

**NOTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM MEETING HELD IN THE PEARSON HALL, SONNING, ON MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 6.30 pm.**

PRESENT: Jeremy Gilmore (Chairman NPSG), Nigel Borshell, Cllr Michael Firmager (WBC via video link), Trefor Fisher (SPC), Mike Hart (Society), Lesley Heaney (Society), Bob Hine (Society), Peter Morrison (SPC), Tim Pascall, Mark Saunders (via video link), Lesley Bates (Minutes).

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Tony Farnese (SPC) and Bob Hine (Society).

MINUTES OF 31 January 2022. Mr Fisher said that he had been absent but had been included in those present. Mr Borshell said that he had been incorrectly quoted as mentioning a couple of details, it wasn't a problem as he agreed the comments anyway and a verb was missing after his name under Nest Steps. The Minutes, having been amended were taken as read and agreed.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE.

Mr Fisher gave an update on the meeting with Marcia Head and two other WBC Officers. Mr Fisher had mentioned the WBC Charter, which was now in abeyance, the process for the 57 flats in Bath Road, the planning application, and the WBC planning meeting where the application had been approved, similar concerns on the RBCS application were also expressed. The planning officer, who had dealt with the 57 flats, explained the delays, and why the proposal would almost certainly have been approved at appeal. The point was made that planning officers weren't familiar with the area they were dealing with leading to misleading statements at the WBC planning meetings. It was noted that the £1.6 million from the developers for affordable housing would go into a WBC pot and Sonning, as the most affected area, would not benefit. Mr Fisher had pointed out that the number of recent approvals in the area, and the application to put a Care Home on the Golf Club site, had already alarmed residents in the vicinity resulting in the proposal to apply for a 70-bedroom Care Home following demolishing of two large, detached houses. The planning officer and Marcia Head indicated that Pound Lane had a completely different character to the Bath Road, which was more urban and overlooked the busy A4, Bath Road. Mr Castle (WBC LPU Officer) had said that the decision to include site 1, 5 and 8 in the allocation for Sonning was not based on mathematical calculation but whether the sites worked. Mr Fisher said that he had been unable to find details about site 12, that had been mentioned and wondered if another draft existed.

NEXT STEPS. DISCUSS THE SONNING NP DRAFT.

The Chairman said that Mr Hart and Mr Borshell were to be congratulated on producing a draft NP document, using the Dorchester document as a template. A link had been set up so it could be shared with members of the group. Mr Hart said that he had left the Dorchester text in place in case it could be used, other N Plans could also be useful aids, and he had used earlier Sonning Documents as a base. The answers from the questionnaire plus the draft visions/policies that people were working on could be added by those responsible and changes would be 'tracked'. Mr Borshell, who was working on Environment, said that he had made some changes to the orientation (N/W to W) of the boundaries, and it was agreed that the Reading Nature Reserve was SW. Mr Hart said that it should show who had made the changes. Mr Borshell explained that all the changes should be visible until the final 'save change'. Mr Hart felt that it might be premature, and agreement was needed on how the 'visions' equalled the policies. Mr Borshell

said that, when putting the Environment together, he had found the answers in the questionnaire very useful, particularly the answers on what they liked most about Sonning and felt that some set rules were needed for the future, reflecting these views. Green Spaces were mentioned, and it was agreed that it would be important to start with the answers in the questionnaire and then expanded. Mr Hart suggested that others could have an input and it shouldn't be left to one person. The Chairman, Mr Hart and Mr Saunders were prepared to do this. Mr Fisher said that Infrastructure was coming together and asked if there was some guidance as to the number of words to be used. Mr Hart suggested a total of 35 to 40 pages. Mr Fisher would include everything and then reduce as necessary, he thought there should be a policy to improve the drainage, bus services, promote the use of smaller vehicles and that new development must not increase the pressure on the area. Mr Hart didn't believe it would be possible to get improvements to the infrastructure given Sonning's location. Mr Borshell suggested that all development should have travel plans and it should be a requirement that they should not increase the existing carbon footprint and have no more impact on the area that existed. Mr Hart said that the Sonning NP should be inspirational, and no new business should be more than one storey high. It was noted that tourism hadn't been mentioned at any stage including in the questionnaire and although there was the section that asked what residents liked about Sonning, there wasn't much on social and community facilities. The Chairman asked Mrs Heaney to work on this and suggested drawing up a list from the answers in the questionnaire and using this as a start. Mr Hart pointed out that the questionnaire did mention sporting facilities. There was agreement that using 'clouds' was a useful tool.

Timetable. Mr Fisher asked if any section needed extra help. The Chairmans mentioned policies for the CA and Mr Hart agreed that these were more difficult than other areas, people didn't want planning permission the CA but policies had to reflect the WBC Local Plan. It was agreed that a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> April should be set for uploading the drafts so that there would be something to report and discuss at the next meeting. Mr Hart said that someone needed to be taken onboard to take a fresh look and it should be possible to pay someone to do this. The Chairman mentioned Mrs Halliday. Mr Hart said that Sonning Eye had a different approach, breaking the parish into 5 different areas. The Chairman said that he was reminded that Mr Woodward had offered his expertise.

What Else. Mr Pascall said that having looked online he wondered if there was a need for a glossary and Mr Hart said that this was something he would do.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING. The next meeting would be held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 6.15pm, in the Pearson Hall.