

Neighbourhood Plan Project Management Group

November 20th 2013, Friends (Quaker) Meeting House 7.30pm

Notes of the meeting

Apologies:

Sallie, Mike

Introductions:

Penny Mitchell (note taker)

Karen Pretty – Streat Parish Council

Andrew Triggs – SDNPA

Belinda Britten – Ditchling Parish Council

Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were declared. Sallie and Emma to be followed up for completed registers.

Streat & Westmeston participation

Both parish councils voted in favour of participation. Ditchling Parish Council must now apply for an extension to include them in the plan. The six week consultation process will follow and be advertised. Andrew has placed ads in three newspapers.

Westmeston's vote was too late for the area extension to be included as a substantive item on the agenda of the recent Ditchling Parish Council meeting, so it will not formally be voted on by DPC until November 26th. However it is confidently expected to be approved.

The consultation process ends on 6th Jan.

PMG membership (Westmeston & Streat)

Westmeston – Natalie has resigned for domestic reasons – Colin Hall may become rep.

Streat – Karen Pretty is considering becoming rep.

Tom stressed that the plan must incorporate the totality of the area and that PMG members should regard themselves as residents in effect of all three parishes.

Advisory Team attendance at PMG meetings. Only one rep. from the three parishes will attend each meeting unless more are specifically invited and needed for their specialist contribution – Don to attend this time.

Locality Grant

£6,996 was applied for, but only £4,796 awarded of which £4,316 (90%) has been received. This has been deposited in the Parish Council account.

As Streat has now joined the project, there's a possibility of a top-up.

Evidence gathering

Sources identified to date; nature of information obtained; gaps in information so far.

Built and historic environment, conservation, heritage and design.

Evidence presented by Richard, with accompanying topic paper:

Richard explained how he had approached his initial evidence gathering.

Evidence was gathered based on understanding the purpose – the evidence base is essential to supporting the plan policies. Questions he asked during his research were: What are the characteristics and issues, and how do they fit into the national and local policy frameworks? Signposts and guidelines were noted.

The identification of gaps will inform additional evidence gathering work (there are resource and time implications here). The focus needs to be drawn down to key issues.

How can the local community be involved in the evidence gathering process? Information gaps can be filled in this way, but there is an art in formulating questionnaires – the right questions need to be asked.

An information audit of what's currently available will help define where we go next.

There is a requirement to use the framework.

National Planning Practice guidance* – does our plan need to comply with this? On website.

Joint Core Strategy*

National Parks*

Defra Circular*

SDNP – plan*

*All these need to be considered. All the elements are applied within these – all the various topics that individuals are working on. There needs to be an accord across the topic areas on all the evidence produced. Topic areas are not discrete.

In conservation and heritage, the parameters are largely fixed, but are the Conservation Area Appraisals up to date? Have the proposed Area Extensions in Ditchling been formally confirmed yet? Tom believed they hadn't as the whole appraisal hasn't yet been completed throughout the Lewes District.

Action: Andrew to update.

What do the conservation appraisals actually tell us? Are they adequate? Do we buy into them? In the Plan, what factors do we need to consider? If the Listed Building Act is a constraint – where do we go with development?

This topic, more than any other, expresses 'the values' residents cherish about living in the parishes that must be retained throughout the process of change.

Recreational facilities

Evidence presented by Emma:

Information obtained from ACRE – Over 60% of residents are happy with what's currently available, but does this apply to all demographics? What about children for example? Were they asked?

The District Council has done a survey –the Open Space and Recreation Study (?) gives an overview.

Sources looked at:

NPPF – to promote healthy communities and guard against loss of services

Lewes Core Strategy

National Parks strategy

Green spaces in Ditchling – these are possibly in jeopardy, unless already formally protected, if building land is needed. Richard confirmed that we are allowed to have green space – it can be protected from development if there is convincing community benefit evidence to support it.

Valuable assets to the community can be included in the Plan. How is recreation defined? It's not to be found only in green spaces. Passive and active enjoyment of recreational resources should be considered – meeting places such as this and cafes and pubs all have their place. There could be more for certain age groups – there is little currently for young people.

Action:

An audit of recreational places owned by the village and of other 'private' recreational facilities.

A spread sheet of the village demographic, and whether and how its 'recreational' needs are met.

Housing facts and figures

Evidence presented by Edwina, with accompanying topic paper:

The Local Core Strategy, reflecting the NPPF requirement, was used to abstract relevant information, and in terms of housing development, figures were also found in surveys and VAPs.

A key question to be addressed is: what is affordable housing? Does it mean housing association, or simply cheaper homes?

In the Lewes local plan – 4,500 additional homes are needed in the District. This figure appears to be under review with the prospect of double? Will the parishes' quota be proportionately increased?

Action: Don and Tom Jones to clarify

Ditchling Parish currently has a planned growth increase of 71 houses between now and 2030 in the local plan, of which 7 have been completed, 49 are already 'committed' and 15 yet to be delivered. Westmeston and Streat parishes do not appear currently to have any planned growth increase.

Lewes District has areas within the SDNP and areas outside it. If housing development within the National Park areas is restricted because of conservation constraints will it mean that areas outside the Park will have to take additional homes in order to fulfil the total requirement?

In Ditchling, 23 households are identified as being “in need” – what does this mean? What's the source of this? Possible questions could be for a parish questionnaire could be: Do you have someone on the housing waiting list? Do you want to buy within the village?

In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Core Strategy has to guide us. Our site identification and

allocation in the Plan will reveal whether there is a potential gap between the Joint Core Strategy and the numbers that can be built - where are the sites? Is there a potential conflict between meeting the demands of the core strategy; meeting the demonstrated 'internal' housing needs of the parishes; and preservation of those heritage things most valued by their residents?

Employment and Economic Activity

Evidence presented by Craig:

In terms of economics, the questions to be addressed are:

What are the businesses here, and in what way may they change in the future?

58 businesses so far have been identified within the area, and a survey will be formulated with links once it is clear what they are. It will then be possible to look at the need for expansion and growth. It should then become clear what the infrastructure issues are regarding transport, postal services etc and what the impact is on the villages.

Further questions are:

What need is there for employment in the area?

How many people are unemployed?

Could they be provided with work within the area?

Maybe a business questionnaire could be devised. LDC has a business advisory board that may help.

Action: Everyone to continue to progress with their evidence gathering by establishing facts and figures.

Should we be looking at gaps in local knowledge? Are we at risk of giving too much time to National Policy?

Communication and engagement

Consultation & Engagement: In terms of St. George's – should the residents be involved as a whole? In the next agenda – how should they be treated as they're such a large group (over 250) yet have most of their needs met by the sisters/agents within their own community.

Launch date & materials

We won't be able to consider a launch date until after 16th Jan., when the end of the consultation period is formally confirmed by the SDNP Planning Committee. Streat and Westmeston will then be full participants.

The launch will be an opportunity to say 'Here we are, and this is what we're doing' using various means of publicity. A prospective date could be 1st Feb. All publicity material should be gathered by then.

We should try to be in a position where the parishes' questionnaire could go out 3 weeks later?

Street Representatives (completing the representatives)

Confirmed Street Reps to date and possible areas of coverage:

Nevill Cottages and Long Park Corner – Penny Mitchell

Mulberry Lane – Alix Clarke

North End – Damian Cleary
Underhill Lane & Westmeston 'centre' – Les Harris
Common Lane & Common – Laurie Mayhew
East Gardens & The Dymocks – John Willis
Twitten & Fieldway - Nick Taylor
Dumbrells Court - Don Craft
Emett Gardens, Farm Lane & Lower East End Lane - Geoff Kavanagh
Spatham Lane – Peter Luckin
Upper East End Lane – Sylvia Bain (latest addition)

Yet to be confirmed?

Lodge Hill Lane & Boddington's Lane – Nick Blake - **Nicola to check**
Lower Beacon Road/Clayton Road – Nicky Jenkins ?– **Tom to recruit**
Upper Beacon Road – Dick Morley ? “ “
Underhill Lane (Ditchling end) – **Tom to consult Roy Burman**
Shirleys/Village Centre – Claire Holmes ? – **Tom to recruit**

Some outstanding locations

Lewes Road
St George's Park
Streat
Westmeston

When Street reps are confirmed, the whole area should be scrutinised to make sure that everywhere has been covered.

2030 Vision & values

The plan needs to state the things that we value and do not want to lose, as well as considering the future needs. What is it that makes this area distinctive?

Referendum Question (understanding it)

“Do you want the South Downs National Park Authority and Lewes District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat parishes to help them decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

Any other business

Sustainability needs to be considered now. Look at the screening option on the SDNP site – it's quite technical and involved.