

Minutes of the Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) Meeting  
Held Monday 2 November 2015, 7.30pm, Renshaw Room, Wivelsfield Village Hall

**Attending:** Ian Dawson, Craig Bowden, Jason Stoner, Gordon Harper, Dave Wright, John Wigzell, Sheila Blair, Angus Thwaites, Liz Gander (Clerk), and approximately three members of the public. Others – including County Councillor Sheppard - arrived during the course of the meeting, in preparation for the subsequent Parish Council meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from John Fair.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None noted.

3. **To Accept Minutes of the Steering Group (SG) Meeting Held 7 September 2015**

The minutes of 7 September were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. **To accept the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The Chairman asked Gordon, for the benefit of members of the public present, to recap on where the SG is at with the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) process. Gordon briefly outlined the chronology of the last few months, culminating in today's recommendation for the SA report to be accepted by the SG:

- Last November (2014), Lewes District Council (LDC) issued a draft Screening Report, indicating that no SA/SEA was necessary.
- In February this year, an official screening notice was issued by LDC, confirming this position.
- In February 2015 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) changed, saying that NPs should now include an SA/SEA, but the SG was not advised of this by LDC, AiRS or Neil Homer.
- During February-March the SG carried out the statutory Regulation 14 consultation on the Pre-Submission NP, feedback from which was used to inform the submission Plan.
- Towards the end of May, the Wivelsfield NP was formally submitted to LDC.
- In June LDC informed the SG that an SA/SEA was required and asked also for the Site Assessment Report (SAR) to be modified to show in greater detail the process undertaken for site selection.
- Since the NP had already been submitted, LDC agreed that it should be pended to allow the extra work to be completed and this is what has been taking place since July.

Gordon stressed that the SA/SEA is based upon the draft (pre-submission) plan, not the final plan as submitted to LDC. Since – had we been advised to do an SA/SEA during the plan preparation process – these reports would have informed the Pre-Submission (draft) Plan, it is the content of the *draft plan* which the SA/SEA report assesses. Consequently, we must make this clear so that everyone is aware that the SA/SEA report relates to a version of the plan which includes development sites taken out in the later (submission) version. The SA purely looks at sustainability, and sustainability issues, not whether a site is deliverable or desirable etc.

Following Gordon's summary, the SG resolved to agree the SA/SEA report as circulated to and read by members, and recommended its acceptance by the Parish Council.

Subject to the agreement of the Parish Council the SA/SEA consultation will commence on Monday 16 November and will run until 5pm on Wednesday 30 December. This allows for the statutory six week consultation period, plus a couple of extra days to take account of the Christmas bank holidays. Feedback will only be sought on the sustainability issues, not on the draft plan itself. Material comments/feedback received will be fed into the draft plan and

used to inform the final document, in the same way that feedback received during the February/March consultation was. Whilst the SA/SEA Report is out to consultation, work can be undertaken on updating the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement.

James Garside has advised that the consultation must be advertised (by means of a letter) to statutory consultees, (including neighbouring parishes/districts, clubs, societies and businesses) and to all those who responded to the Regulation 14 consultation earlier in the year. James has said that it is not necessary to write to all 850 homes in the Parish, as long as the consultation is advertised properly through different mediums. James has agreed the content of all letters and posters to go out and confirmed that it is not necessary to acknowledge every response individually.

The Clerk was asked to let SG members know at the start of each week of the consultation period when she will be in the office (over and above the published opening hours), in case of any additional NP related work being required.

It is hoped that, following the consultation period, the final plan and supporting documents will be ready by the end of January, enabling LDC to consult upon them during Feb/March 2016. If the independent examination can then take place in around April, hopefully we may be looking at a referendum in May.

The Chairman thanked Gordon and Dave for all their hard work in putting the additional reports together. Gordon and Jason also acknowledged that, after a shaky start with LDC which resulted in the Parish Council complaining about service levels in June, they have now really 'come up trumps', with the support being received from James Garside proving invaluable.

**5. To Agree Consultation Actions**

Letters notifying people of the SA/SEA consultation to be mailed to statutory consultees and respondents to the previous (pre-sub plan) consultation. The consultation to be advertised also by means of the Wivelsfield.net website, Community 21, the Wivelsfield column in the Middy and on fliers and posters to be distributed around the Parish.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed.