

The second Neighbourhood Plan Focus Group meeting was held in the Methodist Hall on 5th May 2016. The meeting was attended by 8 Independent Assessors and 3 Steering Group Members. Janet Martin was in the Chair. The attendees were made up of individual village residents and others representing village groups such as

Guides

Cricket Club

Golf Club

Preservation Society

Fire Station

Members of the Steering Group present were Janet Martin Adam Gratwick John Sage

Janet Martin started the session by giving a brief introduction to Neighbourhood Plans. In 2011 the Government set in place a National Policy Planning Framework that described how planning, housing and development should progress over time. As part of NPFF each District Council need to produce and have accepted their own Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans are also part of the NPFF process. Hart are currently working on their Local Plan and have just come to the end of a second public consultation.

The Neighbourhood Plan Process document was distributed to the meeting and Janet Martin explained that community involvement and agreement is an integral part of this process and by involving the village community and obtaining their support after a full village referendum the document will become legally binding.

As with the previous meeting it was emphasised that the plan must be evidence based and reflect what the community of Hartley Wintney wants and that we have attempted to do this via the use of surveys, open days, regular updates via the contact magazine and display during community events such as the Village Festival and Culture on the Common.

Janet Martin explained that we have developed our vision and objectives and have been building our evidence base and that we are now at the point in the process of starting to write plan. We are aiming to conclude our draft Plan by September where we will show involvement with the community and following a village referendum the final document will be reviewed by Hart and then the Planning Inspectorate. Once accepted it will become a statutory document and will need to be adhered to by any developer.

The following initial Questions (Q) were from the floor with answers (A) from the SG team.

Q. Were housing numbers given to Hart from Surrey Heath and Rushmoor?

A. Hart have a responsibility to contact both District Councils but new numbers for Rushmoor are not expected until Autumn 2017 with Surrey Heath some 5 years behind Hart with their Local Plan development. Therefore there may be a change at some point with the total development numbers for Hart but we can only proceed at this point with the numbers as allocated. All housing numbers are cascaded down from central government, thru County, District and finally parish Councils.

Q. Is the Neighbourhood Plan development under the control of the Parish Council?

A. The Parish Council registered it in 2014 and then set up the Steering Committee to take it forward and the final Plan once approved will therefore be accepted by the Parish Council as a community document

Q. Without a Neighbourhood Plan can any developer come in and start a development?

A. Any proposed development would still follow the normal process and approval from Hart. The Neighbourhood Plan is being developed to address other areas such as size, location, type of housing and other areas not the actual approval itself.

Q. Will Hart accept the NP when prepared?

A. If we have followed the correct processes then it will be very difficult for the plan to not be accepted. We are

utilising an external planning consultant who is very experience in the development of Neighbourhood Plans and who will ensure that we are following the process correctly that will result in a robust and comprehensive Plan.

Q. What would we do if Hart reject our plan?

A. This is considered very unlikely but if it were to happen we would need to start again

Q. What about Winchfield?

A. Winchfield are developing their own NP and even if the major developments there go ahead it will still be 5-10 years before legal objections/final approvals are given, Therefore having a Hartley Wintney Neighbourhood Plan in place during this time will control what is taking place in our community.

Q. How does the Hart Local Plan and HW NP link with each other?

A. We need to meet the housing numbers as imposed by Hart. Our original target was 380 and because of the recent developments (such as Rifle Range, St. Marys Park, Monachus House and Renaissance apartments) we are in a strong position with only about 80 additional houses required (subject to any revision by Hart if their numbers change)

Q. Can the NP therefore state that we just need to provide 80 houses?

A. No we need to show a prioritised document based on the sites that have been proposed by Hart or local landowners so that if the housing numbers change then the cut-off point will move.

Q. Could developers continually try to develop sites listed in the NP even if the housing numbers have been met?

A. Only if the housing numbers from Hart change. Otherwise the NP will limit the developments taking place.

Q. What about supporting infrastructure that is required as the population increases?

A. This clearly needs to be addressed but areas such as shops/services are subject to market factors while others such as roads and schools are the responsibility of District and County Councils.

At this point in the meeting the following documents were issued and explained and further questions were then focussed on the content of these documents

- Hartley Wintney Parish Boundary Map
- Hartley Wintney Parish Boundary Map showing constraints (SPA, SSSI, SINC's etc) on potential development.
- Hartley Wintney Parish Boundary Map showing sites proposed for potential development
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment showing proposed sites. It was explained that the sites have not been chosen by the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. They have been chosen by Hart or submitted directly by local landowners. The comment of no further assessment means that the site is still viewed as appropriate for development but that Hart do not intend to carry out further assessments on it.
- Matrix of proposed sites. It was explained that the methodology for the assessment is based on the Adams Hendry approach as used by Hart in the evaluation of sites together with our own local knowledge and by reviewing against our set of objectives to ensure that they have all been addressed.
- Overall score sheet of proposed sites. It was explained how the scoring had been made and the use of 2 weighting factors across the criteria to prioritise certain key criteria.

Q. Why was the Renaissance development of apartments allowed when the majority of the community did not want a 3 story building in the village centre?

A. The absence of a Neighbourhood Plan when this development was proposed restricted the ability to object and confirms that an approved NP would help to prevent future similar situations

Q. Can development take place in a Conservation area ?

A. Yes but enhanced justification for this is required

Q. What is being done by other Parishes?

A. Most of the Parishes are developing their own Neighbourhood Plan and we are all at a broadly similar stage of development. Hart facilitate meetings of the various NP groups

Q. How can we ensure that the character of the village is maintained (eg building heights and design)?

A. We will attempt to do this via the vision, objectives and policies that we are writing as part of the plan. It will also be possible within the plan to define certain locations as having views which should be protected if this is something that the community identify and want.

Q. What does a high positive score mean?

A. The higher the score the greater is the preference for development across the criteria identified and used. Conversely the lower the score the less is the preference for development.

Q. What happens next re the site assessments of most favoured sites?

A. These will be taken forward to the village referendum to ensure that any conclusion is based on the views of the community.

Q. The assessments look an excellent way to progress the prioritisation of sites but how can additional feedback be provided?

A. Feedback should be given via the HWNP web site (hartleywintneynp.org.uk and also accessible from the Parish Council web site) but it is important that this should include specific comments related to the assessments not just general feelings about the village.

Q. Is it inevitable that over time people will have to leave the village if the relevant houses needed are not built?

A. Market forces will drive this and it is possible that this may occur

Q. How can the types of developments be controlled?

A. By having a Neighbourhood Plan that reflects what the community wants

Q. Some of the site selection criteria in the assessment matrix need further definition (eg Coalescence). Can this be done?

A, This will be addressed

Q. Will the referendum be an opportunity for the community to further prioritise sites?

A. No - the referendum will be a yes/no vote on acceptance of the final document only

Q. Why can't infrastructure and facilities required as the village and surrounding areas increase in population be put in place prior to developments occurring?

A. This is the way that the planning in central government works

Final Comments

The meeting was concluded by Janet Martin at 9pm. Comments were given that the work done has been comprehensive and reasonable and that the process seems an excellent way to progress. The participants were encouraged to communicate back to the organisations that they represented and other village residents and to provide additional feedback as described above. It was confirmed that the results of the 2 focus sessions would be added to the web site in the near future.