

HENLEY-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2014 AT 9.00am IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, HENLEY-ON-THAMES.

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

Officers: Mr M Kennedy (Town Clerk).
Ms P Price-Davies (Committee Administrator)

Also Present: 6 Members of the public

86. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Nimmo-Smith.

87. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

88. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**
Mr K Arlett, Elizabeth Road,
As a Member of the Housing Working Group, Mr Arlett expressed his concern about the behaviour and attitude of other members within the group at the last meeting. He felt that despite assurances from the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee (NPGC) in February that this behaviour would not be tolerated, it was apparent that these individuals were representing the views of pressure groups which was detriment to the productivity and transparency of the Neighbourhood Plan.

He was assured by the Chairman that the presence of pressure groups within the Working Groups was inevitable as Planning was a contentious issue but both Nexus Planning and the NPGC remained committed to safeguarding both the process and fairness of the Plan at every stage. He reminded him that it was important to remember that the draft Plan had to go out to Public Consultation and that HTC would ensure that all residents of Henley and Harpsden had the opportunity to fully engage with it.

The Chairman assured him that Nexus Planning were seeking a democratic resolution and at the next Housing Working Group session a conclusion on the site allocation would have to be reached otherwise HTC would have to intervene. It was felt that if there had been representation from OCC at the last Housing Working Group session regarding site specific transport assessments then a conclusion over site allocation might have been reached but they had since provided a document which would be circulated to members of the Housing Group in preparation for the next session. A Member requested that all Members of the Housing Working Group enter the next meeting with a positive, open frame of mind to ensure that fair solutions were reached.

89. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Governance Committee held on **14 February 2014** were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

90. **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 that although there had been a two week slippage due to the fact that no conclusion on site allocations had been reached at the last Housing Working Group meeting, he was confident that the Workplan would revert back to the original timescale once the Housing Working Group had reconvened on the 19th March. He confirmed that Nexus Planning were confident that they would still be able to draw up the Draft Plan within the agreed timescale, ensuring that the next stage of Public Consultation remained on schedule.

The Committee discussed the number allocation of dwellings in relation to the guidance from SODC and it was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan would have to find the capacity for 450 houses as so many additional Brownfield sites had come forward. Traffic issues in relation to the various sites were discussed and the fact that OCC had provided no adequate site specific assessments or representation at any of the Working Group sessions. The Chairman reminded Members that the Neighbourhood Plan was bound by the main constraints of the Core Strategy and that OCC had recently provided some basic assessment on various sites but the indication was that they would provide more thorough Traffic Assessments of each site once the Draft Neighbourhood Plan was drawn up.

The Town Clerk reported to the Committee that OCC were of the mind-set that Traffic Assessments should be undertaken by the Developers at this stage but until site allocations were confirmed then it would be unreasonable to expect them to invest in site specific assessments.

91. **BUDGET REPORT**

The Committee considered the Income and Expenditure report to **12 February 2014**. 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. It was **RESOLVED**

that the financial report to 12 February 2014 be received and noted.

92. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed the date of the next JHHNP Committee be held on **Wednesday 23 April 2014** at 9am.

93. **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.

94. **WORKING GROUP SESSIONS**

The Chairman gave a verbal update on the last Housing Working Group session held on the 27th February, expressing his concern about the monopolisation of certain individuals throughout the discussions. Members were in agreement that in order for resolution to be reached within the group over the allocation of certain contentious key sites then a more rigorously guided Chairmanship had to be adopted which ensured all members were included in the process of agreement.

The Chairman re-iterated the fact that strategically and in line with the Core Strategy, maximum use of Brownfield sites took precedent and then Greenfield sites had to be allocated. Therefore it made sense to distribute the remaining allocation across the more contentious sites so that there was a fair geographic spread. All sites would be subject to the normal assessment criteria so it was crucial to include key reserve sites to safeguard the Plan from any undeliverable sites being identified further into the process. It was inevitable that at this stage personal emotions would dictate objections but it was the role of the Chair to ensure that clear decisions were agreed based on the criteria with reference to the Public Consultation held at the beginning of the year. Members agreed that the presence of Pressure Groups in relation to any planning development of this scale was inevitable and was not unique to Henley.

A member enquired as to whether there would be further opportunity for all the groups to come together to agree on the draft Neighbourhood Plan before the Public Consultation stage. The Chair confirmed that Nexus Planning had scheduled final Workshop sessions for May to ensure that all members of the Working Groups were fully consulted on the final document.

The meeting closed at 9.57 am

ppd

Chairman