

Notes on the Ditchling, Streat & Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan Project Management Group meeting 05/02/2014

Two observers attended

1) Streat and Westmeston still need to provide members for the Project Management Group

2) The contact from **Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint, Keymer, Ditchling Transition (HKD)**, advocating building stronger communities to cope with climate change. We will engage with them at a later date in the production of the plan.

3) **Website:** Sallie Collard-Watson said that the website with the logo was now up and running and that the website domain name is now active at:-

Tom as Chair, will monitor any email traffic:-

4) The leaflet to be distributed to the street reps, who will be meeting tomorrow night 06/02/2014. They will be asked to circulate copies of the leaflet throughout the Beacon villages. The question was posed as to how we communicate with businesses in the area.

5) **Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan:** An extra item was added to the agenda concerning the recent failure of Slaugham Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan to pass the independent examination stage. An explanation was given as to the reasons why.

These include, that the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out has not met the requirements of the relevant EU Obligation. As such the SPCNP does not meet this basic condition. Given the nature of the incompatibility with the EU Obligation, it has not been possible to recommend modifications that would allow the inspector to recommend that the Plan can proceed to a referendum.

The inspector also found that whilst the Neighbourhood Plan recognises the need for new housing development, the target it sets for the Plan period is not based on sufficiently robust evidence. This in turn has resulted in three site allocations for residential development which fall within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that are not necessarily deliverable and have not been sufficiently justified given the great weight the National Planning Policy Framework attaches to the protection of landscape and scenic beauty. Given the District Plan context and as much of the Parish falls within the AONB, a robust Assessment of need and of

suitable and available sites was required to ensure that the policies and proposals in the Plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, have regard to national policy and guidance and generally conform to the strategic policies of the development plan.

It was felt that lack of communication may have alienated sections of the community from the plan, which must conform to the MSDC District Plan. The Project Management Group should take on board these comments when preparing the Beacon Villages plan.

In the light of Slaugham's failure discussion proceeded at length regarding a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In this a process known as screening is involved, and is undertaken to determine whether a plan or programme requires a Sustainability Appraisal or a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Some plans automatically require SEA, due to meeting the criteria defined in the directive, whilst other plans and modifications to some existing plans must be determined on a case-by-case basis. As plan makers, it is our responsibility to identify whether our neighbourhood plan meets the criteria established in the Environment Agency directive, and hence requires SEA.

Annex II of the SEA Directive (Guidelines on biodiversity) sets out 'significance criteria' to guide the plan maker and statutory consultation bodies at this stage of the process.

Where a screening consultation is undertaken the plan maker is required to produce a screening determination, which must be made publicly available.

Before submitting a planning application, potential applicants can apply for an opinion on whether a development should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. This is called a screening opinion.

Requests should be made in writing and be accompanied by:-

- A plan sufficient to identify the land
- A brief description of the proposed development's nature, purpose and possible effects upon the environment
- Any information or representation from the developer.

Applicants have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State for a Screening Direction to determine whether an assessment is necessary.

Screening criteria is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. It is based upon a proposed development's characteristics, location and potential impacts.

Applicants can also seek advice on the content of the Environmental Statement by requesting a scoping opinion. This is a where developers can write to us requesting an opinion on what information should be included within an Environmental Statement.

It is recommended that a scoping opinion is requested for all applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. This helps to identify key areas which should be covered (such as noise pollution or ecological impacts), as well as avoiding subsequent delays in processing the application.

Advice on the content of an Environmental Impact Assessment is available from the Environment Agency website.

Cllr Jones talked about the SHLAA sites (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). A new assessment will be published by LDC in the near future. The SHLAA is intended to provide district councils with a five year supply of land for building. Cllr Jones said that the District plan for Lewes would also include “windfall” sites within the calculations. He also mentioned that travellers' sites need to be incorporated within the district and therefore possibly the Neighbourhood Plans. A possible site that had already been identified is the derelict greenhouses site in Beacon road although it was stressed that this did not mean it would become one. Sites also had to be allocated for businesses.

Action: Tom Jones to circulate the LDC 'Site Allocation' document. (nb It should be read in conjunction with what the SDNPA is doing)

6) Questionnaires: This item concerned the structure and wording of the questionnaire or questionnaires to be prepared as part of the public consultation. It is suggested that the questionnaire should be aimed at three groups.

- a) Residential
- b) Businesses
- c) Special interest groups

The questions need to be set in a context to explain why they are being asked.

Action: All PMG members should consider what questions we need to put directly to residents/businesses/SIGs for information that we cannot obtain from other sources. Members responsible for specific topic areas such as heritage, business, housing, employment, environment, traffic etc. should in particular consider their part of the questionnaire. Great thought should be put into the structure of the questionnaires such that both open and specific information is obtained and the questions themselves should not predicate the replies.

Action: Sallie Collard-Watson and Edwina Rowling to investigate other neighbourhood plan questionnaires. (Some notes on this have already been circulated, and are repeated at the end of these minutes).

7) Communication and Engagement

A record (log) needs to be kept of how the PMG has addressed and responded to views and issues raised by residents (individual or collective), businesses and special interest groups.

Action: Sallie Collard-Watson, Edwina Rowling and Tom Dufty to agree how this should be done. (NB the issue raised below is one such)

8) Ditchling Traffic:

A paper was presented by an observer, Nikki Upton, analysing the adverse impact of traffic on Ditchling village and requesting the results of what she thought had been a traffic pollution survey in the village. She also put forward her proposals as to how through-traffic could be significantly reduced - that the Beacon road, New Road and two sections of Underhill Lane should be blocked off to through traffic, so that traffic travelling from Brighton to Mid-Sussex could not use the village as a through route. The resulting section of unused roads could then be used as new car parks. The matter was left for consideration.

Action: Tom Dufty to ask Andrew Triggs (SDNPA) to come to the next PMG to explain where and how the issue of traffic can be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. Also to follow up the pollution survey.

8) Next PMG Meeting: Date and time of next meeting, Wednesday Feb 26th at 7.30pm in the Friends (Quaker) Meeting house

Don McBeth
07/02/2014

Notes on Questionnaires

Aylesbury has an example toolkit, attached as Questionnaire Toolkit

Wivenhoe
, Crawley Down & Laverham, used Survey Monkey to set up both a residents and a Business survey:-

Also myfeedback.com:-

Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire:-

Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire:-

Clifford Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire:-

Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire:-

Barwick in Elmet has multiple surveys:-

These sites can be found in the link to the minutes on the web site. Hold down the CTRL key and click on any of the above web links in that electronic version)

1) Summative evaluation is often numerical or quantitative and most people are familiar with evaluation questionnaires. These can be useful tools, but have their limitations. Key points to consider when designing an effective feedback questionnaire:

- What information do you really want or need to know?
- Engaging the respondents
- Length
- Structure and design
- Maximising responses
- Confidentiality
- Analysis

2) Questionnaires: Functional matters

Design the questionnaires so the data can be easily extracted. Stay focused, concentrate on getting key information that you will use. Critical questions that you need to address are likely to include:

Who participated and how are you going to capture this data?

How many of them were there?

How did they participate in the activity/ can you usefully capture data/ how it can feed in to shaping of plan?

3 Questionnaire: Length

Keep it focused, simple to complete, and as short as possible (usually 1 or 2 sides of A4). This will maximise the response rate.

Resist temptation to throw in lots of questions. A longer questionnaire reduces people's will to fill it in, and the more likely you will have missing answers. It will also take you longer to analyse the information.

4 Making the respondent's experience positive

Make sure the respondent finds the experience straightforward and useful; they may even gain something from the process.

Ensure that your language is appropriate and that for some people English may not be their first language.

Ensure the respondent has an opportunity to say what is on their mind. We suggest you always include a general open ended question at the end.

If possible, pilot the questionnaire on a few people (colleagues, family etc.) before circulating it widely; piloting will help you identify any difficulties with wording or concepts. You'll be using formative evaluation to improve your summative evaluation

5 Structure

It is usually best to place sensitive questions towards the end, so that you can build up rapport with the respondent.

Avoid long batteries of questions using scales, as respondents will drift into automatic pilot.

If the questionnaire is long, break up questions into groups visually and into logical, sub-topics.

Demographic data (e.g. facts about age, sex, education, and ethnicity) are usually best placed at the end; do not ask for information that you do not plan to use: it wastes everyone's time

6 Maximising the response rate

Distribute questionnaires at the start of the event, and ask people to complete it before they leave.

Make it short, simple and relevant.

Learn from experience and be prepared to make adjustments based on this experience.

7 Data Analysis

Plan the time and resources needed for data entry, analysis and reporting. Design these at the same time as the questionnaire to ensure the data sought is in a capturable format. A simple Excel spreadsheet will allow you to do quite a lot of analysis of the data.

8 Confidentiality/data protection

Take all reasonable steps to make sure the respondent is not adversely affected by taking part in evaluation. Keep their responses confidential, unless you have their permission. Do not do anything with their responses that they were not informed about at the time. So unless you made it clear when you gave them the questionnaire or on the questionnaire itself, you cannot use the results to build a database for marketing, for example. Take particular care with children and teenagers.

9 Using scales

The 1-5 Likert scale is the most commonly used form of rating. It is simple to understand and relatively discriminating. The scale is commonly anchored descriptively e.g. 5= Agree strongly, 4= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = disagree strongly. You can also add a "don't know" category, if it seems a likely answer. Other scales that are used include scoring on a line of one to ten or a percentage score.

Another way of differentiating between people's view is to present them with statements that the respondent chooses between. These are often ordered on an implicit scale but you are asking the respondent to tick the one that best fits their view when in fact they may not agree with any of those presented. An example of this type of question is:

Which of the following statements best reflects your feelings about the Plan area today?

- a) Our Neighbourhood Plan aims to make our lives safer and better.
- b) Our Neighbourhood Plan is changing many things for better, but I wonder how much of it can be achieved.
- c) Our Neighbourhood Plan is producing lots of new things but I'm not sure we need them all.
- d) Our Neighbourhood Plan is not reflecting the needs of the community. When it comes to the analysis all you can really do is present the percentage of respondents who agree with each statement. Rank ordering is best avoided – many respondents won't do it properly, unless you stick to asking for first, second and third choices. Otherwise, people get confused and get pushed in to declaring preferences they don't really have.

10 Designing open-ended questions

Use broad openers: who, what, where, when, and (especially) why. Balanced open questions (what did you like, what did you dislike) help the respondent structure an answer without feeling pressured to give a particular reply. Avoid asking more than one question at the same time.