

NOTES OF 23rd MEETING OF THE TETSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

HELD AT 7.30PM ON THURSDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2017

IN TETSWORTH MEMORIAL HALL

Present: John Gilbert JG
Gill Copsey GC
Aidan Lynch AL
Gemma May Brown GMB
Rajen Nathwani RN
Gaynor Sellors GS

Apologies: Sarah Appleby SA
Caroline Cann CC
Karen Harris KH
Max Sellors MS

1. **Notes of 4th September 2017 Meeting.** The SG was content that the notes were an accurate record of business. Actions were reviewed via the rolling Action Chart. All were complete or noted for future action.

2. **Code of Conduct.** As a result of their concern over Declarations of Interest and their perception of AL's conflict of interest as a member of the SG, Huw Davey and Geoff Rufus had decided to withdraw from the group. JG had acknowledged their withdrawal and offered to welcome them back at a future date should they so wish.

The SG had been operating without formal Terms of Reference and this shortcoming had since been addressed by JG preparing and circulating a draft document to members. This document had also been reviewed by Ricardo Rios at SODC and his feedback incorporated. The SG agreed unanimously to adopt this revised document to regulate and guide its operation and business. A copy of the final document is attached to the notes of this meeting.

3. **Tetsworth NP Document Preparation.** Five members of the SG (JG, GC, KH, AL and GS) had met with Ricardo Rios at SODC on 20 September to review the V3 draft of the Tetsworth NP document. The Tetsworth NP team was impressed with the thoroughness of Ricardo's preparation for the meeting, and the wisdom of his advice, guidance and feedback. While he encouraged the team that it was progressing along the right lines, he emphasised that we needed to address the following issues prior to exposing a draft NP document to local consultation:

- While village opinion was important, NP policies must be supported by objective evidence.
- A defined settlement boundary would be difficult to defend, and a phrase such as built-up area would be preferred.
- A formal Character Assessment study of the parish (village and countryside) could be very helpful in providing local evidence to support policies.
- Duplication of qualifications/constraints of policies extant in higher level planning policy documentation should be avoided.
- The allocation of at least one development site within an NP was desirable, but selection would need to be supported by an objective Site Assessment study to consider at least all relevant sites identified in the SHLAA/HELAA register.

The 3 hour review meeting at SODC only managed to get as far as the Housing Policies in V3 of the draft Tetsworth NP document. Ricardo agreed to complete the review of the remainder of the document at a further meeting with SG members. The SG agreed that it should be represented at this follow-up meeting by JG and AL, and that JG should make the arrangements.

The SG agreed that revision of V3 of the Tetsworth NP document should await the outcome of the follow-up meeting at SODC.

Action 122. JG to arrange follow-up meeting for AL and himself to complete draft NP document review with Ricardo Rios at SODC.

4. **Preparation of Supporting Documentation.** The SG recognised that the submission version of the Tetsworth NP document would have to be accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- Basic Conditions Statement – demonstrating that NP policies are consistent with higher level planning policies.
- Consultation Statement – demonstrating channels of communication and engagement with local community and other relevant bodies.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

Preparation of these documents would need to progress alongside local consideration of the pre-submission version of the NP document, and JG agreed to investigate exemplar documents produced by other NP groups and Locality advice on their preparation.

The review meeting with Ricardo Rios at SODC had indicated that there may be merit in conducting Character and Site Assessment studies, with or without external support. In the case of a parish Character Assessment, JG, GMB and AL agreed to take the initial steps on preparing such a document with JG circulating a strawman structure to the others. Engagement of external support would be considered once the initial framework had been set.

Locality guidance on the process leading to a Site Assessment report indicated that it was far from a simple task and that independent preparation, or at least independent review, may be necessary. The SG agreed that the pros and cons of including the Mount Hill Farm development as an allocated site in the Tetsworth NP should be discussed with Ricardo Rios at the follow-up review meeting with him. Should the SG subsequently decide to go ahead with a Site Assessment study, AL agreed that he would take no part in site selection decisions.

Action 123. JG to investigate preparation guidance and exemplar statements for supporting documentation.

Action 124. JG to prepare a Character Assessment strawman framework for sharing with GMB and AL.

Action 125. JG to seek Ricardo Rios' advice on pros and cons of including an allocated development site in the Tetsworth NP.

5. **Independent Review of Draft NP Documentation.** The valuable feedback and guidance given by Ricardo Rios on the Tetsworth NP project to date, and in particular his advice at the recent draft NP document review, suggested that the SG could probably rely on him for impartial and independent oversight of its output.

6. **Preparations for Local Consultation.** The draft NP document review at SODC had shown that there were still a number of significant work packages to be undertaken, as well as revision of the document itself, before the SG would be ready to expose a Pre-Submission version to

local consultation. However, the SG was able to agree that the local consultation should be preceded by publicity for a consultation launch event in the form of a public meeting in the Memorial Hall.

7. **Project Plan Review.** Slower progress on the preparation of the Pre-Submission draft of the NP document and the required supporting statements had resulted in approximately 4 months slippage in the programme. JG agreed to seek Ricardo Rios' advice on the 9 month duration currently allocated to SODC to complete their stages of the project. Following his feedback, the overall project plan would be revised.

Action 126. JG to seek SODC advice on duration of their stages of the NP development process.

8. **Budget Review.** Approximately £3,800 of the £5,000 SODC grant remained uncommitted. However, the SG recognised that engagement of external support for Character and Site Assessment studies would need considerable additional funding. GMB had previously investigated the application process for Locality support and she agreed to refresh her understanding of what was required. It was believed that applications must be for defined tasks and be accompanied by quotations from potential suppliers; also, any funding granted must be spent within the financial year. As the SG had still to define the scope of any external support for studies, let alone know the costs, it was not yet in a position to submit any funding application to Locality.

Action 127. GMB to refresh understanding of Locality funding process.

9. **Date of Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the SG will be held on **Monday 16th October 2017** at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall.

John Gilbert
Chairman
Tetsworth NP SG

28th Sept 2017

Enclosure:

Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference

TETSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. **Steering Group Status**

The Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is a team of Tetsworth Parish residents who have volunteered to undertake the preparation of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Tetsworth Parish Council, the Qualifying Body for the approved Tetsworth Neighbourhood Area.

At its meeting on 11 April 2016, Tetsworth Parish Council endorsed the launch of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan project and agreed that the Steering Group should be considered a sub-committee of the Council and provide it with regular reports of progress. It also agreed that the Parish Council should be represented on the Steering Group by at least one Parish Councillor, and that the project's finances should be handled through a Parish Council sub-account.

2. **Steering Group Objective**

The objective of the Steering Group is to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Tetsworth that defines the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence.

3. **Steering Group Membership**

The Steering Group comprises a team of Tetsworth parish residents, including at least one Parish Councillor, who have volunteered to undertake the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan development project. Membership is open to all Tetsworth residents. Specialist expertise is not a prerequisite for membership and it is more important that the Group should be representative of the wider Tetsworth community. However, residents who are also local landowners or have a professional planning background are welcome.

Steering Group members will elect a Chairman for the duration of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan project. He or she will guide and coordinate all preparatory activities leading to the delivery of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan. Other members of the Steering Group will undertake specific roles as and when required and agreed at Steering Group meetings.

4. **Steering Group Chairman's Role**

The Chairman is responsible for the following activities:

- Arranging and chairing Steering Group meetings
- Making a formal record of Steering Group meeting business
- Ensuring that the Steering Group conducts its business without conflict of interest
- Monitoring progress against the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan project plan
- Endorsing invoices with at least one other Steering Group member
- Ensuring that endorsed invoices are forwarded to Tetsworth Parish Council for approval and payment
- Reporting progress to meetings of Tetsworth Parish Council
- Maximising opportunities for Tetsworth community engagement in the project
- Seeking advice and feedback from nominated SODC Neighbourhood Planning officers
- Nominating an Acting-Chairman in his or her absence

5. **Steering Group Meetings**

The Steering Group will hold meetings at approximately monthly intervals, with additional meetings called as necessary. Meeting agendas will be published at least 3 days ahead of meetings, and formal notes of the business conducted will be produced following all meetings. The notes for each meeting will be tabled for approval at the next Steering Group meeting.

Agendas for and notes of Steering Group meetings will be made available to the Parish Council for publication on its website.

Steering Group meetings will be considered to be quorate and competent to make decisions provided that at least 6 members are present, including the Chairman or nominated Acting-Chairman. Should any proposal be subject to a vote, the outcome will be determined by the majority of those present being in favour or against, subject to a minimum of 4 votes determining the decision.

6. Steering Group Code of Conduct

The Steering Group will be committed to delivering an unbiased and objective Neighbourhood Plan which recognises the wishes and opinions of local residents and is in general compliance with existing and anticipated higher level planning policies.

Steering Group members will make declarations of interest at Steering Group meetings on any issue on which they might be perceived to have a planning interest and which might subsequently give rise to a possible conflict of interest. Such declarations of interest will be recorded in the notes to the relevant Steering Group meeting. Where declarations of interest might give rise to a potential or perceived conflict of interest, members making such declarations will be excluded from decision-making on issues relevant to the declaration.

The scope of such declarations will include any situation in which an interest might be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made at that meeting. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of an interest in land which may directly or indirectly form part of or be close to the subject matter of the Neighbourhood Plan, one's employment status and any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken on the Plan. Matters of interest identified will not preclude a member from participating in the development of the Plan. It is a declaration of potentially competing interests intended to promote the objectivity of the persons involved. This also ensures transparency and honesty throughout the process.

7. Steering Group Tasks

The Steering Group has collective responsibility for undertaking the following tasks:

- Proposing the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Preparing and monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan project plan
- Preparing and monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan budget
- Preparing grant applications
- Agreeing to expenditure from available funds
- Preparing for and participating in community engagement events and activities
- Preparing, administering and analysing the findings of a Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire
- Considering the engagement of professional support to conduct directed studies and oversight of Steering Group draft documentation
- Contributing to and agreeing a Pre-Submission draft of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan
- Contributing to and agreeing supporting documentation including Consultation and Basic Conditions Statements and a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening submission
- Managing the local consultation on the Pre-Submission draft of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan and acting on feedback
- Providing Tetsworth Parish Council with the Submission version of the Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documentation for its approval and forwarding to SODC
- Collaborating with Tetsworth Parish Council and SODC is progressing the remaining stages of the Neighbourhood Plan development process.