

HENLEY-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** HELD ON FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2014 AT 9.00am IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

Present: Councillor S Gawrysiak (Mayor ex officio)
Councillor D Hinke (Chair)
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor K George (Harpsden)
Councillor M Plews (Harpsden)

Officers: Mr M Kennedy (Town Clerk).
Ms J Brazil (Committee Administrator)

Also Present: 1 Member of the Press
1 Member of the Public

65. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Akehurst.

66. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

67. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**
None.

68. **MINUTES**
The Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee held on **22 November 2013** were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

69. **PROGRESS ON THE CURRENT WORKPLAN**
Members had before them a copy of the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (JHHNP) Workplan progress report.

The Chairman informed the meeting the Workplan was progressing well and keeping within the time frame that had been drawn up. He confirmed that between January and March the Working parties would be looking to draft up their plans. At the next meeting it was hoped the Housing Group would produce their preferred site allocations and were looking for further public participation via further public consultation. This in turn would lead to the referendum in the autumn. All of which would be undertaken under the guidance of Nexus Planning.

70. **DEVELOPERS PRESENTATION SESSIONS**
Members received a verbal update from the Chairman on the Developers Presentation sessions held on the 26th & 27th November 2013, which was co-ordinated by Nexus Planning. He confirmed that both sessions were well attended by residents and the feedback had been very positive.

Some presentations were better presented than others and Nexus were to be commended for the way these sessions were run.

A member noted not all proposed sites had given presentations at the sessions and would also need to be acknowledged in the final proposal. The Chairman also confirmed Henley Town Council had now formally proposed the site of 357 Reading Road as a potential site.

71. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

(i) Public Consultation

This gave an overview of public opinion on possible housing sites to Nexus Planning and was agreed by all to be the most open way to engage with the residents. Around 450 people had attended the event with a great deal of discussion and lively debate had producing a positive engagement for all concerned.

Mrs P Price-Davies of Henley Town Council was also thanked for her attendance and input in attending both presentation days.

The Chairman also updated the meeting on the hits to the JHHNP web page. They were on average 4 minutes long, leading to the conclusion visitors were taking their time to peruse the site and digest the information therein.

(ii) Business Consultation

The Committee had before them the artwork and details of the Business Consultation event, due to take place on Tuesday 21st January 2014. The principle of this initiative was to engage with local businesses in Henley. The Committee considered Ms Trudy Godfrey of SODC should to be invited to these sessions. Concerns were raised over possible attendance as although they have been widely publicised, so far only 2 people had so far committed to attendance. This meeting is to be facilitated by Nexus Planning and the event is advertised as invitation only. Mr Peter McConnell, Henley Town Manager (HTM) has been working hard to publicise the event via Twitter, direct email and his Facebook page.

Action: Mr P McConnell to contact all businesses again on Thursday 16th and Monday 20th January 2014 to reiterate the invitation and include a RSVP on the invite in order to confirm numbers for catering.

(iii) Henley College Consultation

The Committee reviewed the copy of the Henley College Consultation paper. Nexus Planning had previously attended a meeting with students at Gillotts school and this had proved beneficial for input and engagement with the younger residents of Henley. Henley College Students were being asked to complete the survey on line and although some would fail to do so it was agreed this was a positive way to engage with a large number of 16-18 year olds who use the facilities of the town even if they did not actually live within the boundaries of Henley or Harpsden.

A member suggested Nexus Planning seek a forum with the College to speak directly to the students and the Chairman confirmed Nexus were already in close contact with the College administration. The Henley Standard was asked to promote both the Business Workshop and the Henley Collage Consultation initiatives.

72. BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered the income and expenditure report to 9 December 2013. The report gave details of the total income to date of **£74,000**, including a grant from SODC of **£15,000** and a grant payment from Locality UK of **£6,300** (90% payment of total award). A full breakdown of the expenditure was attached to the agenda.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the JHHNP was presently on budget and the extra working group meetings should be able to be covered in the present schedule

He estimated it would cost the full £74,000 to complete the plan, although extra expenditure may be incurred in due course. Nexus had proposed another Developers Day as a possibility. The Chairman confirmed the Committee would need to be guided by Nexus as to the necessity for this.

The committee was advised the next Housing Group meeting is to be held in February 2014. As there is still some work to be reached on each site other sites may be removed from the plan warranting further discussions with developers and necessitate further meeting with additional extra cost. It was confirmed there was still flexibility within the budget to incorporate extra cost at this time. It was **RESOLVED**

that the financial report to 9 December 2013 be received and noted.

73. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

After some discussion it was agreed to hold an informal meeting to discuss the JHHNP with Nexus and SOCD on Tuesday 21 January 2014 at 2.30pm, immediately following the business Consultation lunch.

It was agreed the date of the next JHHNP Committee be held on Friday 14 February 2014 at 9am.

74. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved by the Chairman and **RESLOVED**

that the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the matters about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.

75. WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATION

Members discussed the membership of the Working Groups and the terms of reference for them. It was agreed that any member of a Working Group who also had an interest in a site that was being considered within the Neighbourhood Plan must declare that interest from the outset. The issue of members of Henley Town Council now being potential developers due to the new site put forward of 357 Reading Road was discussed. It was **RESOLVED**

that although Members of Henley Town Council were now to be considered as Developers or the Landowners they may still attend meetings of the JHHNP Housing Working Group in an observational capacity only and may no longer speak or take part in any debate relating to the Town Council's promoted sites. This was in order to maintain transparency and openness in demonstrating that decisions are fair and objective.

The Chairman raised the issue of the Code of Conduct of members of the Working Groups. He raised the issue of two particular members who had both received complaints by members of the public against them.

The Committee discussed the individual cases and it was agreed there was a distinct difference in the complaints and behaviour of the two individuals

concerned. The Committee agreed that if a member is acting in an official capacity and is confirming the views of the Council and residents then that is not in conflict with the Terms of Reference for Working Groups. However, if a member of a Working Party is making personal statements in a public arena and attempting to coerce others to their opinion then they will be reminded of the agreement they signed when they joined the Working Groups.

It was **RESOLVED**

that Nexus would deal with the matters that arise within the groups at the designated meetings and monitor the situation in the interest of the Working Parties which would again both maintain transparency and openness.

The meeting closed at 10.05am

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Chairman