

Aston Rowant Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

11 June 2019 7:30pm

Kingston Blount Village Hall

Present: Mark Thackeray (MT), Andy Green (AG), Steven Sowerby (SS) and Peter Tinson (PT)

Apologies were received from Paul Fincken (PF), Mark Jones (MJ) and Guy Cunningham (GC)

1. Introductions and Appointment of Steering Group members/officers for 2019-2020.

Following the disbanding of the previous Group at the end of the Parish Council term, the members of the Steering Group from the date of the meeting were confirmed as Mark Thackeray, Andy Green, Paul Fincken, Guy Cunningham, Mark Jones, Steven Sowerby and Peter Tinson. Mark Thackeray agreed to continue as Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that all had completed Declarations of Pecuniary Interest as required of a sub-committee of the Parish Council and had submitted them to the Clerk.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (8 January 2019)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Presentation by Strutt & Parker

The presentation by Strutt and Parker had been postponed to a later date as they were presenting to the Parish Council meeting the following day.

6. SODC Local Plan

MT reported that he had met with Ricardo Rios (RR) to discuss the likely progress of the SODC Local Plan following the change in control of the District Council. RR advised that he believed that the Local Plan was likely to proceed as planned. This would mean that expert evaluation would take place in September. RR confirmed that there was no requirement for building in small villages.

It was noted that, in the event of the Local Plan being stalled, the current core strategy relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan is low key infill (0.2 hectares or less). The weakness in relying on this policy is that if the five year plan fails, the currency of the local plan would be brought into question making speculative applications in small villages more likely. It was noted that the recent inspectorate decisions had confirmed Aston Rowant as an unsustainable location.

7. Draft Plan

RR had advised that there was still support for villages to develop their neighbourhood plans but that they would need to reflect the proposed density in the Local Plan. Any examination would be carried out with reference to the core policy (which in turn reflects the Government policy of a minimum housing density of 25 dwellings per hectare). MT reported that Pyrton had attempted to introduce a policy which restricted any new development to the prevailing density but that the plan was rejected by the examiners as it failed to comply with the 25 dwellings per hectare policy.

Chinnor had decided only to allocate sites with outline planning permission following the success of planning applications in the village. It was noted that the plan could be vulnerable if there was no allocation. However, the Pinnacle site should probably not be allocated as it fell outside the existing built up area.

8. Consultation Process

The meeting agreed that a number options for housing policy could be presented to the public for consultation, depending on the outcomes of the decision on the Local Plan. These could be presented at an event to allow a full and open discussion. The options were:

- a) If the Local Plan proceeds to examination, the Housing Policy should be based on infill only;
- b) If SODC should fall below the land supply requirements, or if SODC pulled the Local Plan, publish the AECOM housing assessment and reconsult on the potential sites to establish what the parishioners would find acceptable.

It was agreed that the only contentious section in the Plan was the Housing Policy. The meeting agreed to adopt the draft Plan developed by the previous instance of the Steering Group with the exception of the Housing Policy which was contingent on the Local Plan. It was agreed to review the Housing Policy with a view to consult with the public in September when the position regarding the Local Plan would be clearer.

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that a request for clerical support for the Neighbourhood Plan group had been made to the Parish Council. An individual had expressed an interest and was considering further.

It was agreed to publish a call for more members in the next edition of the Parish Notes.

10. Next meeting

The next meetings are scheduled for Tuesday 9th July 2019 and Tuesday 13th August 2019.