

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting
20th June 2016
Minutes

Present - Jon Fowler (JR), Frank Farquharson (FF), Dave Rushton (DR), Michael Winton, Lorna Denby (LD), Catherine Murray (CM), Philip Murray (PM), Andrew Ashcroft (AA) Edel McGurk (EM),

Apologies - Martyn Spence (MS)

SC= Steering Committee; NP=Neighbourhood Plan
EM volunteered to take minutes

1. Review of Actions

1.1 All actions were discharged, except 3.3. The proposed discussion about Water Framework Directive implications was no longer needed.

2. Drop in Session Feedback

2.1 Forty people attended on the Friday night, and a further seventy two on the Saturday. Both events were busy, with people keen to stay around and discuss matters.

2.2 AA stressed the importance of capturing a summary of the event as part of a dossier to demonstrate the community consultation that has been undertaken to inform the NP. He advised that the summary should concentrate on describing the nature of the event, what happened and the overall thrust of discussions held. It's particularly important to record anything that might result in us needing to change our direction, but we do not need to report the detailed views expressed. JF agreed to prepare a high level summary for the consultation, but work-stream leads will need to provide a few lines on their area.

Action - All workstream leads to send JF a few lines summary wrt to their work area by Friday 24th close of play. This timeframe was proposed so as to meet the deadline for inclusion in the next issue of the Benson Bulletin.

Action LD to continue to compile an electronic dossier of material (photographic etc) to demonstrate for the record our consultation effort.

3. Update on Policy Development

3.1 DR has reworked a number of his policies based on AA's advice.

3.2 CM raised a query about distinction between policies that are general in nature as opposed to site-specific. Until we know which sites are likely to be supported, it is very difficult to prepare policies for the latter. AA advised workstream leads to concentrate on getting the general policies addressed whilst we wait for the results of HNS and the SEA. JF asked all workstream leads to finish drafting general polices and sent to AA so that the wording can be finalised.

3.3 PM suggested that the SC ought to consider commissioning air quality monitoring in some traffic pinch points in the village. AA advised that this might be an action to pick up

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

2 June 2016

Minutes

under the SEA. PM volunteered to take the issue away and seek some advice on the practicalities of such monitoring.

3.4 EM suggested that our specific policies around SUDS might need to be adapted to address likely RAF concerns that mitigation measures should not result in an increased risk of bird strike. (Some SUDS techniques can act as a draw for populations of wildfowl). EM and FF agreed to discuss further.

3.5 JF asked whether it is permitted to frame the NP so as to impose particular phasing requirements on developers/sites. AA advised that this would be impracticable and an examiner would be likely to strike it out. Generally the market will dictate the phasing. CM reported that views expressed at the drop in event indicated a desire to see development phased over many years, but it is unclear whether the implications of that are understood.

3.6 DR queried whether we will at some stage consider sites other than those in the original SODC proposals for allocation. AA advised that there ought to be an opportunity to do and reminded the SC that our NP should consider land allocation for more than simply housing. The SEA will help us understand the relative environmental impact of developing each of the sites.

Action all workstream leads to provide AA with revised drafts of the general policies. JF confirmed that he would like AA to finalise the policies.

Action PM to enquire about air quality monitoring. DR to email contact details to PM.

Action DR to share thoughts with the SC on possible additional sites.

4. Summer Fayre Stand

4.1 EM reminded the SC that the organisers of the summer fayre have provided space for a NP stall at the event on 9 July (12pm to 3pm). She sought SC volunteers to help run the stall and views on the best focus for the event. The stall will include a children's game to keep children entertained whilst adults look at material.

4.2 The SC agreed that this would be a good opportunity to showcase HNS results if they are available. We will need to think about how to present the information.

4.3 Several members of the SC were willing to help, but EM will email out to allow people to check their availability. A small working party/sub group will be needed to pull together material. AA advised to take lots of photos for the record.

Action EM to email out seeking volunteers and develop a plan.

5. Littleworth Lane Phase 2.

5.1 JF reported that this application will be determined on 29th June, and the site visit will be undertaken on 27th June. AA advised that it is worth letting the community know that this visit is taking place. Planning committees will generally be interested to see the human angle as indicated by the community turning up to show their views - their presence can

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

20th June 2016

Minutes

create a powerful message. We need to be clear that they will not have the opportunity to speak to the Planning Committee members on site.

5.2 For the Planning Committee hearing on 29th June, AA suggested that the narrative can be same/similar as before. Presenters should preface statements with 'As you will have seen on the site...' to reinforce the points. The SC agreed that LD should prepare messages to encourage local people by email and via the fb groups to attend the meeting, publicising providing the data/time and location of the meeting. The messages should stress that the more people that are there, the more impact it has.

Action PM to talk to the comms group about a poster for those wishing to be present at the site visit.

Action JF to talk to our District Councillor about the likely itinerary for the visit.

Action LD to arrange a message to send out to volunteers and via fb.

6. Meetings with Developers

6.1 JF is organising a number of meetings with potential developers/landowners, and suggested that only a small subset of the SC should be in attendance. Volunteers were JF, PM, DR and MS. JF will arrange the meetings.

6.2 AA stressed the importance of taking meticulous notes and of asking all of the developers the same questions. It is also important to make clear that the discussions are being held without prejudice.

Action JF to organise meetings and those attending to have regard to AA's advice.

7. AoB

SEA screening

7.1 - SODC has determined that an SEA screening of the NP will be required. NE, EA and Historic England were consulted and latter two have confirmed that an SEA is required because of the possible impact of developing some sites. The SC now needs to procure a specialist consultant to undertake this. We will need to define the issues that we want it to address, and the sites to be assessed. Whilst this is an additional aspect to manage, a SEA does strengthen the NP by providing defensible advice on the nature of environmental issues and likely impacts.

7.2 AA is happy to advise us on a range of suitable companies to carry this out. The independent examiner can amend most things in the plan, but if there is a flaw in the SEA, he/she cannot amend that, so it is important that we choose a consultant that is suitably experienced.

Action AA to provide the SC (via JF) with advice to inform a short list for the tendering process.

Housing Numbers:

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

2 June 2016

Minutes

7.3 MS has proposed that the RAF housing numbers should not be included in SODC's housing allocation consideration. The SC supported EM's suggestion that the Parish Council approach the RAF for a statement confirming how Service Families Accommodation is operated - this can be presented to SODC in support of an argument for a modification in their approach and calculations.

7.4 AA confirmed that military houses are unrelated to the usual open market housing stock and are discounted from the objectively- assessed housing need. And if the Services need accommodation, they often fall outside normal planning regimes and do not count against new provision. He advised that it would be prudent to write to SODC immediately to explain our position and the action we have underway given how quickly things are moving.

Action JF to write to Nikki Hamilton, RAF Benson's community liaison officer seeking a statement, and to write to SODC as suggested by AA.

Design Guidance

7.5 SODC have issued a consultation on the revised Design Guide with a deadline for response of 29 July. AA advised that in time we may wish to build some of our NP text around CM has volunteered to look at it.

Action CM to review the draft design guidance and consider implications for NP design principles.

8. Date of next meeting

8.1 Next SC meeting is booked for Tuesday 5th July (subject to delivery of the HNS results). (This may be cancelled if not needed.) A meeting has also been booked for Monday 18th July.

Action JF to book rooms as necessary.