

MINUTES
BECKINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING GROUP MEETING
10 July 2024

Present:

Chair - Sue Shipley (SS)
External Communications - Jo Hole (JH), Clive Winterbourne (CW)
Project Plan - Sarah Ball (SB)
Design Codes and LCA – Paula Fox (PF)
Website - Alex Richards (AR)
Secretary - Ben Richards (BR)

Apologies: Debs Byrne (DB), Laura Parry (LP), Andrew Tyler (AT), Jennie Tyler (JT), Mel Usher (MU), Sue Wonnacott (SW)

1. **Minutes of last meetings**
 - 4 June 2024 - Approved
 - 19 June 2024 – Approved with one amendment to Item 1 ***Afternote: Actioned by Secretary***
2. **Actions arising**
 - Cllr Adam Boyden (Frome North) had been invited but was unable to attend. See item 10.
 - Other action points were dealt with under agenda items.
3. **Focus of Plan going forward**
 - Following a discussion of the issues raised at the 19 June meeting and noting that the new Government might announce new policy, including changes to the NPPF, it was agreed that Housing should become the focus of the NP to influence any future decisions on housing allocation. Although we do not have any specific allocation at this stage, we needed to be realistic and assume that Beckington could be required to take more housing. Assessing potential sites against an agreed set of criteria would be required. It was agreed that the reasons for doing this would need to be communicated clearly to residents and their views sought on potential sites.
 - It was agreed that other work (Landscape Character Assessment, Green Space and Views) would continue.
 - PF and SS had taken advice from our NP Consultant, Stuart Todd (ST), concerning what would be required for a Call for Sites process. He had advised:
 - The assessment process needs to be transparent to avoid criticism of bias or vested interests.
 - A full Call for Sites process should be conducted (rather than using the previously identified 9 sites in September 2023) to demonstrate transparency and rigour. Using previous data could risk challenges by developers or landowners. ***Afternote: SS and***

PF have sought further advice on this as a fresh Call for Sites process will significantly increase the amount of time required to complete the NP.

- Input from Somerset Council would be required in specific areas (including transport and drainage). PF would request a meeting with the Principal Planning Officer (André Sestini) to discuss Council input into the call for sites and the assessment process. She would also request a copy of the most recent Call for Sites documentation. **Action: PF**

- It was further noted that:
 - Although Local Plans may only include strategic sites (normally 10 homes and above), Neighbourhood Plans may also consider smaller sites.
 - AECOM has a technical support package available to assist with assessment. This had been included in our latest funding submission to Locality.
- The SG noted the following outline steps that would be required:
 - Sites identified through a Call for Sites exercise.
 - Sites assessed for viability by AECOM (subject to technical package being approved).
 - The assessment results shared with local residents, with the opportunity for feedback and comment. It was noted that many in the village will be unfamiliar with the sites. They will need to be provided with supporting information and guidance on how sites are selected. It was agreed that this would be best achieved at an event rather than by another survey. Developers could be invited to present to residents and take questions.
 - Sites assessed against an agreed set of criteria identified and put in an order of priority in accordance with residents' feedback. We would need to agree whether the outcome would be all sites ranked in order, a preferred top three, or another option.

Afternote: this exercise will likely be conducted by an independent consultant.

 - Results fed into the NP.

4. Residents Survey

- SW had circulated drafts of the main analysis document and an executive summary for distribution to all residents via maildrop and the website. She had requested comments and would produce a final draft. **Action: All**
- Production of the printed summary to residents would be the responsibility of the Comms Group. **Action: DB, JH**

5. Technical Support

- **Design Codes.** PF and BR had provided AECOM with our comments on the first draft. It was agreed that ST would be invited to comment on the final draft, expected in the next 2 weeks. The final document was due on 16 August. JH and CW agreed to source sunnier versions of the photographs already included. **Action: JH, CW**
- **Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)** – the working group will meet once DB returns to recommend a consultant to conduct this work.
- **Housing Needs Analysis (HNA)** – the final report has been received from AECOM.

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – this will be required as part of the site assessment process. There is no additional funding required for this as it can be done through Locality.
6. **Stakeholder Engagement (Local Businesses)**
 - The working group is due to meet on 22 July.
 7. **September Event**
 - It was agreed that the September event would not take place to allow the SG to focus on Housing. The Stakeholder Engagement working group would need to consider how we capture the views of local businesses and clubs. **Action: SS, AT, BR, LP**
 8. **Finance**
 - A further grant application of just under £10,000 has been submitted to Locality. The outcome should be known in the next 4 weeks. AT is requested to provide an update for the next meeting. **Action: AT**
 9. **Project Plan**
 - Version 1.5 is now on the shared drive.
 - AR informed the group that the review of key reference documents is 80% complete and should be complete by the end of July.
 - We are not going to be able to achieve 2.11 (identification of key issues, questions and gaps) by 27 July. This would need to be pushed back. SS would discuss this with MU.
Action SS, MU
 10. **AOB**
 - **Date of next meeting.** Wednesday 14 August. CW would invite Cllr Adam Boyden. **Action: CW**
 - **Declarations of interest.** SS would provide these to AR for publication on the website.
Action: SS
 - **Archiving.** BR and AR would provide a recommendation at the next meeting. **Action: BR, AR**
 - **Consultation and Engagement Plan.** AR confirmed that this has been published on the website.