

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)

Virtual Meeting via Zoom on Wednesday 23rd June at 7.30pm

Present: NPSG Members: Alison Alexander (Chair), Mike & Cheryl Loverock, Tom Lowry, Andrew Mogford, Bruce Thorogood (joined 7.45), Ed Vidler and Ian Catherall

Attending: Lee Bray, NP Consultant and Duncan Smith, SHDC Planning Cllr Jacqi Hodgson and Karen Smith (Clerk) and 2 Members of the Public

1) Parishioners Time – Nothing raised

2) Apologies - None

3) The minutes from the last meeting on 11/05/21 were approved.

4) Matters Arising – N/A

5) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations relating to particular Sites

- Alison Alexander (Chair) declared a financial interest in Site 8.
- Ian Catherall declared a financial interest in Site 4.
- Tom Lowry declared a personal, non pecuniary, interest in Site 21.
- Bruce Thorogood declared a personal interest in Site 13, being his next neighbour; also in Site 8, being across the road (non visual); and also in Site 10, being across the valley (visual).

6) Discussion with Lee Bray and Duncan Smith

Both Lee and Duncan have indicated they do not support the approach not to allocate.

Alison outlined that the previous working allocation produced by the NPSG satisfied the 40 requirement, supplied some affordable housing and met the aspirations of the Parish, but since the ‘pepperpot approach’ and single sites policy was also not acceptable, what solutions might Lee & Duncan suggest?

Duncan stated that in his view the NPSG had not as yet provided a robust justification for their approach. The NPSG are within their rights not to allocate, but most NP groups, where there is a JLP requirement, do try and meet it and include an exceptions policy to add local conditions to tie down the type of site. He did however say that there was no other Parish similar to ours in South Hams/West Devon.

Lee’s view is the Parish ideally wanting small scale scattered development is an understandable response to the Questionnaire/Survey. He added it is not unknown for a community to have a settlement boundary in 2-3 pieces. Lee did not support the Shropshire approach, as it applies to sites within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary. The issue of covenants is the significant facet of justification for not allocating sites in Staverton.

Lee's proposal was to allocate Site 28 (14), Site 1 (12-16). Site 26 (1) could be included, although as this is within the settlement boundary it could come forward outside the Plan. A phased development could be considered for Site 1. For Staverton, the NPSG should look at Site 15 – although he appreciates it is a complicated site with viability issues; and primarily sites adjacent to the settlement boundary near the Church.

Lee confirmed he is willing to work with the NPSG whatever route they go down. He will put together the Statement of Basic Conditions, but only after the Plan is resolved.

Points raised by NPSG

- A rumour is circulating in Staverton that the Idverde site may come up for development – the option to introduce a policy seeking to retain employment sites (generic or area specific) solely for business purposes could be considered. Both Lee & Duncan felt the Idverde site would likely fall foul of the JLP, but being a brownfield site it was subjective.
- In Ian's view there would be strong resistance to more than 20 in Landscope and the Plan could fail at Referendum.
- If Staverton Bridge is argued to be part of Staverton, then it is arguable that Memory X is a functional part of Woolston Green. Here Duncan stated that the NPSG is lacking COGENT JUSTIFICATION for that position. Lee was more supportive and referred to the Evidence Paper produced in February.
- Tom raised the Shropshire policy, which is designed to be more flexible - referring to 'named' rather than 'sustainable' settlements. Tom would make the case for Memory X fitting the Shropshire criteria. A new settlement boundary would need to be drawn tightly around Memory X, but it does bring Site 29 back into play, which would offer some affordable. Duncan was not supportive from SHDC perspective, but an Examiner might support, given robust quality justification.
- The option of self-builds to enable a small element of affordable housing might support the peppercorn idea. Duncan was not supportive.
- The NPSG are sceptical that not allocating in Staverton creates risk to developers coming in, as the sites are just not there due to the covenants.
- An ideal site in Staverton may come forward in 2034, but Duncan warned against making any form of allocation on the basis of future assumptions. It was agreed that a generic argument should be made in the evidence paper and mentioned in the body of the Plan, but that it should not be site specific.

Lee confirmed he will hold off further work until hears back from Alison. Duncan, Lee and Jacqui Hodgson left at this point.

Alison summarised that the NPSG have 2 options:

- 1) Keep no allocations
- 2) Revive the preferred peppercorn approach, revisit the working allocation and tighten the justification for it.

All agreed that now they are aware that they are able to redraw the settlement boundaries, this is a gamechanger for Memory X.

The next meeting will address the NPSG original allocation and re-look at the settlement boundaries, preparing cogent points regarding the Shropshire policy and how it can be applied

by allowing single plot self-builds adjacent to our 'named settlements'. Each objection raised by Lee and Duncan must be beaten down one by one. It is fundamental to the aspirations of the NPSG that an open mind is retained - just because something is different to the way things have always been done, does not make it wrong.

The NPSG briefly considered how the allocation might look under this new arrangement

	No. dwellings	No. affordable
Landscope		
Site 28	14	5
Site 1	12 (6+6 phased)	None – if phased
Memory X		
Site 29	6	5
Site 3	3	2
Staverton		
Site 8	2	0
Site 13	4	3
TOTAL	41	15

This does not include Site 26, as it can come forward without the Plan

7) Finance

Chris Timpson has advised that there is £1699.36 remaining to be applied for out of the £10k basic NP grant. There are additional grant funding schemes £8k and £10k, making total grants available as £19699.36; Ed will investigate the criteria for eligibility on both of those before the next meeting.

8) Housing Policies – not discussed

9) Open Meeting – not discussed

10) Correspondence - The NPSG appreciated the letter of support received from the PC.

11) Date and form of next meeting – Tuesday 29th June, 7.30pm (venue tbc)

Face to face meeting, around the map. Alison to book Court Room, however if weather conducive may be held outside with notice on Court Room door to advise any attending parishioners. If Court Room, masks must be worn; sanitiser is provided.

Meeting closed 9.30pm

Karen Smith, Clerk