



MINUTES of a Meeting of the **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group** held on **Monday 20th December 2021** at **19:30**, via Zoom.

Present Mrs. Sara Burrell (Chair of the NPSG); Cllr. Paul Jordan (Chair of the Parish Council); Cllr. Phil Colmer; Cllr. David Ribbens; Cllr. Jerusha Glavin; Catherine Nutting (Clerk & RFO)

Apologies Cllrs. David Griffiths and Nick Whitehouse and Mr. Bill Townsend.

1. **Meeting purpose: To evaluate the outcome of the meeting with CDC held on 14th December 2021 and consider the Steering Group's recommendations to the full Parish Council.**

These minutes should be read in conjunction with the notes of the meeting between Chichester District Council and representatives from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) held on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 10:00, via Microsoft Teams.

Mrs Burrell has spoken with Locality, who recognised the difficult situation and agreed that there is no workable alternative available to the Council – the Plan should be withdrawn from the examination process and amended accordingly.

Carry on?

The meeting discussed and agreed that the Plan must have all its development policies removed (H1 / EE4) and the opportunity should be taken to review the other policies and update accordingly.

The meeting agreed that the benefit to the Parish of having a made Neighbourhood Plan, even without the development policies, was important. The Plan has always been wider than the development aspects alone. It covers things like heritage assets, green space, rural design and development, agricultural diversification, and traffic management. These aspects will be important in managing future development plans coming forward, especially at the Crouchlands Farm site and generally benefit and protect the Parish. A made Plan attracts 25% of [Community Infrastructure Levy](#), rather than the current basic 15% rate. Although the timescales for resolving the water neutrality situation is unknown - and could take some years – the issue will be resolved and therefore

the Parish should have a nimble Plan in place, fit for purpose, to support/protect the community post 'water neutrality'.

The meeting discussed and agreed that the timescale to get the Plan back to its current Examination stage (and ultimately Referendum) would take a minimum of two (2) years; (re-write / Regs 14 and 16 process and Examination). The stages will require detailed public consultation at Reg 14, including exhibitions and public information, and a further HRA and other technical assessments at Reg 16.

The meeting agreed that it is likely to be easier to some degree a second time around – it will not be a 'new' process / the Steering Group knows what it is doing and has some of the material already in place (e.g., exhibition pictures) and can streamline the process and the Council already has a professional relationship with Colin Smith Planning. Additionally, the development aspects were contentious and without these the Plan may not attract the same level of community comment/engagement, and this would reduce the workload/timescales to a degree.

The meeting discussed and agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan is a 'life-time' commitment for the community and is bigger than the individuals which make up the Parish Council / Steering Group at any given time and any 'personal commitment' made by one or two individuals in terms of their time. Once 'made', Plans require statutory reviews and amendments every 5 years. The Parish Council must consider the wider, future benefits of a made Plan for the community and decide based on safeguarding the future of the community which it serves. Nevertheless, it cannot ignore the reality of the work involved / required to maintain the Plan.

Sara Burrell stated that she is happy to continue to Chair the Steering Group and give her time to the Plan. However, considering the timescales involved, the Council must decide without relying upon her personal availability.

Previously, the Council benefitted from the considerable time given voluntarily by Steering Group members; however, some of these individuals are no longer on the Steering Group. Similarly, the Council's previous Clerk was unable to get heavily involved due to their contracted hours. The Council's current Clerk is more able to support the Plan. However, the meeting agreed that this could be an additional 50 – 100 hours of work, on top of the Clerk's current workload. The Clerk's hours will need to be considered by the HR Steering Group / Parish Council. The Council will need to manage the 'pressure points' of the Plan at certain time on the Clerk and ensure that the Clerk has the support / capacity to undertake all that is required.

Sara advised that the Parish Council must ensure that there is sufficient budget in place (either Precept / grant funding) to support the Plan i.e., to instruct consultant/professional support e.g., from Colin Smith Planning and pay for the Clerk's time to ensure that no one member of the Steering Group is unreasonably burdened. However, there is some grant funding left; the Council could consider diverting/re-evaluation some budgets and there is likely to be further significant grant funding available for future technical support (between £10 – 18,000) which will be investigated by the Steering Group and applied for. Also, the costs of the Plan will not be borne all at once and will be spread across multiple financial years.

The meeting discussed and agreed that it is highly important that the Parish Council is supportive of the Plan and the work of the Steering Group and does not seek to undermine the Plan/process. This is counterproductive.

Actions

The meeting discussed and agreed to:

- Investigate available grant funding
- Seek a quote from Colin Smith Planning

The meeting agreed to recommend that the Parish Council:

- Withdraw the Plan from Examination
- Remove the development policies (H1 / EE4)
- Update the Plan and return it to Reg 14 (onwards) process
- Approach the community for new members to join the Steering Group (newsletter / social media etc.)
- Allocate a budget which makes financial provision that allows the Council to have the option to progress the Plan (keeps options open in the interim)
- The Steering Group is happy to continue under the leadership of Sara Burrell

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 21:02