

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CRANBROOK & SISSINGHURST  
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON  
17TH DECEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Cllr. Warne (in the Chair) and Cllrs. Fletcher, Hatcher, Smith and Pethurst, Annie Hopper, June Bell, Marion Cranmer, Liz Daley, and Jeremy Boxall.

APOLOGIES: Marcus Boret, Tally Wade, Matt Warne

Cllr. Warne read out the following statement:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

Cllr. Warne declared an interest under the site assessments regarding site 122 which had been put forward by a relative.

Cllr. Warne, Annie Hopper, and June Bell declared a personal interest as members of the CVLT (Crane Valley Land Trust). Tally Wade and Matt Warne declared an interest as board members of the CVLT. Members of the various Advisory Groups declared an interest as necessary.

### **NDP – Way Forward**

Cllr. Pethurst was of the view that not allocating but having an input in the policy process by liaising with TWBC planning officers and any positive points raised could be factored in to the draft local plan.

Cllr. Warne asked members of the Steering Group for their views. Cllr. Pethurst said that he was of the opinion that the NDP should go ahead without site allocations with a review of the policies also looking at Section 106 projects to draw up a list of important projects to go ahead i.e. new footpaths. He felt the NDP should concentrate on (a) Policies and (b) Projects. Liz Daley felt NDP should go ahead without site allocations, however with input in the Spring to incorporate SAAG views within the TWBC Draft Local Plan. If NDP do not allocate we need to get policies which are achievable not aspirational and every policy has to be evidenced based. Cllr. Warne explained that passive house building standards would be an aspirational policy and would be challenged by developers. Liz Daley commented that the NDP had never been set up to drive Section 106 projects in her view. Cllr. Pethurst said a list had already been compiled by the NDP and he would like to see a top five drawn up. Cllr. Fletcher reported that at a recent Parish Chairmen's meeting Stephen Baughen had reported that in terms of real politic all the sites the NDP has raised the profile of are now very vulnerable to speculative development. He went on to inform the Committee in his view the Section 106 projects should improve the outcome for future residents which they will thank this group for. Cllr. Pethurst commented that it was important to have projects for Section 106 funding ready, whatever they may be for when we need to put in an application. Liz Daley commented that in her view requesting Section 106 funding implies that you are in agreement to the development. Cllr. Pethurst commented that Section 106 requests needed to be in place at the initial planning application stage as they could not be added if the application goes to appeal. Cllr. Smith agreed with view of Cllr Pethurst need to go ahead where we can best influence and sooner NDP gets Policies completed the better this view was

endorsed by Cllr. Warne. Marion Cranmer commented that the SAAG Group had so much experience and she would like them to continue to look at other sites which are bound to come forward. Cllr. Hatcher agreed that the policies could be based on all the hard work which had taken place and the knowledge would not go to waste.

The advice of Richard Eastham, FERIA Urbanism was sought via a telephone conference call.

Cllr. Warne explained that the Steering Group had agreed to press ahead without site allocations. Richard Eastham stated that the policies produced needed to improve over and above those already in the Draft TWBC Local Plan. In his view they should be site specific and offer greater protection to the local community. The NDP could have general parish wide policies and also write site specific policies adding site specific points. The policies could target, high design specifications, landscaping, footpaths, infrastructure. Richard Eastham asked the question would a planning application look any different with or without a local plan in place, in other words the policies needed to be stronger and more site specific than those already in the TWBC Draft Local Plan. He pointed out that there is now a sense of inevitability about sites included in the TWBC Draft Local Plan and the NDP need to confirm them with additional criteria.

June Bell raised concern that the TWBC Draft Local Plan had allocated large sites with the majority of the development to the south of Cranbrook whereas the NDP Steering Group had wanted smaller sites with lower property numbers. Richard Eastham stated that the Group needed to concentrate on those sites included in the Draft Local Plan with policies shadowing and enhancing quality control. These could be (1) Parish Wide and (2) Site Specific.

Policies written for those sites which are not supported by the NDP could be prefixed with statement such as “Community does not support development of this site however should it be granted we would like to see .....” The NDP needed to engage with sites not supported by NDP. The draft NDP would go through Regulation 14 and at a later date the examiner may modify opening statement in feedback received.

Cllr. Pethurst asked Richard Eastham for his opinion as to whether it was worth continuing. He replied that more influence could be bought to bear by having specific action groups to liaise direct with developers. In his opinion needed to create a plan which would be taken on board by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Planning Department. Cllr. Warne thanked Richard Eastham for his input.

After a full discussion the following resolution was proposed by Cllr. Pethurst: **Go forward with NDP without allocations and have enhanced site specific policies for sites allocated in the Draft Local Plan.** This was seconded by Cllr. Warne and agreed.

Cllr. Warne agreed to contact Richard Eastham informing him of the decision to go ahead with NDP without site allocations. Richard Eastham could now go ahead and incorporate recommendations from David Carlisle (AECOM) site assessment review previously received.

Cllrs. Pethurst, Warne, Hatcher and Liz Daley agreed to be part of the site specific policy group.

Liz Daley explained that she had gained a great deal of experience and the CPRE give specific references which could help shape policies. She was also collating all the comments from the community in response to the Draft TWBC Local Plan and she felt that site specific policies could really shape development going forward. The Community had been so supportive of the NDP and what they had been trying to achieve is was important to try to get the best development possible for the future generation.

## **Project Timetable**

It was hoped to meet early in the New Year to undertake policy revision and hopefully make a presentation at February Full Council.

