

## ***Neighbourhood Plan Working Group***

Cllr Chris Fagan's Meeting with Barbara Childs, Catherine Howe & Norman Kwan from HDC

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 at 2.00pm

Venue: MS Teams Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Chris Fagan, Barbara Childs, Catherine Howe & Norman Kwan

Also in attendance: WCPC Assistant Clerk, Elaine Hunt

- CF – Cllr Fagan explained to the meeting that the Parish's Working Group had conducted its Site Selection process and agreed on the two sites that were discussed at the last meeting and appear in the HDC Draft Local Plan that was published in Spring 2020.  
He asked if, on the basis that these two sites appear in our NP, HDC would be happy to support that NP.
- BC - Obviously not seen the Plan yet, but from what they are understanding about the work WCPC has done, using AECOM etc, then she feels that we have a good way forward now.  
Need to go through the Reg 14 consultation process though, as despite it seeming silly (with HDC having already done this for the relevant sites), NPs need to stand on their own two feet, and there is a standard legal process to achieve that which includes a consultation at Reg 14 stage.  
Understand how frustrating this must feel, but ultimately it is to protect the PC as there will inevitably be challenges, and a part of any challenge would certainly be around due process if the Reg 14 consultation is not completed.  
After doing all this work, no-one wants the NP to fail on a technicality.
- NK - Confirmed BCs assertion, and stated that he would be very happy to help and assist WCPC through the process and is available on the telephone at any time during the working week. He said that the evidence collected (via AECOM) seems very robust, so he is very happy to engage and progress the NP with us to Reg 14. He also has an array of resources that will help us, like contacts, comment form and public notice templates, address lists for statutory consultees etc.
- CF - Confirmed that the PC wants to do this right and not get caught out on a technicality.
- CH - Although Reg 14 is for Parishes to do, not only can HDC provide the PC with resources, but it also offers a Health Check before the consultation is carried

out where it will identify any possible issues with the Plan that can then be ironed out before making the Plan public. This is HDC's preferred method of approach to a Reg 14 consultation but it is not obligatory

- EH - Asked about the cost of the exercise, especially in the light of COVID restrictions and the need to do a mailing etc.
  
- NK - It is legal to do consultations during the pandemic, but they need to be carried out electronically, and therefore there's no reason they should attract additional costs. There is help from HDC with tools and templates to make this 'virtual' style consultation work.  
There is no need to do a mail out – just need to make sure the consultation is very well publicised and direct parishioners to e-mail and website options of responding to the consultation.
  
- BC - The COVID crisis has changed the world, and as long as there is publicity about the consultation on Parish Noticeboards, e-mailed to known interest groups and well-publicised via local magazines/other publications, then the PC will have fulfilled its obligations. There is no regulatory obligation to write to everybody (ie all residents). However it is a legal requirement to inform any parties impacted by the emerging policies in the plan.
  
- NK - The consultation must be over a minimum of six weeks. It must be on the PC website, and HDC will also provide links to highlight the consultation. . After the findings are reviewed and any required amendments are made to the NP, it is submitted to HDC to carry out its Reg 15 consultation.  
Need to carefully record and document how we engaged with parishioners and supply evidence of 'reach'. This is a legal requirement, and also something that NK can help with.  
Also need a narrative of how sites were selected – Inspector will be looking at how decisions were made not just the decisions themselves. NK happy to send examples of work done by other parishes to assist.
  
- CF - Wanted to confirm that the '25' number that was in the HDC Draft Local Plan for West Chiltington Parish IS still the number, and how far into the future that number will hold.
  
- BC - That is the multimillion-pound question! Housing numbers keep changing for everyone, and indeed even since HDC's Spring consultation numbers have gone up for Horsham District. It would be wise for the PC to consider if there are other sites it would like to include in its Plan now.

- NK - Emphasised that how the PC deals with rejected sites is as important as how it deals with selected sites.
  
- BC - WCPC is very lucky that it is not the first PC to conduct a 'COVID-style' consultation – others have done it and a lot can be learned from their experiences; what worked and what didn't.
  
- EH - Thanked the HDC team for their time and attention to our NP efforts. Agreed we'd be in touch again with NK, and with CH and her team in due course.

Meeting ended at 2.30pm.