

Minutes of the Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting Monday 16th July 2018.

Those present: Alex MacGillivray (AMa), Annie Ralph, Mo Heather (MH), Tim Parsons (TP), Christine Arbenz, Peter Denison-Pender, Ben Bosence, Loretta Bosence (LB), Alan Marler

1. Apologies. Received from Nick Gant and Ben Kimpton

2. Declarations of Interest. None

3. Minutes of the last meeting. Approved

4. Future of NP project. Discussions moved from the planned agenda to the e-mail received from Thea Davis (TD), (Neighbourhood Planning Officer for LDC) in response to the discovery that Lewes District Council had not made its three year and five year housing land supply targets. The consequence being that all Neighbourhood Plans (with the exception of those meeting the 3 year supply target criteria) were considered out of date and determination of development would move towards “presumption in favour of Sustainable Development”.

AMa outlined the background to the Housing Land Supply/NP connection.

The Steering Group was annoyed that this information was effectively disguised and not voluntarily disclosed to all Parish Councils. It was only through investigative work by AMa that it was discovered.

It now appears that developers may submit development plans for any area and those plans cannot be contested using policies in Local and Neighbourhood Plans. There will be no protection for the Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan or its Housing Policies until at least December when an update of the housing land supply might be available.

The concern is where the housing shortfall will be recovered – are areas previously coded red, likely to change to green in Barcombe and indeed anywhere ?

All SG members voiced their disappointment at this news and the seemingly impossible position Barcombe is in. AMa reported that a senior exec at the SSALC had advised that Neighbourhood Plans were a waste of time. There was a debate about whether the Steering Group should continue, and if so what sphere of influence there is available.

It is possible that development plans for the Barcombe sites could be put in before there is any correction to the housing supply numbers and the Steering Group could have no influence on design and possibly numbers.

MH expressed his concerns that over the last few years we have completed a Housing Policy that basically replicates the LDC Core Strategy and may have little effect.

TP is concerned that the badly needed affordable housing part of the development could be offset to another location.

The team was genuinely astounded that supply figures were so finely balanced that a small shortfall of 28 houses can have such a huge impact on the district. There is no evidence to suggest that this could not happen again and again.

AMa produced figures to show the LDC housing supply figures since 2015 and this (2018) is the first year that the target has not been met.

2015	5.34 years
2016	5.62
2017	5.55
2018	4.99

It should be noted that the number of houses required has increased from some 2,000 to 6,900 over the period.

The current shortfall is slight, however the SG is concerned that the shortfall came about as approved sites were discounted and that this process could happen again. The response from TD did not give us much confidence that the numbers can be recovered without granting permission on unsuitable sites.

LB suggested we consider a Neighbourhood Development Order.

After much debate we concluded that the SG should continue to refine our existing Neighbourhood Plan and to have this completed by the end of September. AMa to contact TD seeking confirmation that LDC would publish a mid-year housing land supply figure. If this was above 5 years, then to arrange to meet with TD to review and advise; the SG to meet before such an event.

The SG can then decide to continue to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or stop and leave the Housing Policies as a blueprint for the Parish Council when deciding on planning applications.

The Village Hall booking in late September to be cancelled.

5. Date of next meeting. TBA

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.