

HENLEY ON THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
STEERING GROUP HELD ON  
MONDAY 16 MAY 2016  
AT 7PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
TOWN HALL, HENLEY ON THAMES.

**Present:** The Chairman, Mrs R Chandler-Wilde  
Councillor Sara Abey - Henley Town Council (HTC)  
Councillor J Smewing - HTC  
Councillor M Plews - Harpsden Parish Council  
Mr P Fleming  
Mr D Whitehead  
The Mayor, Councillor J Brookes (ex officio)

**In Attendance:** Mrs J Wheeler - Town Clerk  
C Adams – Committee Administrator / Minute Taker

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

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor called for nominations for the election of a Chairman for the year 2016-2017.

The Mayor, Councillor J Brookes, proposed and Councillor J Smewing seconded, that Mr D Hinke be elected Chairman for the year 2016-2017.

Following a vote it was **RESOLVED**

**that Mr D Hinke be elected Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the following municipal year.**

In the absence of Mr Hinke, the Mayor, Councillor J Brookes, remained in the Chair.

## **2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor called for nominations for the election of a Vice-Chairman for the year 2016-2017.

The Mayor, Councillor J Brookes, proposed and Mr D Whitehead seconded, that Mrs R Chandler-Wilde be elected Vice-Chairman for the year 2016-2017.

Following a vote it was **RESOLVED**

**that Mrs R Chandler-Wilde be elected Vice-Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the following municipal year.**

Mrs R Chandler-Wilde took the Chair.

## **3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor H Chandler-Wilde, Mrs J Bland and Mr D Hinke.

## **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Mr K Arlett, Elizabeth Road* – Mr Arlett stated that when it had been announced that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would be formed, he had expressed interest in being on the Group. In the event, he would not have been aware that the meeting was taking place if he had not been checking for other Council committee meetings on the Council's website. Mr Arlett cited Minute No. 96 from Full Council on 29 March 2016, where Mrs R Chandler-Wilde had been nominated for the Group, but there had been no mention of membership at the Annual Town Meeting, as had been minuted on 29 March 2016. Minute 233 of Planning Committee on 26 April 2016 referred to removing an SODC representative from the Group and increasing the number of members of the public to 5. In view of Mrs J Bland's absence, Mr Arlett stated that he would be pleased to take her place.

It was explained that Mrs Bland was not on the Group as a representative of SODC, but as a member of the public. The 5 members of the public had been chosen on their merits and had been invited to join the committee. It was agreed to note Mr Arlett's question. Mr Arlett stated that he was not content with this response.

## **6. MONITORING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The legal weight of the Neighbourhood Plan was discussed. A Member informed the meeting that the Henley MP, John Howell, was championing Neighbourhood Plans in Parliament. Various groups such as the National Association of Local Councils and Civic Voice are putting pressure on government to make Neighbourhood Plans more robust. A Member asked whether the Group had seen a letter regarding Neighbourhood Plans from the Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis. This was strongly in favour of Neighbourhood Plans. It was agreed to send a letter to John Howell MP with the Group's views on Neighbourhood Plans.

**Action:** *Members to send comments to the Chairman for inclusion in a letter to be sent to John Howell MP.*

**Action:** *The Committee Administrator to find out the cost of joining Civic Voice and to circulate copies of the letters from John Howell MP and Brandon Lewis MP.*

**Post Meeting Note:** *Town and Parish Councils are able to join Civic Voice at a cost of £50 per annum.*

A Member stated that she had drawn up a list of sites and their current status, as this had seemed a particularly useful section in the example monitoring report that had been attached to the agenda. It was highlighted that a particular problem in Henley was the number of applications for retirement housing. A report on the SODC website shows that although there is a need for retirement housing in South Oxfordshire, the number of leasehold retirement properties as opposed to rented retirement properties, is above the national average. A Member expressed the view that the former Jet Garage site on the Reading Road had been brought to the JHHNP as a development of apartments with 40% affordable units, not as retirement housing. An application for retirement housing would therefore not be in the spirit of the JHHNP.

Discussion took place around the transport that will be generated from the Highlands Farm development, together with the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that will come to Harpsden. Members were informed that officers from SODC would be attending the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee on 24 May 2016 to explain Section 106 funding and CIL. It was felt that SODC should be lobbied to spend their percentage of CIL funds in the Henley and Harpsden area.

Discussion of the format for reporting on the status of the JHHNP led to the agreement to adopt a report based on the Member's spreadsheet and then to look into adding new policies or measures at subsequent meetings. The lack of available officer time to create and update reports was highlighted. It was

**RESOLVED to create a report to monitor the sites in the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan**

## **7. REPORTING ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would need to meet every 3 weeks if it wished to advise the HTC Planning Committee. It was agreed that this was not feasible. It was suggested that a list of policies should be produced and that the Planning Committee could be asked to take Neighbourhood Plan policies into consideration when considering applications. It was

**RESOLVED to create a checklist of policies for consideration when reviewing planning applications. This list to be prepared for discussion at the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The checklist is to be used for applications of 3 houses or more.**

**8. JHHNP POLICY H2 DESIGN BRIEF**

Concern was expressed that at meetings with developers Councillors could give an impression of how they would vote on an application, when they should remain impartial. The Town Clerk advises using references to the JHHNP when speaking to developers – i.e. give the view of the JHHNP rather than a personal view. This should give Councillors serving on Planning Committees more protection. It was decided that Members would benefit from more time to consider how the Design Brief policy should proceed and the item was deferred to the next meeting.

*Action: Committee Administrator to provide sample Design Briefs for the next meeting.*

**9. OTHER POLICIES NEEDING SPECIFIC CONSIDERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WEBSITE**

It was agreed to defer consideration of these items until the next meeting.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 9 June at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

ca

Chairman