

Notes of Sherston Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group meeting

4th September 2017

1. **Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Anthony Price and Richard Hulme.

Steering Group attendees were:

Dr Petit – GP Surgery Judy Sharp Harry Stevens (HS) Giles Robinson Rob Johnson John Thompson (JT) Mike Johnson (MJ) John Matthews – Chair (JM)	John Knight Graham Hayman Zoe Metcalfe (ZM) Kevin Smith Sara Sharman Nick Manassei (NM)
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2. **Declarations of Interest**

None were registered.

3. **Approval of minutes of meeting held 31st May 2017**

These were approved without comment.

4. **Introduction and Purpose of The Meeting**

The Chairman advised the meeting to be principally of the Steering Group to progress the Neighbourhood Planning process but with members of the public welcome in attendance for their information and comment, when considered applicable. The Chairman thanked all present for attending and asked all attendees to sign the circulated document to record their attendance.

The Chairman advised his intent to make the meeting inclusive and also that the newly re-shaped Steering Group was positive in making progress with one voice. He advised that the NHP was a 5 year process to date and advised the need to look forward, and not to where we've been. There was agreement to the proposed agenda by all present with The Chairman advising that there would be later occasions for raising questions of detail and with tonight's meeting not being appropriate for this.

5. **Resume of the Neighbourhood Plan**

Mike Johnson advised that the Steering Group was formed 5 years ago to prepare aNHP, with the 1st year or so spent assessing needs, holding workshops, exhibitions and community questionnaires all to gather ideas to develop the NHP, with this being an opportunity for the village to decide upon its own future and what it wishes to see delivered up to 2026.

The Community has fed into the objectives which have shaped the current NHP.

The NHP process had to look at the principles of land uses at this stage and not detail, as may be associated with a specific planning application.

Planning consultants were later employed to independently review the planning options for Sherston, including those sites put forward by individual owners and to classify suitability for uses being proposed.

About 18 Months ago a key need was identified to enhance/ replace the existing GP surgery to meet the future healthcare needs of the community. Of all the sites identified in the village the preferred site for the purpose of delivering a GP Surgery was considered to be that off Sopworth Lane, with this also suiting the likely future requirements of Village schools (primary and pre-school). A proposal was presented to the Village in the Jan. 2017

Cliffhanger which set out how it was considered that all of these desired community requirements could be met. It was explained that given the significant costs anticipated for opening up and developing the site it had been estimated that there would need to be up to 45 houses allocated (of which 40% would be affordable units) to make this work. This proposition was discussed at a public meeting held at the end of the month and was the subject of a questionnaire survey which indicated a high level of local support for such a proposal.

These findings were reported to a meeting of the Steering Group held in February at which a debate took place about possible alternative solutions for delivering these same outcomes. It was agreed to delay a decision on this proposal until various alternative options had been investigated. These were reported back to the Steering Group in May.

6 .Progress since May

Zoe Metcalfe took over at this point. She explained that at the SG Meeting of 31st May 2017 an alternative view to the development of the Sopworth Lane site, with a reduced site area, less development and more limited infrastructure enhancements had been put forward. The basis of this approach being reliant on the establishment of an Independent Living scheme. Substantial effort had been put in to try and progress this idea including the undertaking of a Traffic Impact Assessment, and the securing of a promise of appropriate alternative funding, etc.

The TIA had concluded that development of the site for housing and all of the community uses being considered would be acceptable as traffic levels in the village are relatively low.

Since May and after further research and a series of meetings with WC and the landowners, it had become clear that: there was no support for an Independent living unit scheme on this site (this being contrary to the WC strategy of securing such facilities in the larger urban areas); the landowners had entered into an option agreement with a developer that would make it extremely difficult to promote alternative proposals; there would be a need to provide an appropriate amount of affordable housing; despite the promise of a loan from private individuals in the village that there was still likely to be a shortfall to pay for a new GP surgery; and that, as verified by Seymour Quantity Surveyors, the site development and infrastructure costs were prohibitive unless the number of houses proposed on the site were increased. It is for these reasons that the decision had been made to withdraw their alternative proposals and to lend support to the scheme tabled in January.

Zoe Metcalfe made this presentation and it was recognised that as a result of the AOG's activity there was additional beneficial understanding of the related SNP issues and a stronger Steering Group.

MJ confirmed that some of the ideas and issues that had been raised over the last few months were now proposed to be incorporated in the NHP.

Christopher Bryant – sought to clarify does the housing include 40% affordable. John Matthews confirmed this was correct.

7 Objectives and Policies - Discussion and Voting

Mike Johnson took the steering group through the proposed revised Objectives and Policies. Whilst all of these had been circulated to the Members of the SG in advance they were shown to the meeting on a Powerpoint presentation. A complete set of the agreed Objectives and Policies are to be found at the end of these Notes. (N.B. These “slides” have been amended to include a number of changes agreed at the Steering Group meeting and are not therefore exactly the same as displayed on the night).

MJ confirmed he was going to outline the proposed NHP policies, objectives and how the proposals will meet this.

MJ highlighted the next steps – series of informal and formal consultations.

Independent examination to be undertaken before final referendum and adoption.

MJ highlighted that our desire is to get it right. MJ outlined the programme likely to be circa 5-6 months from now before being complete.

Future planning applications will be determined against the NHP policy and objectives.

Objectives: MJ described each of the Objectives in turn as shown on the Powerpoint presentation (see copy “slides” at end of notes).

MJ described Objective 1.

Objective 2. Environment. MJ highlighted that the policies spin out of these objectives to protect what we have as well as safeguarding them for the future.

Objective 3. MJ suggest that the requirement for high speed broadband be deleted. Replaced by reference to Ultrafast communications. Sean McGee commented that *‘Willesley not yet got High speed broadband’*. JM confirmed this will be reworded to ensure the community benefits from future upgrades. JT highlighted a benefit to request that any new housing should safeguard for fibre not simply copper.

Objective 4 – MJ noted that most brownfield opportunities have already disappeared hence reason for looking at the Green field site on Sopworth lane.

Objective 5 – The plan will seek to provide for existing and future leisure facilities, and a burial site.

Objective 6 – Highways and traffic – managing traffic. Inclusive access.

Objective 7 – community woodland / safeguarding ecology and landscape quality.

Objective 8 – Low carbon food, allotments suggest deleted. Demand additional allotment now gone. MJ queried whether this should be removed? Phil Catcher – highlighted that the need for allotments come and go. Note benefit to the community. Beryl Clampton also highlighted potential future need for allotment with new development. Steering group agreed reference to future allotment provision to be retained in NHP.

Mark Lehar asked about the 45 houses proposed – any safeguards in place to enable local people to buy rather than people from outside the community. John Thompson – WC Affordable housing

policy has recently been changed so that if someone local that has a need for the affordable houses to rent will be prioritised over an individual from outside the catchment area.

JM INVITED ALL ON THE STEERING GROUP TO VOTE ON THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES (WITH AMENDMENTS AS DISCUSSED). THE STEERING GROUP UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES.

Policies:

MJ highlighted the fact that the precise wording to any of the proposed policies may change as the NHP develops. MJ hopes that they do not fundamentally change. Care needed to make sure the NHP stands up to legal scrutiny.

The Steering Group were then asked to consider each of the proposed Policies in turn. (See full list of agreed policies at end of notes).

Topic: Safeguarding existing services and facilities -Policy 1

Protection of community services and facilities and business premises.

MJ articulated each bullet point – purpose.

MJ then read out ‘the policy will’... see slide content.

Add to policy: Primary School to ‘facilities and premises to be protected’.

Add to policy: Define the ‘existing historic Tolsey surgery building’

JT noted the NHP the plan is a document that can be updated in due course to incorporate new facilities such as the new surgery once built.

Penny Hutchins – queried whether list should include the ‘Parish Church’.

Potential to include Willesley Equine centre.

Phil Cutcher – Pinkney Park business park - should this be included? Wording to be defined and to be incorporated.

Voting: All members of steering group voted to accept policy with addition of reference to Primary School, the “Tolsey Surgery” building, Pinkney Park Business Units, and Willesley Equine centre.

Topic: AONB / open character – Policy 2

MJ showed the plan – highlighting the historic settlement.

Hannah Griffin – queried the proposed site for burial shown on the allotment. MJ confirmed this was a proposal that was considered but rejected by the SG.

Phil Cutcher – Anything to protect the village from ribbon development, connecting with Willesley or elsewhere. MJ highlighted the village boundary is defined in the existing North Wiltshire Local Plan – a saved policy. WCC will need to re-define this through a separate planning document should any new sites be allocated outside of the existing boundary. MJ confirmed the boundary is currently tight around Sherston.

John Thompson – asked whether the site for a potential cemetery should be in the NHP.

MJ explained that there is a proposed policy that covers this later. Giles Robinson sought to gain assurance that playing equipment to the recreational area would not be precluded by being deemed not being in keeping with the 'character'.

Add – 'Sports field' to be included as a protected site on the Policy 2.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy subject to that one addition.

Topic – High speed broadband – Policy 3

Add reference to ultrafast to this policy.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Topic: New Build Development – Policies 4, 5, 6 and 7

MJ described the key 'needs' as identified through earlier work.

MJ highlighted that the Green Square land owner on Anthony Close had no current desire or plan to enhance or replace the current development.

MJ indicated the site next beyond Easton Square not available for use by land owner.

Sports field considered but rejected.

Proposal 4: Site 1-Sopworth Lane

Nick Manassei(Chair of school governors) – asked about the Wilderness garden adjoining Sopworth Lane – will there be an opportunity for this to be re-provided in the new development?Not clear as yet how much of this will be lost should the road be widened. MJ accepted may be the potential to flag in the text a desire for a wilderness garden to be created elsewhere on the site. Consider further how to deal with in context of proposal 4.

Harry Stephens asked why there is a requirement for future proofing of the school. JT highlighted the aspiration to retain more rather than less land. Need to consider provision for future expansion of the school well beyond 2026. Once lost cannot be replaced.

Maggie Harris – who holds the freehold of the land? How is the land retained? JT confirmed current freehold is with the Moody's private landowners. Intention is for land to be parcelled up and freehold of the GP Surgery and the future proofed school area transferred to WC. JT advised that the Affordable housing would be freehold held by a housing association.

Item 2. Change wording to state: 'inclusive access to the boundary of the school'.

NM raised concern regarding security and safety regarding the school boundary and steps to be taken to protect the welfare of school children.

Individual raised point regarding new housing achieving - Carbon and renewables – MJ confirmed this sort of issue dealt with by national and core strategy policy.

Beryl Clampton – reasonable parking need. ZM confirmed adequate parking provision in proximity to the new housing. MJ to check national and core strategy policy to see if reference to parking needs to be incorporated here.JT commented that garages often used as storage rather than for cars putting pressure on space in proximity to the house.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Proposal 5: Land at corner of Green lane and Sopworth lane

Existing housing allocation in North Wilts Local Plan. Proposed to retain.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Proposal 6: Vicarage Site

Ben Sleep – Regarding Vicarage site – asked if there a need for any housing? NF explained that the site needs to be self-funded. Selling the existing vicarage will fund the new vicarage. With space for burial. Existing 1960's house owned by Diocese likely to be sold.

Pam P: New burial area – new path required to allow access for coffins. How is the provision of this path and cost be incorporated. JM responded that the Diocese would seek help from the Parish to help facilitate this.

Voted: 1 voted No. All others voted to accept.

Proposal 7:Anthony Close

NHP to support the proposal to upgrade and replace Anthony Close.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Policy 8: Highway works

MJ suggested that this may funded by Community Infrastructure levy or by WC– which the village can choose to allocate at that time.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Topic: Sports Facilities

Policy 9 -designed to protect existing sports facilities

Policy 10 – safeguard strip against the playing field to be bought into sports use. (privately owned land) Note that wording needs to amended to read Site 4 as per new plan.

Policy 11 – changing rooms.

Hugh Bowles – emphasised the need to enhance the sports facilities. Cited the Tetbury Rugby club example where done poorly in Tetbury. Keen to inform greater definition for the actual sports facility to enhance the current 'muddy field'. MJ pointed out that the SG had sought to argue that the new development on Sopworth Lane should help fund certain improvements to the Football Field – but advised by WC not likely to stand up to scrutiny. Suggested that some funding might come from CIL and other sources to improve sporting facilities. No evidence to support need as yet for a new indoor sports facility. JT pointed out that developer of Sopworth Lane site would have to provide funds for open space on own site.

HS sought to identify if a need could be identified for a Pavilion for example.

Vote: All members unanimously voted to accept this policy.

Meeting close:

JM thanked the public who have attended the meeting. Thanked the steering group for time this evening. Thanked both Zoe Metcalfe and most significantly Mike Johnson for time and input to date.

JM confirmed that now have a clear mandate to begin drafting the Neighbourhood plan.

Timing and Next steps:

MJ confirmed that the NHP Steering group will draft the plan which will take 2-3 months. Then submitted under regulation 14 as a formal plan. At this time the community will be invited to comment. Referendum likely in 6 – 7 months' time.

Concerned raised over the timing over the Option on the Sopworth Lane site. JT confirmed that the Officers will action the option and secure the land prior to the deadline expiring.