

# Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

## 29 August 2017

### Minutes

Present – Jon Fowler (JF), Philip Murray (PM), Dave Rushton (DR), Michael Winton (MW), Catherine Murray (CM); Martyn Spence (MS); Frank Farquharson (FF), Edel McGurk (EM)

Actions highlighted in **bold**. SC = Steering Committee

1 Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed. All were discharged except for the following:

1.1 CM's action to brief Alice Jones-Evans re maps was carried forward, as Alice is away.  
**Action CM**

1.2 A discussion regarding library provision between DR, FF and EM following DR's meeting with George Verdon was carried forward. **Action DR, FF, EM**

1.3 EM action to propose the addition of a reference to the previously circulated NICE/NHS policies regarding paths and air quality was carried forward. **Action EM**

1.4 JF to resend his comments on the Site Assessment report and comments on the Rural Exception Site wording to PM. **Action JF**

1.5 CM's action to discuss with Jill Parrick the format for publication and implications for design illustrations was carried forward. **Action CM** to discuss with Jill Parrick.

2 Checkpoint (covering Transport Study Brief item also)

2.1 JF introduced the topic, referring to his email summary of the issue, following the last SC meeting. DR had circulated a set of options and provided a verbal run-down of the contents. In summary, the distinction between these lies in the timing of submission of our Plan, with that being influenced by the level of detail required in transport evidence to support our plan.

2.2 The SC agreed that it is necessary to strike a balance between pace and depth of evidence, so that the Plan is in place quickly enough to have weight in determining planning applications and any appeals. Submitting new evidence after submission of the Plan will not be acceptable - we are required to have the evidence necessary to support the Plan at the point of submission. The SC considered the options against a number of questions. It concluded on balance that we should work to submit the Plan as quickly as possible, ensuring that it is evidenced by a traffic/transport assessment that is in proportion to the normal expectations that apply to a Neighbourhood Planning team.

2.3 The transport assessment must justify the safeguarding of the relief road route. It should cover: what it is; where it will go; why it is important; how we have built our housing allocations around it; and the landowner/developer agreement we have secured to build the components of the road within the land that they control. The Examiner appointed to review the Plan will be seeking reassurance that the developers and land owners are supportive and committed to the proposal. It is acceptable to rely on data shared by others provided that the source is made clear.

2.4 PM and DR (plus JF, subject to work commitments) are expecting to attend a meeting arranged by John Howell with the newly appointed OCC Cabinet member for Transport. That will provide an opportunity to strongly advocate the plan that Benson is proposing i.e. a plan that

significantly boosts the supply of housing land in accordance with para 47 of NPPF, and will deliver a significant piece of highway infrastructure in South Oxfordshire at minimum cost to the public purse.

**Action DR** to prepare a transport/traffic statement.

**Action JF** to chase up John Howell for meeting date.

**Action PM** to speak to SODC and ask them to discuss our way forward with OCC Highways.

### 3. Timetable

3.1 JF presented a high level illustrative timetable for the next steps towards getting the plan made:

- 2 Oct Submission of final plan to SODC
- 16 Oct SODC Consultation starts
- 24 Nov SODC Consultation ends
- 8 Dec Appointment of Examiner
- 19 Jan Examiner's comments received
- 23 Feb Proceed to Referendum

3.2 The overall time required for all of the necessary steps to be completed, coupled with the fact that we won't have control over the processes, emphasises the importance of proceeding to submit the plan as soon as possible. AA reminded the SC, however, that once the plan is submitted, any appeals will need to be referred to the SoS. The government has also made some changes that mean the plan has almost full weight in planning terms at the point that the Examiner's report is released.

3.3 Given our need to have the plan made quickly, AA advised that it is vital to be confident that the appointed Examiner is going to be available for 3 weeks to inspect the Plan, as soon as the SODC consultation is complete so that no time is lost. Therefore, we should ask SODC to appoint an Examiner with the necessary availability as soon as we submit the plan. The SC agreed that it would work to submit the Plan asap, aiming for 2 Oct. This means that the amendments to the current draft plan need to be submitted to JF by 23rd September at the latest.

**Action PM** to ask Ricardo Rios at SODC to appoint an Examiner with the necessary availability as soon as we submit.

**Action JF** to speak to Jill Parrick about availability to convert to pdf.

**Action PM** to contact Neil Horner re finalising the SEA.

### 4. AoB

4.1 Landscape - EM sought SC advice on work being done by EM and CM to amend the Landscape section of the Plan. Some components of the text and the mitigation are more relevant to the strategic allocation policy at the front of the plan (because they form part of the justification of the vegetated buffer) so may require additions there too. AA's advice was to limit the content at the front of the Plan to a simple and compelling high level story, one that is not necessarily technical, but

persuasive to a lay audience. It may make sense to describe the proposal under the 3 legs of Sustainable Development (Environmental, Economic and Social).

**Action EM and CM** to finalise amendments and share.

4.2 Budget - JF advised that the budget has now all been used. We need more to cover at the very minimum the preparation of the Basic Conditions Statement (2 days) and amendments to SEA (1-2 days).

**Action PM** to ask SODC for release of some additional funds.

4.3 Consultation - JF has largely completed the Consultation Statement, adding to it as we have progressed. Public meeting - after we submit.

**Action all** of provide JF with a summary of the meetings they've had if not already submitted.

**Action All** to send PM any outstanding contributions to the spreadsheet collating feedback and responses.

5. Date of next meeting: 18 September.