

LONGHOUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 17th JULY 2019

1 Present:

Adrian Hinchcliffe (Chair), Peter Bromley, Bill Bell, Carole Green, Andrew Willmott, Chris Thomas, Ayshea Lewis, Bryan Ellis.

In attendance- Sarah Brannigan (NCC Advisor)

2 Apologies for Absence:

Margaret Robinson, Councillor Wendy Pattison, John Haughie.

3 Approval of the Minutes from 10.04.19

Were approved as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

5 Progress Report

The Chair went through the Progress Report which covered

- Web site
- Meeting with Lord Howick
- Vision and Objectives of the NDP
- Housing Needs Survey
- Housing Demand and Allocation
- Project development within the Longhoughton Review
- Howick Review.

6 Vision and Objectives.

Proposals for the Vision and Objectives along with a contextual statement of the Parish and its three villages had been circulated to all Members of the Steering Group on 10th May 2019 with a request for any comments. Comments had been received from Sarah Brannigan and they had been incorporated into the document. The updated version was considered by the meeting. The following points arose:

- The spelling of Houdiemont was thought to be incorrect and should be Howdiemont.
- The information on Longhoughton Church may not be correct. Andrew Willmott to drop a note to Adrian Hinchcliffe.
- A question was raised on whether the document sufficiently stresses the need for sustainability in the objectives and vision. To be reviewed.

It was stressed that we are close to closing off these important document that are fundamental to the NDP. **Members were asked to forward any further comments to the Chair by 31.07.19.**

ACTION MEMBERS

7 Howick Survey Results

Due to an incident that had arisen in the afternoon John Haughie was not able to be present. He had sent the outcome of the Howick Review to the Chair but it had been too late to print. Members were advised that the survey results would be circulated by email. Hopefully a summary narrative would be available.

ACTION – JH/CHAIR

8 Demand for Housing in the Parish

The meeting considered a paper dealing with the potential number of new houses to be built, the type of houses and where they should be built, during the period to 2036. This topic is at the heart of the NDP. The focus for the paper was intended to put forward a framework of the issues that need to be considered.

The number of new houses to be built would come from two sources:

- The housing needs of the existing population of the Parish.
- The demand for housing within the Parish from people who do not currently live within the Parish.

The paper considered a number of related issues – the national and county allocation of housing numbers; the need for new housing; market driven housing; RAF Housing; affordability; sustainability; differences within the Parish; attitudes towards increased housing; protection of new housing tenure; design of housing; the views of the landowners; settlement boundaries, sites for housing; the protection of some sites from house building.

The discussion involved all these topics and particularly the importance of achieving sustainability for the community and the Parish. Sustainability has to be defined. It the state of having sufficient people in the community to support the village and community infrastructure – the School, the retail and other services, the medical services, the community centre and sports and leisure facilities, having thriving clubs and organisations, a sense of place and people feeling that they are part of a community and are valued and listened to. The critical mass for the achievement of ‘sustainability’ does change over time with changes in the way that services are delivered and the general economic situation. Longhoughton is seen by the County Council as a service village for Howick and Boulmer due to both having limited facilities. The point was also made that any restriction on the supply of housing will have an impact on prices and we should take this into consideration in terms of affordability.

It was also said that changes such as the duelling of the A1 may result in more people settling in the area and commuting to the Tyneside conurbation. We know that this is already happening due to the nearness of the East Coast Main line station at Alnmouth with people commuting to Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Global warming will also have an impact over the sixteen years to 2036 and the gradual changeover from oil based transport and energy use to the use of cleaner energy sources. This will have an impact on the type of transport that we use and the design and energy efficiency of the homes that we live in.

The changes in the RAF are also adding a further complexity. These are not expected to fully materialise until 2022. The potential numbers coming to Longhoughton and requiring housing could be between 50 and 200 but it is too early to make firm plans. It will be essential to keep this under review along with possible changes in the way that the RAF fund housing for its staff. Currently there are 33 RAF houses which are rented out but half of these are occupied by RAF personnel who do not qualify for RAF housing. At the moment the RAF is not anticipating having to build more houses. If need be it could build Single Living Accommodation behind the wires but there are no plans to do this at the moment. It was suggested that within the NDP we have to provide for the increase in personnel happening but be flexible enough to meet whatever is the eventual outcome. It was also stated that should the outcome be that 200 personnel (families and singletons) come to RAF Boulmer then this would represent a significant issue and it could not be contained just within the Parish of Longhoughton.

The ‘Green Necklace project’ and the ‘Old Recreation Field’ project are both likely to identify areas within the existing settlement boundary of Longhoughton that the community would probably like to retain as open recreation areas. Some of these areas are currently earmarked for housing. If this is to be overcome it will be necessary to make a case to the landowner and have proposals to change the settlement boundary to allow house building in other areas. It was pointed out that Northumberland Estates had said they expected to build between six and ten houses per annum year on year into the future within the Parish. There had been no discussion with the Estate since the Autumn of 2018 on this topic but it was essential to continue to have a dialogue with them and the Chair and Vice Chair would be arranging to have a meeting to discuss these issues.

The next steps would be to pull all these issues together and come up with a suggestion on the potential number or range of properties to be built in the period to 2036. The more distant the time

period the less certain will be our estimates. The NDP can be reviewed every five years, so checks on the estimates can be done and changes made. Outline proposals will be put together on the type and quality of housing and where it should be located. This will be a key stage in the NDP and once we have something that looks sustainable and appropriate it will be subject to consultation with residents.

ACTION CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

9 Engagement of a Consultant and Grants

The meeting considered a draft briefing paper for the appointment of planning consultant. The brief covered the background, vision and objectives, community engagement, scope of work and requirements, outputs, management arrangements, timescale and value of the contract.

Sarah suggested that the section on the scope of the work was too broad and not sufficiently specific. She said that some other NDP groups had first requested the Planner to do a 'Scoping Report' for them to define what needs to be done from the evidence and the work that has already been done. This would also identify any gaps and put forward the suggested next steps and this would include the writing of the policies. Sarah said that Lesbury had taken this approach and offered to send examples of what other NDP groups had specified in relation to the scope of work for the planner. She said there was an 'Expression of Interest Form' designed for the purpose and would send this. Insurance would also be needed for the activity.

Sarah also offered to send the contact details for the three planning consultants in Northumberland.

Grants Available from Locality

Adrian reported on the grants that are available from Locality for NDP work. The basic grant is £9,000. Groups facing more complex issues - such as the allocation of land for housing and a proposed design code, could claim a further grant of £8,000. In addition a further £10,000 is available for affordable housing. There is also provision to apply for technical advice from (AECOM). This would cover:

- Allocating sites for housing.
- Proposing to include a design code.
- Bringing forward affordable housing for sale.
- Environmental impact assessment
- Habitats regulation assessment.

There are restriction on the obtaining of grants. Any grant has to be spent by 31st March in the next year. Any unspent grant has to be given back. The maximum grant that can be 'live' at any one time is £9,000. It also sets a maximum daily rate for Consultants of £550 plus VAT with limits on expenses. There is a timescale for applications to be processed and grants have to be approved before any work is started or contracts agreed.

It was clear from this discussion that:

- The scope of the consultants brief will have to relate to specific parcels of work.
- The parcels will have to be closely linked to the applications for grants.
- That the timescales will need to be managed so that grants are spent by the next 31 March.
- That the appointment of the Consultant will need to specify the stages and parcels of work and be clearly linked to the grant funding.

ACTION CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

10 Overall Timescales

The meeting considered the updated timetable.

11 Budget

A budget statement was considered that showed expenditure of £506 against the budget of £3,040 excluding the grant.

12 Date of the Next Meeting.

To be called by the Chair once sufficient progress has been made with the Housing paper along with the grants and appointment of the Consultant.

Meeting ended at 8.55pm.