years.

8. Website development

LM has built a website that is now at a working prototype level and this has been made available to the Steering Group. As soon as the name of the site can be established and made live, it will be published and advertised so that any member of the public can access it.

9. NP drafting

Progress has been made to start drafting the NP. Structure and elements of generic information have been completed, and a draft contents page tabled. This is available on dropbox.

10. Residents comments

Note – apology given by the Chair as the residents on the mailing list were late in receiving the agenda for tonight's meeting.

In response to a question regarding the number of sites, Cllr Clive Thompson stated it was too early to say how many there were but aiming for around a dozen to compare.

Following a request to know where the potential development sites were, the Chair responded that the discussions with the owners of potential sites was private and confidential at this state. This approach is based on advice and guidance from East Herts Council. The intention is that the next public consultation, in March 2017, will include a map with all potential sites highlighted together with an analytical assessment.

In relation to a query relating to the Barn School, it was reported that there are still ongoing discussions regarding the potential availability of this site.

11. Next 3 months objectives

Objectives were presented by the Chair:

- Draft our first policy proposals using the output from the last Consultation event
- Complete work on identifying potential development sites
- Create a photo library of views to be presented based on the Conservation appraisal
- Improve the public's accessibility to our evidence base

12. Items for next Agenda

Future items are:

- Use of consultants
- Locality funding

13. Closing Comments

The Chair highlighted that the first draft of the Standon and Puckeridge NP is available on line as is the second Bishop's Stortford NP for central and southern neighbourhoods. Residents were thanked for their attendance.

14. Date of next meeting

This is to be advised but likely to be the 14th February 2017.

DRAFT