

Whitchurch on Thames Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Committee (SC)
Minutes of Meeting
Monday 18th July, Village Hall

Attendees:

- Keith Brooks, Chair
 - Jean-Marc Grosfort
 - Sarah Hanfrey
 - Charles Cotgreave
 - John Bradon (reporter)
 - Dave Bowen
- **Apologies:** Jim Donahue Emily Williamson, Peter Ferguson

1 Minutes of 14th June Meeting

Were approved. Keith to circulate to PC.

2. Declaration of Interests & other Contacts

Action: Last few to complete the form. We felt that we should record it if we live adjacent to or would be affected by any specific potential development site. Emailing forms to Jim to collate.

Meetings:

Jim met with SODCs Rachel Riach on 12th May. Will send out notes.

3. Consultations in Old Stables on Saturday 3rd June

Action(carried over): John to liaise with Emily to put on Google Drive after removing peoples' names.: John to add the list of attendees the names from the second session.

Action: All to read the verbatim responses.

Action: Sarah to add development sites that were mentioned to a draft list of sites.

Further Consultation

We had discussed

- Deliver door-to-door a survey with a link to an online survey for those who would be happy to complete it online (saving us time in typing up).
- Use the Electoral Commission or Electoral Reform Society process to ensure that it is impossible to vote twice. (**Action** Sarah to investigate)
- Offer a small prize to those who complete it

Material to review

From the previous meeting Charles and Jean-Marc have put together the following documents which summarise key areas currently of interest:

- Frequently Asked Questions.(Charles)
- Rural Exemption Scheme and options for Affordable Housing. (Charles)
- Input on policies with example of NP of village like WoT (Jean-Marc)

Note: These documents are in the Google Drive folder called: “Input on Specific Topics” <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxHtztMNqzOlb1h1bmZOQTNaT2M>

Next Steps on the Neighbourhood Plan

Keith and Dave had attended the Village and Town planning forum (?) (date TBA). This gave the guidance that SODC are really most interested in pursuing NPs where there is a big allocation of houses in the SODC Local Plan. This allocation is made to focus development where there is infrastructure and where there is a prospect of job creation.

Policy H10 in the Local Plan sets out a target for 500 houses in the 54 smaller villages, which is how WoT is classed. This is an average of 10 moves per village. On the 5% rule our allocation would be 32 houses but less the 18 or so from Eastfield House – not a significant number in terms of the Local Plan.

We noted from the NP progress chart and Map that very few small villages are starting a NP

We discussed whether to continue developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Arguments for waiting are:

- The cost and effort is not warranted by the 10-15 houses that would be involved.
- Guidance says that a Neighbourhood plan can be used to promote development but not to prevent development. General feedback from the two consultation sessions was that attendees did not want the village to be changed.
- Policies in the SODC Local Plan (including policy H10 mentioned above and the policy to avoid developments in the two AONBs) mean that WoT would be an area where development would not be required beyond the current gradual level of house building.
- It looks highly unlikely that any truly affordable housing could be developed in Whitchurch itself.

Other options were reviewed. These are:

- A full Neighbourhood Plan. This is the option we have been following.
- A full Neighbourhood Development Order. A simpler approach aimed at promoting a single development. Seems to offer no advantage.
- A Community Right to Build. Here, the community forms a corporate entity to develop a specific thing (such as shows or affordable housing). We cannot see this working for us.
- A Village Plan. This has not statutory force and is not focussed on development. However the previous plan gained great support in the village and several important improvements highlighted in the plan have been delivered.

A proposal to put the Neighbourhood Plan on hold was tabled and agreed unanimously. It was also agreed to:

- Discuss this with Jim, Peter and Emily (who were not at this meeting)
- Review it again if government directives on rural development and AONB/ Green Belt change over the next few months.

AOB

Action: Sarah to draft prototype press release.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18th September, at 8pm in the Village Hall.

The key agenda item is how to progress the Village Pan. Keith will ask if we can get input from an SODC to help us more to the next stage.