

MINUTES
BECKINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING GROUP MEETING
1 May 2025

Present:

Ben Richards (BR), Georgina Fletcher (GF), Paula Fox (PF), Laura Parry (LP)

In attendance: Wendy Hopkins (WH)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Debs Byrne (DB), Jo Hole (JH) Alex Richards (AR), Clive Winterbourne (CW).
2. **Introductions.** BR welcomed WH from Brodie Consulting. He outlined the context for this meeting:
 - The housing site survey was about to end
 - The next event would be a public consultation event on Views, Local Green Space and Character (15 May)
3. **Minutes of Last Meeting.** For a number of reasons, the minutes of the meetings on 10 Feb, 27 Feb and 9 Apr had yet to be approved. **Action: BR to send a confirmatory email to SG members requesting approval out of committee.**
4. **Actions arising from previous minutes**
 - WH had updated the Housing background Paper and provide comments. There was now more detail in Section 8 concerning the Call for Sites. The document would be kept under review and updated as necessary. WH requested a copy of the revised map of the 5 sites. **Action: BR**
 - WH advised that the next step would be for the Paper to be updated with the housing site survey results. It could then be sent to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) - Somerset Council (André Sestini) - requesting expert comment for example the Landscape officer's views on road noise mitigation measures that might be required for sites adjacent to the A36 and what would be appropriate.
 - GF asked how the mix of housing should be represented in the NP. WH advised that it was generally best to keep policies on this separate from sections on specific sites.
5. **Housing Survey**
 - The SG discussed and agreed the procedure for ending the survey on Fri 2 May and calculation of the results. Boxes would be collected on 3 May and the aim was to have initial results available by 6 May.
 - WH advised that the results would need to be reviewed to determine:
 - Any preference from residents.
 - Whether the draft plan needed to be amended.
 - Landowners of any sites shortlisted for inclusion in the draft plan would need to be informed with a request for comment/clarification in any issues (eg noise mitigation plans).
6. **Public Consultation Meeting, Thursday 15 May**
 - Steve Kemp was due to attend the meeting and summarise his findings. He was due to provide the SG with his draft reports in advance of the meeting. He had refined the original 8 Green Space sites to 4.

- The Parish Clerk had mapped character areas that would be the basis of the consultation. The LCA working group would produce the Character Assessment based on the areas identified in the Mendip District Council Beckington Conservation Area Appraisal and by AECOM after hearing residents' views on May 15.
 - Stuart Todd had advised that landowners of any Local Green Space to be presented on 15 May should be informed in advance.
 - WH advised that the LPA Landscape Officer should be consulted about views and LGS and she would do this. **Action: PF to provide contact details to WH.**
7. **Draft Plan.** The SG agreed that, subject to funding approval by the Parish Council, WH would take on responsibility for drafting the NP. WH requested sight of the current draft so she could submit a quote. **Action: PF.**
 8. **Topography / Landscape Assessment.** Following discussion with consultants, the LCA working group recommended that a Landscape Assessment would be more appropriate to meet the evidence requirements for the NP. Consultant quotes were due in shortly and would be reviewed. Budget authority had already been received from the Parish Council. WH advised that before a decision is made, she would contact the LPA Landscape Planning Officer to seek advice on whether an assessment is required. **Action: PF to send a copy of the letter to tenderers to WH.**
 9. **Consultation Statement.** PF informed the SG that she had copied and pasted into a document all the communication materials and consultation events and activities for use as evidence to the examiner. It was agreed that the Parish Clerk would produce the statement, using a template provided by Brodie Planning.
 10. **Local Planning Authority Communications.** WH repeated previous advice that the SG should request a Memorandum of Understanding with the LPA over numbers or sites. She reminded the SG that the provisional figure of 95 was a minimum. She advised that a preference for phasing development over the lifetime of the NP could be included as a policy, but the absence of a 5 year housing supply might undermine this. She also advised that the NP could contain a policy that improvements to infrastructure required to support new housing should be completed prior to construction. **Action: PF to seek clarification from LPA (André Sestini) and ask when the Council would be updating the provisional figure given to the SG.**
 11. **SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment).** WH advised that a decision on whether either of these would be required would be for the LPA once sufficient information was available. This could be prior to or after the Regulation 14 submission. In our case, due to uncertainty over the numbers allocation, it was likely to be after. The SG noted that Norton St Philip had not required a SEA and HRA initially for their first two Regulation 14s but that a SEA had been required for the third Regulation 14 submission. **Action: PF to contact NSP and ask for the background and reasons.**
 12. **Budget Update.** PF confirmed that the full £18,000 Locality grant had been allocated and accounted for. Future spends would need to be approved in advance by the Parish Council.
 13. **AOB.** BR noted that the SG member details on our website needed updating. There was also a requirement for the Declarations of Interest to be reviewed as the current versions dated from the start of the SG in 2023/24. It was good practice to do this on an annual basis. **Action: BR to contact SG members with details.**
 14. **Date of next meeting.** Tuesday 17 June, 7pm.