

Minutes of the Meeting of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
held in the Green Room, Village Hall
on Tuesday 26th November 2019, at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Ian Hunt (Chair), Cllr Bill O'Neill, Martin Adams, Michael Byrne, Neil Clarke and Hugh Labram.

In attendance: Fiona Forth, Parish Clerk (Secretary) and 23 residents.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ken Howlett and Clive Thompson. In addition, Cllr Ian Devonshire (EHC) was unable to attend. Ruth Fleetwood and Jacqueline Veater were not in attendance to contain consultancy costs.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Chairman's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone and reminded those present that it was a Committee meeting and not a meeting with or for the public. He also outlined the current position with the Neighbourhood Plan – Pre-submission Regulation 14 consultation has been completed and modifications to the Plan being considered as a result of the feedback before the modified Plan is submitted to the Parish Council for submission to East Herts Council (EHC). Once with EHC, there is a further public consultation, an examination by an independent planning inspector which may result in further modifications then a referendum is held. If accepted, the Plan becomes part of local development plan.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on the 28th May 2019 were approved without amendment and signed by the Chair.

5. Pre-Submission Consultation

The Chair gave a position statement in respect of the Pre-Submission Consultation. The key points were:

- responses received from 181 residents and 22 statutory and other consultees;
- all resident responses have been transferred to a spreadsheet and categorised. A summary of this was provided - see Appendix A – and the format explained;
- early indications are that residents' suggestions are more likely to lead to changes in the detail of the wording, to ensure clarity, as opposed to rewriting policies;
- in due course, the consultation responses and action taken will be published on the website;
- main changes to the Plan policies are more likely to come from the statutory consultees, primarily EHC and Historic England, with further agenda items indicating the policy changes so far (see items 6; 7; 8; 11 and 12) and further changes may still be required; and
- whether EHC will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be completed (as requested by Historic England) which would be time consuming and costly.

6. Moor Place Gate

The Chair outlined the reasoning for the inclusion of Moor Place Gate as a site within the Plan, namely for the provision of affordable housing owned by the community, and then highlighted the main reason to withdraw this site: no commitment from EHC to community housing, including no decision to give the nomination rights to a Community Land Trust (CLT). EHC also required significant further work undertaken now by the parish to develop a CLT business plan which was considered to be premature.

In addition to this, the Chair outlined that Historic England had objected “in principle” to this development, citing concern for the significance of the Conservation Area and the impact on the setting of listed buildings.

Finally, the Chair outlined that two further policies would no longer be required if the site is withdrawn – extension of the village boundary and an additional heritage asset policy.

Following discussion, **RESOLVED to withdraw Moor Place Gate (South Side) as a site allocation (unable to obtain nomination rights for Community Land Trust), its village development boundary extension X4 (no longer required) and Policy MH HA1 Moor Place (no longer required).**

7. Designate as site allocations

The Chair stated that informal discussions with EHC had highlighted that an option to bolster the robustness of the housing numbers in the Plan was to re-label those sites that have planning permission but are currently undeveloped as site allocations. The main advantage being that these sites would remain as site allocations even if the planning permissions lapsed. There are three such sites permitting 4 dwellings.

RESOLVED to designate as site allocations the following sites for which planning permission has already been granted: Old Nurseries (1), Rear of Ashview, Tower Hill (1) and Yew Tree House (2).

8. St Elizabeth’s Centre

The Chair outlined that the governance and management structures for St Elizabeth’s had changed since the initial meetings had taken place. Consultation responses from St Elizabeth’s highlighted that they had no plans to provide staff accommodation on site.

RESOLVED to withdraw Policy MH H9 Dwellings for St. Elizabeth’s Centre workers (not required).

9. Residents’ comments

Following a question from a resident, it was confirmed that planning permission, with conditions, had been given for two dwellings at Yew Tree House. In addition, it was confirmed that if this permission lapsed, any further application would need to comply with the Neighbourhood Plan once it is adopted.

The Chair confirmed in response to a question that the St Elizabeth’s management did not want the draft policy within the Plan. A further resident highlighted that at certain times of the day staff traffic on the country lanes was heavy. The Chair responded that there were arguments for and against this policy. In addition, it was noted that the Parish Council is aware of the hamlets concerns about the roads and a traffic survey will be taking place during the winter months.

In response to a question, the Chair clarified where Ashview is in relation to Tower Hill.

A resident sought clarification about the location of the potential development site at Kettle Green Lane (agenda item 10). The Chair confirmed that this was the site that is currently designated as a nature reserve. In addition, it was considered unlikely that planning permission would be granted for the (recently marketed) land south of the railway bridge as this is classified as in the rural area beyond the Green Belt. Additional comments were made, by residents and the Chair, regarding the fact that the landscaping conditions associated with planning permission for the Moor Park Place had yet to be complied with although now noted that enforcement action is being taken in relation to part of the site.

A resident queried how the consultation feedback impacts on the timetable for the Plan process and the Chair confirmed that it could be some months if a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

10. Potential development sites

Land at Oudle Lane

The Chair specified the location of this land, highlighting that it was outside the village boundary and in the flood zone. Whilst a site assessment was reasonably favourable, district policy is not to support development on the flood plain.

Following discussion, **RESOLVED to reject the recent offer of land as a potential development site at Oudle Lane (in flood zone).**

Land at Kettle Green Lane

The Chair clarified that the site proposed is the so-called “nature reserve” and outlined more details of the proposal. In addition, he highlighted that an advisor from Historic England considered this site to be part of the parkland at Moor Place and still in the Conservation Area and therefore, in principle, any development would be objected to.

Following discussion, **RESOLVED to reject the recent offer of land as a potential development site at Kettle Green Lane (land to be designated as Local Green Space).**

11. Windfall allowance

The Chair stated that now, after the resolutions earlier in the meeting, there are sites developed and allocated totalling 46 units, leaving a shortfall of 8 to achieve the minimum target of 54. As there are no further viable sites available for consideration, a declaration can be made in the Plan that there is an expectation that at least 8 dwellings will be built within the village development boundary by 2033. There would be no control over their location nor the type of housing to be built, other than that the Plan policies would need to be complied with, and unlikely that any will be social affordable housing. The Chair also outlined what is required to be demonstrated in order to place reliance on windfall.

Following discussion, **RESOLVED to include a windfall allowance in the housing supply to 2033.**

12. Spatial strategy policy

The Chair explained that the proposed policy for the Plan was to remove a potential loophole, and explained what each policy permitting rural development covers.

RESOLVED to add a spatial strategy policy to specifically prevent housing development outside the proposed village development boundary (as defined on the policies map) other than in accordance with District Policy GBR2 Rural Area Beyond The Green Belt or HOU4 Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites or HOU5 Dwellings for Rural Workers.

13. Finance report

The Clerk reported that nearly £31,000 had been spent on the project to date, the majority of which was in relation to consultants (nearly £24,000). This has been funded by the original fund set up by the Parish Council, receipt of grants and from precepts.

In addition, she reported that the last part of the grant received in the 2018/19 financial year had been spent and, once the grant report had been completed, the final tranche of funding (just over £3,000) could be applied for.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting has not yet been arranged but it will probably be when the post-consultation draft of the Plan is ready to be recommended to the Parish Council. As stated earlier in the meeting, a key aspect will be to understand the impact of any Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The Chair thanked all attendees and the meeting closed at 8:15 pm

APPENDIX A

| MUCH HADHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--------|--------|---------|----------|---|-------|---------|----------|-------|--|
| PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION - Aug/Sept 2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RESIDENTS' RESPONSES - number of comments for each site / policy grouping, analysed by theme | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Theme: | TRF&PKG | PROPOSE | SUPPORT | SETTING | OTHER | NO REAS | POLICY | ALTERN | DENSITY | WARMEM | FLOOD | SPORT | PROCESS | SPECIFIC | Total | |
| MOOR PLACE GATE | 77 | 23 | 19 | 58 | 18 | 43 | 16 | 32 | 4 | 20 | 2 | 16 | 6 | 10 | 344 | |
| PRIEST HOUSE | 20 | | 6 | 2 | 7 | | | | 12 | | 7 | | | | 54 | |
| HOPLEYS | 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | | | 4 | | 7 | | | 17 | 52 | |
| MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS | | 13 | 7 | | 8 | | 2 | | | | | | 8 | | 38 | |
| HILL HOUSE | 3 | 8 | 16 | 2 | 6 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 36 | |
| OTHER HOUSING POLICIES | 1 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 10 | | | | | | | | 35 | |
| BULL INN | 4 | 1 | 6 | 1 | | | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | | | 6 | 25 | |
| LANDSCAPE | | 10 | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | 16 | |
| SOUTH PLOT, CULVER | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | | | | | 3 | | | | | | 15 | |
| OTHER POLICIES | | 10 | | | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | | | 14 | |
| HERITAGE | | 9 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | 11 | |
| Theme Totals | 113 | 82 | 81 | 73 | 51 | 45 | 36 | 32 | 26 | 20 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 33 | 640 | |
| CHECK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Theme Definitions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ALTERN | Need to find an alternative site; use windfall allowance instead | | | | | | | | | PROPOSE | Text change or additional analysis / evidence suggested | | | | | |
| DENSITY | Density and layout issues; preference for a type/size of housing | | | | | | | | | SETTING | Adverse impact on landscape setting etc | | | | | |
| FLOOD | Increases the flood risk | | | | | | | | | SPECIFIC | Site specific issues - no more than 10 mentions | | | | | |
| NO REAS | Non-specific objection - simply against the site - no reason given | | | | | | | | | SPORT | Risk to sports facilities | | | | | |
| OTHER | Issues mentioned with insufficient frequency to be separately classified | | | | | | | | | SUPPORT | Supports the site/ policy / plan | | | | | |
| POLICY | Against District or NPPF policies, and / or the NP's own aims and objectives; | | | | | | | | | TRF&PKG | Traffic, parking and pedestrian issues | | | | | |
| PROCESS | Consultation process flawed | | | | | | | | | WARMEM | Development impact on War Memorial | | | | | |