

Minutes of the Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) Meeting
Held Monday 14 December 2015, 7.30pm, Renshaw Room, Wivelsfield Village Hall

Attending: Ian Dawson (Chair), Craig Bowden, Jason Stoner, Gordon Harper, Dave Wright, John Wigzell, Sheila Blair, Angus Thwaites, Michelle van Bochove, Liz Gander (Clerk), and approximately three members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from John Fair and Judy Stoner.

The Chairman welcomed Michelle van Bochove to the Steering Group as a newly co-opted member of the Parish Council.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None noted.

3. **To Accept Minutes of the Steering Group (SG) Meeting Held 2 November 2015**

The minutes of 2 November were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Update on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Consultation**

Five consultation responses have been received so far, four from residents supporting the appraisal and one – from the Wivelsfield Village Hall Management Committee – declining to comment.

5. **Progress on other Documentation**

GH and DW are currently working to update the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement in conjunction with James Garside of Lewes District Council (LDC). Some amendments will also need to be made to the Plan document to take account of the additional work undertaken (eg making reference to the SA/SEA).

JS asked whether LDC has indicated where it is with the Core Strategy. GH replied that there is a hearing this week on the Core Strategy amendments. If the Core Strategy is approved before the NP is submitted, we will have to revisit the NP documents in light of this. If the Plan is submitted and accepted by LDC before the Core Strategy is approved, it will be down to LDC to re-write it accordingly.

6. **To Discuss the Appeal for the Springfield Industrial Estate Application (LW/14/0790)**

LDC has sent notification that the appeal for the above application will be heard in January. GH has spoken to A Padfield, the agent for Bluemark Projects, at the Chairman's request and confirmed that he will ask for the last of the dates offered. It is therefore expected that the appeal will be heard on 29 January. The appeal hearing will be an informal one, without barristers, and is likely to last only one day.

J Garside has advised that for the purposes of the NP, the Parish Council should now withdraw its objection to the Springfield application, by writing to the Planning Inspectorate prior to the 5 January deadline. Within the letter the PC should confirm that the argument of prematurity no longer applies and should state that the Springfield site is fundamental to the NP's housing allocation targets. Also to be mentioned is that the site has mixed brownfield/greenfield status, that it is an eyesore that has been untended for many years and that the planning boundary will be moved in the NP to incorporate the site.

Concern was expressed that, with the appeal having come up so soon, the NP may not be at a sufficiently advanced stage to guard against the site being taken as windfall if the appeal is allowed. However, it was argued that, since LDC have had the NP since May – albeit in pending form – it would look foolish if they were to try to take our known preferred site as windfall.

Nevertheless, some members of the SG felt that, if lots of comments on the SA Consultation are received, causing a delay to the Plan's submission, we might need to retain the argument of prematurity. As such it was agreed to essentially have two different responses ready to send and make a final decision on 4 January.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that, subject to it being possible to email the Parish Council's comments to the Planning Inspectorate on 5 January (Clerk to confirm), the SG will meet again on 4 January to agree and make recommendation to the Council about the wording to be sent and to confirm its wish to withdraw its objection. The Clerk to draft a response and circulate it to SG members.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.