

**MINUTES**  
**BECKINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**STEERING GROUP MEETING**  
**17 December 2024**

**Present:**

Ben Richards (BR), Georgina Fletcher (GF), Paula Fox (PF), Alex Richards (AR), Sue Shipley (SS, item 1 only), Clive Winterbourne (CW)

**Apologies:** Debs Byrne (DB), Jo Hole (JH)

**1. Introduction of new member, apologies**

- BR, as temporary Chair, welcomed Georgina Fletcher onto the SG as a representative from Rudge.
- Apologies were received from DB and JH. BR read out an email from JH containing her views on the future work of the SG.
- BR noted that, since the last meeting, Andrew Tyler, Jennie Tyler, Sarah Ball and Mel Usher had stepped down from the SG. He thanked them for their input and work over the last year and wished them all well for the future.
- Sue Shipley informed the group that she had also decided to step down from the SG. BR thanked her for her excellent leadership of the SG since its inception and wished her well.
- The remaining members of the SG present indicated their willingness to continue. AR noted that work commitments in 2025 and a change of commute might affect his ability to attend meetings. He would know more by January 2025 and would inform the SG.
- It was agreed that AR would revise the access arrangements to the SG shared drive to reflect the current membership and that BR would update the WhatsApp chat group.

**Action: AR, BR**

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- The minutes of the 11 November meeting were approved. **Action: AR to publish on website.**

**3. Actions arising from previous minutes**

- The published project plan overview and timeline on the website was not synchronised with the updated project plan document. **Action: BR to address**
- All other issues had been addressed or were discussed und the relevant agenda items.

**4. Scene setter and overview**

- BR outlined what he understood to be the current situation, externally and internally. The Government had published its revised [NPPF](#) on 12 December, with a headline figure of 1.5 million new homes over the course of the current Parliament. This equates to 370,408 per year. The SG was unclear whether any specific targets had been imposed on Somerset Council and when they would announce local requirements. **Action: PF to contact Andre Sestini and ask.**
- **Afternote:** the [Indicative Housing Need](#) document published by the Government states that Somerset has a revised target of 3,769. Media reporting (Somerset Live) indicates that Somerset Council will be conducting a call for sites process over six weeks in the New Year.

- The SG noted that the decision on Selwood Garden Community development had been deferred until February 2025.
  - It was noted that ST will be unavailable to provide consultancy in January and February 2025.
5. **SG members availability for 2025**
- Following on from discussion at Item 1, BR will contact LP to determine her availability.  
**Action: BR**
6. **Call for Sites update and next steps**
- PF reported that Brodie Consulting hopes to be able to deliver their initial report on 20 December. It was agreed that, due to the sensitive nature of the document, it should be password protected. **Action: PF to inform Brodie Consulting.**
  - PF stated that Wendy Hopkins (WH) from Brodie Consulting would like to speak with the SG to discuss the findings and how the results should be incorporated in the NP. PF reported that WH had indicated that, having completed the Call for Sites, she was keen to assist the SG further to complete the NP.
  - It was agreed that WH, having conducted the call for sites, was ideally placed to assist with drafting the NP. PF stated that the Parish Council had indicated that funding was available for this but would need to be approved at its next meeting on 14 January. It was decided that the SG would meet on 13 January with WH (subject to her availability) to discuss the call for sites and her availability to draft the NP. In the meantime, PF would ask WH for a quote that can be put to the Parish Council for consideration. This would be required seven days before the council meeting. **Action: PF to get quote from WH and confirm her availability to meet with the SG on 13 January.**
7. **Green Space and Views Assessments**
- CW reported that the PC had approved the budget of £1695 for Steve Kemp (SK) at Open Plan to conduct the Green Space assessment. The work was ongoing. SG welcomed this and requested a completion deadline of 30 January for both assessments. **Action: CW to inform SK**
8. **Draft Plan – Aim, Vision and Objectives**
- BR had circulated a draft outline of NP including the aim, vision and objectives. Comments had been received and it was felt that the outline was too complicated. It was also felt that some of the objectives did not fall within the remit of a NP. It was agreed that BR would revert to circulating the draft aim, vision and objectives only and would ask ST for guidance on whether any fall outside our remit. It was agreed that consideration of the outline should be discussed with WH as part of the drafting work. **Action: BR**
9. **Project Plan – Work Plan for 2025**
- It was agreed that the priority was getting the NP to Regulation 14 status at the most appropriate time to influence planning decisions and the process of drafting of the new Somerset Council Plan (expected in Spring 2025).

- The SG revisited previous debate concerning whether the NP should consider site allocation ahead of any announcement of the new targets from Somerset Council. PF stated that the strong advice of WH was that site allocation should not feature before we know the requirement, but that this should not delay the production of the plan itself: we should aim to get to Regulation 14 consultation as soon as we can. If, for some reason, we do not have a parish level housing number from Somerset Council (expected in Spring 2025) when the plan is ready, we can proceed to Regulation 14 consultation without site allocation and then add a chapter under a separate Regulation 14 consultation later. This was agreed in principle for discussion with WH on 13 January.

10. **AOB**

- GF asked about the scope of what the NP would cover, e.g. in relation to homebuilder plots and some other issues noted in the local survey. It was agreed that this should be marked for discussion with WH on 13 January and that, in the meantime, PF would seek advice from ST. **Action: PF/GF**
- Date and venue for next meeting. 6.30pm, Monday 13 January 2025, Clifford Suite (tbc)