

Minutes of the Meeting of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
held in the Green Room, Village Hall
on Wednesday 15th February 2017, at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr Ian Hunt (Chair), Cllr Clive Thompson, Mark Ashwell, Hugh Labram, Lynne Mills, Cllr Bill O'Neill, Cllr Ian Devonshire (EHC), Martin Adams, Ruth Fleetwood and Ken Howlett.

In attendance: 11 residents

Action

1. Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Michael Byrne and Neil Clarke. Jacqueline Veater is on her way.
2. Declarations of interest
None.
3. Chairman's announcements
The Chairman announced that during the 3 months since the last meeting, there had been favourable content for Neighbourhood Plans in Parliamentary papers and considerable resistance put forward to the further development of the Old Station Yard. In addition, the following actions has been completed:
 - New website developed by Lynne Mills is now live;
 - Members have been attending meetings locally, in the hamlets, and in neighbouring parishes;
 - Evidence base has been indexed by Martin Adams;
 - Review of the Group's governance documentation; and
 - Work underpinning the items on the agenda.Reference was made to a negative letter to the press following the last meeting, including a reminder as to how the group operates in a transparent manner.
4. Minutes of the last meeting
The meeting minutes from 8th November 2016 were approved without amendment.
5. Reports on outstanding matters
Report on outstanding matters received. Majority of items addressed.
6. New appointments to be approved
Ruth Fleetwood – Project Manager
Ruth is a Project Manager with 35 years experience and helped Braughing get its Neighbourhood Plan to the pre-submission stage. The appointment was agreed.
Jacqueline Veater – Planning Consultant (arrived at the meeting at this point)
Jacqueline is a Planning Consultant working with Parish Councils and community groups to help improve areas, fight planning applications or develop Neighbourhood Plans. She has been involved in the Neighbourhood Plans for Braughing and Walkern. The appointment was agreed.
It was clarified that her role would be to provide insight on planning policies, oversight to Neighbourhood Plan policies and oversight of the site assessment process.
7. EHC Developments
Cllr Ian Devonshire (EHC) reported that the key issues from the draft District Plan consultation will be presented to EHC's Executive meeting on the 9th March, where permission to submit the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate will be sought. It is already known that the Plan will not be looked at until September/October as the Inspectorate are busy. The expectation is that the results of the inspection will be known at the end of 2017 to enable the Plan to be adopted in the early part of 2018. He also confirmed that EHC has a land supply over 3 years.

8. Approval of site assessment process

The Chair stated that the site assessment process describes how sites will be chosen and it a crucial element of the Neighbourhood Plan process and critical to delivering the Plan. Assessment needs to be objective with no bias. The process is outlined in the following documents, circulated prior to the meeting:

- Narrative description of the process;
- Site assessment ratings matrix; and
- Proforma 'Site Assessment Summary'.

Following detailed review, and subject to amendments, the site assessment process documentation was agreed.

It was confirmed that the assessments would be reviewed by the whole Housing Group to ensure consistency of application.

9. Approval of Business Survey

Draft Business Survey was circulated prior to the meeting. Following discussion, and subject to amendments, the survey was agreed. The survey will be undertaken after the Workshop on the 25th February as that opportunity will be used to gather more contacts. It was confirmed that agricultural businesses are on the list.

10. Approval of business schedule

The project plan, in summary and detailed form, prepared by Ruth Fleetwood was circulated prior to the meeting. It was highlighted that the housing aspect will take the longest. Consultation on polices was discussed and it was confirmed that no consultation is required until the pre-submission stage. However, it can be undertaken a number of ways e.g. make use of the website, and feedback on policies drafted to date will be sought at the Workshop on the 25th February. Following a question, EHC appoint the examiner of the Neighbourhood Plan and this will not be done until the final submission.

It was agreed to approve the schedule and accept the timescales outlined.

11. Approval of project budget

The project budget, prepared by Ruth Fleetwood, was circulated prior to the meeting. Total budget cost proposed of £14,403 which is to be partly funded by a Locality Grant of £9,000 (see next agenda item). It was agreed to approve the budget.

12. Approval for Locality grant application

Ruth Fleetwood explained the process regarding applying for a Locality grant, including that the application is submitted by the Clerk. Phasing and timing of expenditure is important as there is a 6 month window to spend the grant. It was confirmed that the balance of the cost would be met by the Parish Council. A Technical Grant is potentially harder to get, but not impossible, and has no time period. This will be considered in the future. It was agreed that an application for a grant be submitted.

13. Workshop (25th Feb) progress report

Aim of the workshop is to seek feedback from residents on the environment – character of the village; hedge rows; flora and fauna and views. Displays have been prepared to support this which will be interactive and enable residents to contribute.

14. Policy Leaders' updates

Housing -

Cllr Clive Thompson reported that this is in progress and will remain confidential for the time being.

Natural and Built Environment -

Martin Adams reported that significant analysis had been undertaken of EHC's policies in this area and these were found to be good. 1/2 additional policies will be needed to supplement these relating to the landscape characteristic of Much Hadham. Effectively, matching of policies needs to be undertaken for all aspects of the Plan and then localise for Much Hadham.

Hugh Labram reported that similar work had been undertaken in relation to housing design and conclusion drawn that EHC's policies in this area were good.

Economy and infrastructure -

Business Survey – see agenda item 9.

Following a question in relation to fibre broadband, BT are continuing with their work of fibre to cabinet. Gigaclear are doing 600m of Bourne Lane.

15. Residents comments

In response to a question, the Workshop on the 25th February is on the basis of come along at any point during 2-5pm.

In terms of the business survey, all categories of business welcomed to complete it and it will be advertised in the Parish Magazine and via the mailing list.

Following mention of the village sharing in a landowners windfall if their site is developed, the Chair reminded that this was not a matter for the Group as the Parish Council considers planning applications. It would not be possible for money to be given to the Parish Council for a site to appear in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Reference was made to the village being vulnerable to speculators until the Neighbourhood Plan is in place and it was highlighted that developing such plans typically took 2.5 years where site allocations are involved.

Following discussion of the 54 houses target, it was reiterated that the site assessment is key.

16. Next 3 months objectives

The detailed project plan schedule lists the deliverables for the next 3 months.

17. Items for next Agenda

Future items are:

- Constitution changes
- Non-disclosure agreements
- Survey of young adults
- Output from the workshop on the 25th February

18. Closing Comments

Residents were thanked for their attendance and reminded that the Group always needs more volunteers if anyone is willing to help.

19. Date of next meeting

This is to be advised but may well be the 14th March 2017. Currently no room is booked and need a meaningful agenda.

Meeting closed at 9:49pm.