

HENLEY-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 26 JULY 2013 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 Mrs P Phillips (substituting for Councillor Akehurst)

Officer: Mr M W Kennedy – Town Clerk

Also Present: Councillor R Dorkings (Harpsden PC)
Councillor K George (Harpsden PC)
Councillor Mrs O Moss (Harpsden PC)
Councillor M Plews (Harpsden PC)
Mrs S Tipple Parish Clerk (Harpsden PC)
3 members of the public

24. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Akehurst and D Nimmo-Smith.

25. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

26. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Dr B Wood, Blandy Road, sought clarification on the suggested parish boundary changes submitted by Henley Town Council and Harpsden and Shiplake Parish Councils to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) as part of the district council's Community Governance Review. The Chairman ruled that the question could not be put as it was not included as an item for discussion on the agenda.

Dr Wood iterated his concern that the efforts of those residents who had volunteered their services to the production of the neighbourhood plan could be jeopardised while this uncertainty remains because SODC will ultimately decide on any boundary changes before the submission of the neighbourhood plan and its progress to referendum.

27. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee held on 6 June 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

28. **PROGRESS ON THE CURRENT WORK PLAN**

Members had before then a copy of the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (JHHNP) Work Plan, copy having been previously issued.

Expressions of thanks were recorded to UNITED! for the presentation by Dr Wood of his critique of the plan.

In noting that Stage 1 (inception meeting) was completed on 14 June, Members acknowledged that the Baseline report, Stage 2, would be presented by Nexus Planning to the joint meeting of the Governance Committee with Harpsden Parish Council following this meeting. Members recognised that the JHHNP was organically evolving and that the Governance Committee, working with Nexus, would continue to formulate an overall route map for the Plan's development and the establishment of important aspects such as Working Group protocols, the website and public launch. The process should be transparent and would be defined by the residents of Henley and Harpsden as the public participation process begins.

A press release had been issued to the Henley Standard confirming the arrangements for launching the neighbourhood plan in Henley on 7 September and at the Henley Show on 14 September. The website, www.jhhnp.co.uk was now live and a facebook page, for information only, has been created. A landowners' information day would be held on 13 August to explain the plan process.

The timetable for Stages 3 and 4 would involve workshop sessions with working groups. In noting that there was no legislation preventing landowners from submitting applications for development to SODC alongside/outside the neighbourhood planning process, it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of SODC making it absolutely clear that any application for the development of 2 or more houses within the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan Area must come through the neighbourhood planning process and that the suggested boundary changes to the parish boundaries should be made after the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan is passed at referendum.

29. THE PROPOSED COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Members had before then the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan Communication and Consultation Strategy (working paper) prepared by Nexus Planning for approval, copy having been issued. The importance of a transparent, open communication of the plan, its preparation and associated activities was considered to be central and essential to the process.

Within section 2, the decision making structure, Members were reminded that this Committee has no influence over the policies only the governance of the plan. The roles and responsibilities of Nexus Planning, the Governance Committee and the Working Groups were clearly defined. In noting that Nexus Planning would be responsible for facilitating meetings of events and workshops, the Governance Committee would be required to sign off public consultation material prior to print and distribution. It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee be amended to include a delegated power to sign off public consultation material prior to printing and distribution.

It was further recognised that the Governance Committee, jointly with Harpsden, would appoint the working groups (in accordance with their terms of reference). Regular meetings would need to be held between the various working groups so that the policies could evolve. It was suggested that around 25 people be appointed to serve on each working group.

A view was expressed that since every Councillor on Thame Town Council was involved in some way in the work of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan, all Henley Town Councils would need to be appointed to serve on at least one working group. It was further suggested that a co-ordinating group was needed to oversee the work of the working groups, possibly through the appointment of a foreman from each group. This view was not supported by Nexus Planning who see policies evolving from the working groups.

Questionnaires would be sent out to volunteers explaining the process. This should allow Nexus and the Committee to gauge numbers for each workshop. The time of day meeting convene should be flexible to ensure those in full time employment could attend every workshop.

As regards communications, the Committee acknowledged the need to work closely with the Henley Standard. It was further suggested that a pictorial editorial was required to capture readers' attention. Banners across the road should be used sparingly otherwise they could quickly be taken for granted and the message would be lost. An information board should be provided outside the Town Hall Information Centre. It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the Communication and Consultation Strategy be approved subject to further discussions by Nexus Planning ,at the following Co ordinating Working Group meeting ,having regard to the views expressed at the meeting.

Post meeting note-- The discussions with the Co ordinating Working Group resulted in the Communications and Consultation Strategy being accepted without amendment. However , it was noted that this document could evolve further after Public Consultation.

30. **LANDOWNER INFORMATION SESSION**

The arrangements for the Landowners' information day on 15 August 2013 were reported. This would be an opportunity to exchange information between Nexus Planning and landowners about their sites. To ensure transparency, this information would also be published on the website.

31. **BUDGET REPORT**

A copy of the income and expenditure report to July 2013, copy having been issued was considered. The report gave details of the total income to date of £67,000, including a grant from SODC of £15,000. A second application would be made to Locality UK for a grant of £7,000. A full breakdown of the expenditure incurred to date included £178 on the website; £590 on the public opinion day at Harpsden Village Fete, staff costs of £4,037; the first tranche of the consultants' costs of £5,000; and sundry costs of £18. It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the financial report to July 2013 be received and noted.

32. **CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR K GEORGE AND COUNCILLOR M PLEWS**

The Committee considered the appointment of Parish Councillors George and Plews as co-opted members of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee. In noting that the appointment of the working groups required input from Harpsden Parish Council, it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Councillors K George and M Pews be appointed as co-opted members of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee.

33. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed for Friday 30 August 2013 at 9.00am.

The meeting closed at 9.50am

Chairman