

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting
18th July 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); Martyn Spence

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

1. Review of Actions

(The discussion focused on undischarged or updated actions.)

Update on draft policies

1.1 JF would like to start drafting the plan so sought reassurance that policy development is progressing. DR has sent his to AA, but others are not ready yet eg Housing policies could not be prepared until the HNS report was available.

1.2 Some parts of the NP can be prepared now - eg the Consultation Statement. (see agenda item below for further info.)

1.3 CM reported that the difficulty with the design policies is that the background rationale needs to be written first. Distinctiveness is crucial to pin down. FF also working on the background justification, and EM reported that time to focus on this has been limited and getting input from the right organisations has been a slow process.

1.4 CM said that we need a session to understand where policies overlap so as to ensure we are consistent, and there are neither gaps nor duplication. The SC reflected that this issue will be clarified as we start to draw the strands of the plan together.

1.5 AA advised that the skill in NP preparation lies in being proportionate. Eg Local green spaces to be designated would be listed, and that supported by a single para policy that restricts development on those to that compatible with their use. Supporting text would be 4/5 paras explaining why they have been chosen, why they are important. All the remaining content including details of their use, a photograph of each and the assessment of each against the 3 NPPF criteria would appear in an appendix as the evidence base.

1.6 There will be two sets of policies in the NP, one generic and another specific to the site. We do need to provide enough detail to steer the sort of development we want. If the NP does not rise to this challenge, the District Council policies will not do for us. The NP becomes the arbiter of what is locally distinctive and the style that is acceptable.

Action ALL work stream leads to continue policy development, sending to AA as they become available.

Meeting with Developers

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1.7 The action on JF re a meeting with developers had been overtaken by Mark Gray's efforts to bring together a meeting to focus on strategic transport planning. OCC is pushing back on the need. Due to summer leave, that meeting will not happen for at least 3-4 weeks, so JF will pick up his plan for a meeting with developers independently.

Action JF to arrange meeting

SEA Screening

1.8 Only one of the 3 companies invited to tender agreed to do so and their bid came in well over budget, so AA will find some additional consultants for JF to approach

Action AA to identify some additional companies for JF to approach.

Contact with RAF

1.9 **JF** did write to Nikki Hamilton, RAF Benson's community liaison officer seeking a statement on Service Families Accommodation, but that has not been forthcoming. A brief email note was provided by OC Ops, which was useful in making the initial case to SODC that the housing numbers currently being used are incorrect but it would be helpful to have the full answer to bolster the case.

Action EM to encourage follow-up

2. Feedback on Benson Summer Fayre

2.1 EM reported back that this had been a good exercise to run. It ensured that the NP continues to be visible and active in the community's eyes, and between 90 and 100 people visited the stand. The game made around £40 for the summer fayre.

3. Consultation Audit Trail

3.1 LD agreed to stand over the preparation of the audit trail. DR sought advice on whether the latter can include consultations even where no response was forthcoming. AA advised that we could deal with that by noting any correspondence sent out.

3.2 We also need a glossary for the NP. AA suggested looking at the Newborough NP for a good sample glossary.

Action All to provide LD with a list of consultation activity undertaken in preparing the NP by each workstream. There is no need to provide detailed records of sub-group meetings; no of meetings and group membership will be sufficient.

Action AA to circulate to all an example of a good audit trail.

4. Additional sites Discussion

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4.1 The SC discussed a range of additional sites that might be considered for a range of uses through the NP. JF would like to add Littleworth Road (to ensure that we capture the youth/community facilities offered under the outline pp awarded) and a small section of land currently part of RAF Benson.

4.2 AA's advice was sought on how we stand with ear-marking sites that are not in our ownership. AA advised that ideally the landowner would be supportive otherwise we risk an objection to the NP, but we should not let lack of owner agreement now deter us from considering the best location for particular facilities. The SC should identify what are the other supporting services that are needed beside residential development. This might include a burial ground.

Action JF to send FF the report from the burial ground Parish Council working group.

Action all to bring along suggestions for the use of each site.

Action FF to bring a list of the community facilities that will be needed.

5. Signing off the Housing Needs Survey

5.1 JF asked for comments on the draft HNS. The SC reflected on some of the areas where interpretation of the results is tricky.

Action all to send JF any comments on the HNS report by 1 August, after which JF will respond to CFO to arrange release of the final version.

6. SODC Design Guide

6.1 CM reviewed the design guide and emailed the work stream leads highlighting key concerns. The examples provided in the guide are very vague/bland and pitched at very urban environments. The way they are presented tends not to reflect the wider context in which any development might sit. It feels like an 'off the peg' generic guide with a handful of SODC requirements retrofitted. CM sought SC advice on whether we should provide individual or an NP group response to the consultation. SC agreed that a NP response would carry more weight.

Action All to provide CM with comments with respect to their topic area **by 25 August**.

AoB

7.1 JF has written to Simon Rowbery to arrange a visit by the SODC team, given that their planned schedule of engagements will take place too late for us. (See action below under meeting dates)

7.2 MS asked how many housing policies we will need. AA advised probably 5 or 6.

7.3 DR sought AA's advice on his latest draft transport policies.

Action AA to confirm his views to DR by email.

7.4 EM asked how we deal with the fact the HNS results may not necessarily represent the full community's views. AA advised that the HNS results stand as they are, but where

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we might need to take additional needs or views into account, we should explain how the survey results have been taken into account.

7.5 MS asked about how we are accounting for the fact that there are 2 primary schools in the parish. DR has drafted high level Education policies and has noted the RAF Benson primary school in the supporting information. AA reminded the SC that the provision of education is only relevant to the NP if it concerns/creates a land use need. On the allocation of a site for residential development, we would have a policy that required the developer to contribute towards the provision of school places.

Action DR to recirculate his workstream's Education policies for comment.

7.6 PM is pursuing discussions with contacts in Watlington re traffic pollution measurements; he now needs to contact Tom Bindoff to discuss.

7.7 PM has also received some correspondence from contacts in Watlington expressing concern about the lack of strategic thinking about transport management, (and also querying whether RAF Benson has any concerns about plan for Chalgrove Airfield development - The SC is not best placed to comment on the latter.) MS suggested contacting John Howell to seek help with escalating over the need for a strategic and shared vision on transport infrastructure. The SC agreed this is a good idea.

Action PM to contact both John Howell and Pete Richardson to discuss development of a joined up approach and common view.

7.8 PM queried whether there should be any concerns about the proposal in the draft Local Plan to delegate 'authority' down through NPs for determining development. The SC believes that the District will actually exercise the authority but using our NP. The Parish Council will respond to the Local Plan. The SC members may reply individually if they wish.

7.9 CM queried whether JF intends to go the meeting with developers armed with our thinking on what each site might be suited for. JF explained that we cannot draft the site policies until the SEA is produced, so at this first meeting, we will be in listening mode to see what developers are prepared to offer. It's likely that we will need to take an iterative approach to drafting.

7.10 EM asked who acts as Chair of the Benson Community Association.

Action EM to speak to Rob Anderson Besant.

7.11 EM asked how the Parish Council would respond to a request for formalise the path beneath the A4074 as a public right of way (it is currently a permissive path). The GI group (reflecting on the OCC PROW approach) is interested in understanding the benefits and constraints, recognising what a valuable asset it is to the community. JF is aware of a long history around his question, which he will seek out for EM. DR has some information to share about the large pipe which restricts access under the road bridge.

Action EM to follow up with JF and DR

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7.12 EM sought clarity on whether the GI group can approach Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre for data. Extraction costs £50 hr. JF advised that up to 2 hours worth could be procured but anything more than that would require additional permission.

Action EM to approach TVERC to check likely costs.

7.13 EM sought advice from AA on applying the NPPF test for Local Green Space designation which requires that the Green space must be 'local in character and not an extensive tract of land'. Help is needed to interpret the definition of 'local in character'

7.14 MS asked DR to resend recent emails.

8. Dates of next meetings

8.1 The next NP meeting 10 August

8.2 Meeting with Simon Rowbery from SODC will be proposed in week commencing 15 Aug.