

LONGHOUGHTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of meeting held 23 July 2020 held on-line using Google – Meet.

- 1 **Present: Adrian Hinchcliffe, Brian Ellis, Chris Thomas, Andrew Willmott.**

In attendance – Rob Naples.

Apologies – Councillor Wendy Pattison, Ayshea Lewis, Jo-Anne Garrick, Peter Bromley, Suzanne Hodgson, Carole Green

- 2 **Progress Statement** – Members noted the statement which will be kept up to date and reviewed at each meeting of the Steering Group. This was the first meeting since early March due to the Coronavirus lockdown. The meeting will pick up where the Group left off in March.
- 3 **Minutes of Previous Meetings** – The minutes of the meetings held 26.02.20 and 04.03.20 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
- 4 **Review of Proposals for Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Protected Open Spaces(POS).** The Group considered a map of Longhoughton and Boulmer showing the Local Green Spaces that had been agreed at the last meeting. The map for Longhoughton was considered to be complete at this stage. A query was raised about the footpaths which are shown in red and it was explained that these are aspirational. In relation to Boulmer, Adrian asked for the field to the west of the Boulmer Memorial Hall to be added as a Local Green Space. This field floods in winter and is an important feeding ground for birds. **This was agreed and Chris undertook to update the map. It was noted that under the Environment paper to be considered later in the meeting, there was a suggestion to include more LGS and POS, so the Group would return to review the map at a later stage.** Concern was expressed that no LGS or POS had been identified for Howick. It was thought that some areas would qualify for this status, for example the areas around the Village Hall including the new pond, the cricket field and possibly other locations. **Adrian said he would take this up with John Haughie who is the representative on the Steering Group for Howick.** The Northumberland Local Plan proposed LGS in the Boulmer RAF Camp. It was not known whether there had been any consultation with the RAF on this. **Adrian would take it up with the RAF representative.**
- 5 **Draft Background Paper – Second Homes and Holiday Lets.** This paper had been written to accompany the housing papers. It focused on the background planning legislation around holiday lets and second homes and focused on the present situation in the Parish. A survey had been done of all properties in the Parish and had identified that overall the Parish has 22 second homes and 44 holiday lets. Together this represents 8.3 percent of all properties.

This level across the Parish was not thought to be an issue and did not need any specific policies to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the percentage at Boulmer was 37.5 percent and it was considered that a policy should be included in the NDP that restricts any new housing to people who live there full time. A Section 106 agreement would create this obligation for perpetuity. **It was agreed that this policy should be included.**

It was pointed out that this policy would only apply to new properties and would not prevent existing owner occupiers and landlords from selling their properties to new owners who could turn them into holiday lets or second homes.

Jo-Anne had identified the need for some additional information for Boulmer and this was being worked on.

- 6 Draft Background Paper – Environment.** This paper had been considered by the Group earlier in the year. The paper sets out some options at Section 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5. Peter Bromley has written a paper with suggestions on the options. This paper was considered and the advice given was accepted. The outcome in relation to the Background paper is as follows:

6.3 Issue 1 Green infrastructure: Possible options:

1a High level policy support for the creation, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure;

AGREED - Fully support.

1b Option 1a plus undertake mapping exercise to identify areas of green infrastructure to be identified within the plan.

AGREED - Further suggestions for green infrastructure to be considered by the Group.

6.4 Landscape: Possible Options

2a Utilise county level landscape character information and the AONB landscape capacity work to inform a criteria based policy to ensure that new development conserves and enhances the special landscape characteristics of the plan area:

Agreed that there is sufficient in the Local Plan to support what we need to undertake in the in the NDP.

2b Commission a local landscape character appraisal to inform a more detailed policy approach to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the plan area;

No, there is sufficient in the Local Plan to support what we need to undertake in the NDP.

2c Identification of particular landscape areas for special consideration for policy development.

No. The Local Plan is sufficiently detailed to allow for our needs. We can pick up and enhance the landscape characteristics in our green space and routeway proposals. A possible exception might be the restoration conditions of the quarries. We have been told that this is a County reserved matter but we might want to press this point. In the longer term we may also want to discuss the possibility of extending the boundary of the AONB if the restoration is environmentally appropriate.

6.5 Biodiversity: Possible Options

3a Utilise information available at a national/borough level to inform the preparation of a high-level policy to ensure that the new development conserves the biodiversity value of the plan area;

Agreed. There is sufficient information and policy protection at County level to support our aspirations, as long as we ensure that the holistic approach to development and environmental enhancement is embedded in the NDP. The policies should reflect this and also our commitment to enhancing biodiversity.

3b Option 3a plus specifically highlighting the important biodiversity of the plan area and the threats to it:

AGREED - Option 3a plus specifically highlighting the important biodiversity of the plan area and the threats to it.

3c Option 3a plus identification of local level designations such as wildlife corridors.

AGREED - This is perhaps the area we do need to ensure that our POS and LGS sites are also identified as wildlife corridors and therefore identify specific "new" sites. (This would mean that any green routes also contribute to wildlife and landscape policies – naturalistic planting as opposed to formal planting and "lollypop trees" for example) We may also wish to pick out particular existing sites that contribute to wildlife and landscape quality. In the NDP assessment of POS/LGS we should therefore look to identify where we want to protect existing wildlife corridors and/or enhance existing green space that is not protected or identified in the Local Plan. This might include roadside verges, roadside woodland and some existing ancient woodlands that are important; we may wish to identify more areas. In the overall designation of green-space we should, amongst other things, seek to set up a system of inter-linking green and wildlife corridors, with access where possible/appropriate.

It was agreed that the further paragraphs for Peter's paper should be included in the minutes:

We do need a strong local policy on the character of our villages and parish that supports the County Plan. Our Parish is set between two landscape types, has a number of

significant designations and has a typical Northumbrian lay-out: Longhoughton and Boulmer are linear villages interspersed with agricultural open space and Howick is an estate designed village set in an estate and agricultural landscape. Therefore, our policies should aim to protect and enhance this, at the same time as protecting the natural habitats and adding positively to reducing the effects of climate change.

What does this mean in practice? I feel we should be taking the framework of the background paper and the county level landscape and habitat appraisals and saying that our green-routes, footpaths, and POS/LGS should all contribute to these greater objectives. Footpaths should also be green routes and wildlife corridors for example, wherever possible; POS should contribute to landscape character, village character and biodiversity; built development should contribute to village character but also biodiversity and landscape character and so on.

I do not feel that we should therefore undertake local and further appraisals, but we should be very strong on both the local character and the integrated and multi-faceted nature of our green spaces.

We should also be very strong on the need to mitigate the impact of climate change in any development (Further, I personally feel that we should ensure that the requisite policies are in place before we look at any further built development, but that's a personal view...) If we consider the very recent decision of the courts on the third runway at Heathrow, it may seem a long way from Longhoughton Parish, but the implications are significant. Any development must contribute to the national carbon reduction and climate change targets. What our policies should do is ensure that this is the case locally; practically this means developing the appropriate levels of biodiverse green space.

7 Any Other Business

(a) Business Accommodation.

The Business survey undertaken in February had not yet been concluded, although not many responses had been received. That will be done urgently and presented to the Group. This links to the possible need for a Business Hub of some sort in Longhoughton. Possible options for the location of a Business Hub are being considered.

(b) Design Guide

AECOM had proposed to do a general design guide for the Parish building on the AONB Design Guide as it applies to Longhoughton Parish. Approval of this is awaited from Locality.

A second stage would be AECOM undertaking a second piece of work which would put together a design code for specific housing sites once we have identified them. This would require a second application to Locality.

(c) RAF

The RAF were still expecting a number of personnel to move to Boulmer but the numbers are not known at the moment. There has been a delay in the dialogue with them due to Coronavirus but now this is receding it is hoped that a number of outstanding items can be progressed.

(d) Energy Generation Schemes

The possibility of solar farms was mentioned as are appearing elsewhere in the Country. The Local Plan should include policies that control this sort of development. If it does not then the NDP should. The landscape in the Parish is of high quality and should not be damaged but there may be locations that are unobtrusive where this sort of development could be located.

Meeting Ended 2.05pm