

## Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee

### Meeting 1: Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 7pm – Benson Parish Hall

**Present:** Phillip Murray (Chair of this meeting), Edel McGurk, Andrew Ashcroft (consultant), Frank Farquharson, Dave Rushton, Lorna Denby (secretary), Martyn Spence, Luke Brown.

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1. Apologies</b> Jon Fowler and Michael Winton</p>	
<p><b>2. Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>2.1. The Steering Committee introduced themselves.</p> <p>2.2. LD to take the minutes for this first meeting but they will be done on a round robin basis for each meeting going forward.</p>	
<p><b>3. To elect a chair for the group</b></p> <p>3.1. Jon Fowler was elected as Chair of the Steering Committee (nominated by MS, seconded by FF)</p> <p>3.2. Phillip Murray was elected as Deputy Chair (nominated by FF, seconded by EM)</p>	
<p><b>4. Visions / Objectives for the Plan</b></p> <p>4.1. PM to forward the SODC toolkit to the Steering Committee for reference.</p> <p>4.2. AA noted that the fast track deadline is 6-7 months, therefore we cannot have lengthy debates about issues due to this short timeframe.</p> <p>4.3. AIM: The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">4.3.1. To regain some control / influence on what happens in Benson in terms of housing. Developments need to be spread across several smaller sites, not all in one large bolt-on estate with no integration.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">4.3.2. To prevent speculative / onerous applications</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">4.3.3. To retain the character of the village</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">4.3.4. To address these issues for both the short and longer term – this plan is about much more than the Littleworth development.</p> <p>4.4. AA noted that the vision and objectives for the plan need to be published. It is key that the community support the Plan. The public meeting in January clearly demonstrated that there was strong support for creating a Neighbourhood Plan. It will take considerable time and effort to manage the continuous communication necessary to keep the community fully engaged.</p>	<p>PM – send SODC toolkit to the Committee</p>

<p>4.5. AA noted that it can typically take 2 years to get a plan in place and approximately 13 months to get to the draft plan stage. We have only 6-7 months to get to the draft plan stage.</p> <p>4.6. Timeline: The draft is drafted, then submitted to the community for comments. Following revision, it is then submitted to SODC for their approval and, when they are happy, for onward submission to an independent examiner. This examiner’s comments are incorporated and then the final version is put by SODC to the community in a referendum. A Neighbourhood Plan only has full weight once it reaches the submission stage, but can sometimes influence decisions when it reaches the draft submission stage. There are no guarantees at any stage that a particular examiner will take the plan into consideration when reviewing a specific appeal, but it is the best tool that communities have at their disposal.</p> <p>4.7. Deadline: We need to aim to have our draft ready for submission 1 month before the appeal date.</p>	<p>AA to send key milestones for a project plan</p>
<p><b>5. Scope of the Plan</b></p> <p>5.1. Designated Area: AA said we should use the existing formally designated area for the Parish in the old Neighbourhood Plan. The area is still valid and to change it would cause a delay of 2 months.</p> <p>5.2. There are 2 key community inputs to the plan:</p> <p>5.2.1. Mandate for vision and objectives – we need to state what we believe should be the vision and objectives for our NP and ask the community to ratify this.</p> <p>5.2.2. Surveys: A housing needs survey and a combined vision survey will need to be carried out. The previous Neighbourhood Plan’s housing survey is no longer valid as it is more than 18 months old.</p> <p>5.3. The plan must be Land Use based and must describe outputs in terms of Policies. Infrastructure issues relating to important areas like Transport and Education issues can be addressed, but only in terms of their impacts on land usage and where our aspirations can be represented as policies relating back to land usage e.g. “All development proposals must provide adequate internal roads, separate footpaths and separate cycle routes to enable ....”</p> <p>5.4. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to consider all development options practically and even-handedly and to recommend viable options, if it is to carry weight with inspectors.</p>	
<p><b>6. Community Engagement</b></p> <p>6.1. An initial update needs to be sent out to the community.</p> <p>6.2. A dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website needs to be set up to help keep the community informed. This needs to be designed with the end in mind – specifically it needs to become the audit trail for the whole NP project. LB will send information on some websites that have already been done.</p> <p>6.3. EM to generate a document with the committee’s photos and brief information about each member.</p>	<p>LD to take on the role of setting up the website</p> <p>LB – send information on other NP websites.</p>

<p>6.4. AA noted that we would need to “go” to each of the 1400 households at least twice. The community will need to confirm what they want us to focus on. Community engagement is key - AA commented that it may be better to attend/have a stall at local community events that are already running, rather than stage our own dedicated events, as we will get better attendance at the former.</p>	<p>ALL – send EM photo and information</p>
<p><b>7. Project Plan</b></p> <p>7.1. The Plan was likely to require 5 topic streams:</p> <p>7.1.1. Housing and Landscape – MS has agreed to cover this area.</p> <p>7.1.2. Strategic Infrastructure – Transport and Education – DR agreed to cover Transport and discuss Education with MS.</p> <p>7.1.3. Local Infrastructure - Retail, commercial and community facilities – FF agreed to cover this area.</p> <p>7.1.4. Open spaces and Recreation – EM agreed to cover this area.</p> <p>7.1.5. Built Environment, Conservation Area and Heritage – PM volunteered Catherine Murray to lead on this area.</p> <p>7.2. In addition a Communications and Website stream will be required to run across the whole project and ensure regular, two-way communication with the whole community. LD agreed to be the liaison between the committee and the communications group.</p> <p>7.3. AA recommended that the next meeting should workshop each of these streams and define 3-5 key policy outputs for each. All members were asked to consider which policies in advance of the meeting.</p>	<p>ALL – think about policies arising from these 5 key areas for the next meeting</p>
<p><b>8. Funding</b></p> <p>8.1. £10,000 of funding has already been secured from SODC.</p> <p>8.2. We can also apply for an additional £8,000 grant from ‘Locality’ - LB noted that we will need to have a project plan, including key high level milestones, in place in order to apply for this. The Locality grant information can be found on the “My Community” website. The Locality grant can be used to fund items like the Housing Needs survey and the Neighbourhood Plan website. It was also noted that surveys are likely to cost £3,000 - £4,000.</p> <p>8.3. Lottery grants are also worth exploring, if additional funding is required.</p>	<p>PM to identify someone to manage the grants</p>
<p><b>9. Volunteers</b></p> <p>9.1. Over 50 volunteers have signed up to assist following the initial Neighbourhood Plan meeting in January. The 2 current lists (general and transport) need to be combined.</p> <p>9.2. An update needs to be sent out to the volunteers before the next Steering Group meeting, to thank them/keep them informed. PM/JF to write a few paragraphs.</p>	<p>PM &amp; DR - send lists to LD. LD - combine lists &amp; attach to the minutes. PM/JF – write a few words for volunteer communication</p>

<p><b>10. AOB</b></p> <p>10.1. The deadline for the Benson Bulletin needs to be confirmed for all future updates. It was noted that it would be useful to have something in the Bulletin regularly. PM to ask JF to confirm deadlines and to write something for the coming issue.</p>	<p>PM – ask JF to write something for BB.</p>
<p><b>11. Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>11.1. Friday 26 February at 5pm at Benson Parish Hall (unless the room cannot be booked)</p>	<p>PM to book</p>