



**Steering Group Meeting - 12 August 2016 9:30 am**

**Parish Council Office, Harrold**

# Minutes

**Present:** A. Jones , S. Reger, D. Mercer, T. Roff

**Apologies:** Clerk – R. Brough

**Disclosure of Interests:** None

## **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 18 July 2016, were approved.

## **Project Planning**

**Project Plan/Work Programme:** The meeting considered the progress against the approved Project Plan and Work Programme and acknowledged that all project plan work-streams were on target. This included preparations for the launch event the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2016.

**Planning Consultant:** The meeting acknowledged that the specification of requirements had been submitted and this provided for an initial commission to undertake a development site analysis/robust assessment of sites submitted for consideration as part of the emerging Local Plan 2035 (11 sites in Harrold) to demonstrate which sites are, in planning terms, the most appropriate/preferred locations for growth - this should hopefully be prepared by the end of September 2016 and (ii) the remainder of the planning consultant commission to commence probably in January 2017. Woods Hardwick Limited had now, due to conflicts of interest, declined to submit a quotation but a quotation was expected from Peter Bull of Mato'Design Associates Limited. Peter Bull DipTP MRTPI, of mato'design associates Ltd (former Bedford Borough Council Planner), has been recommended to provide the necessary planning support to take the Plan forward to completion. Peter is often assisted, as required, by Michael Robinson, BA Hons, DipTP MRTPI of MRC Planning. Peter and Michael have considerable experience from both a private sector and local authority perspective and both have experience in leading a variety of projects in all areas of town planning.

**Use of Volunteers:** T Roff had provided a 'Role of Volunteers' paper outlining the sort of help the committee will need.

**Housing Needs Survey:** Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) had now been appointed to undertake a Housing Needs Survey. The committee considered that the survey should require details of the local connection to Harrold and some amendments to the introduction section of the draft survey were considered. This sought to inform all residents of the importance of the survey results in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that the following introduction would be forwarded to BRCC: "Harrold Parish Council has asked BRCC to carry out a survey as an important part of its Neighbourhood Plan preparations to find out whether there is a shortage of housing in Harrold for local people, whether buying or renting privately, or who cannot afford to rent or buy a suitable home at current prices. This will help to determine whether there is sufficient need in Harrold to bring forward new housing in general, or specifically for local people, whether for purchase, rent or shared ownership, including affordable housing". Ideally, the distribution envelopes should bear the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan logo. **Action: Clerk**

In addition, the meeting considered that a flyer should be distributed to each household with the housing needs survey to introduce neighbourhood planning and to advertise the launch event in November 2016. An initial draft would be prepared for circulation to the Steering Group for consideration. **Action: S. Reger**

## **Community Engagement**

- a) Community Engagement Strategy: This has been prepared to help guide the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce an informed and relevant community-led Neighbourhood Plan; this demonstrated a positive commitment to community and stakeholder engagement given its fundamental importance. The committee supported the Strategy and acknowledged that this should, in line with good practice, be considered and endorsed by the full Parish Council, and then included on the web-site. **Action: Clerk**
- b) Web Site Development - Update: Arrangement have been made to update the web-site but, due to holiday commitments of the appointed designer, this had not yet commenced. Priority had, however, been given to the design of the logo which had been well received.

## **Consultation Launch**

- a) Neighbourhood Plan "branding": Committee agreed the logo for the Neighbourhood Plan that had been previously circulated based upon the image of the Harrold Buttermarket. This should be applied to all neighbourhood Plan documentation.
- b) Strap line for Neighbourhood Plan: The committee further considered and endorsed its support for the Strap line ***'Planning Harrold's Future'***.
- c) Draft Vision/Objectives - The committee considered and supported the following draft Vision for the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan: *"To maintain Harrold's strong sense of place and local identity, respecting well designed growth that will help sustain local services, facilities and employment for the benefit of the community, whilst maintaining and protecting its rural setting"*. The Committee approved the Vision.

The meeting considered and supported the following themes for inclusion in the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan:

- Housing and The Built Environment
- Infrastructure and Access
- Environment and The Countryside
- Community Facilities
- Local Economy

Draft core objectives were considered relevant to each of these Themes and these would be confirmed as shown at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

- d) Local Needs/Issues/Actions: The Committee considered potential local issues relevant to each of the draft Themes/Objectives and these were developed further into potential actions. These will be further developed in due course to reflect any observations received and to identify a series of relevant supporting actions for consultation purposes. They will be incorporated into a Community Engagement Report that will form the basis of the Launch Event and will be circulated for discussion at a future meeting of the Steering Group. **Action: T. Roff**
- e) Launch Event - Key Messages: The Committee considered the key material to be made available at the Launch Event on Friday 11 November 2016 and Saturday 12 November 2016. This would help in planning and organising a high profile launch of the Neighbourhood Plan initiative. Draft exhibition boards would be circulated prior to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration. **Action: T. Roff**
- f) Launch Event - Arrangements: The Committee considered the arrangements for the launch event, including hall booking, attendance and housekeeping. It was agreed that the launch exhibition would be held in the United Reform Church (URC), subject to availability. The original intention was to hold the exhibition from 6.00pm to 9.00pm on Friday 11 November 2016 and from 10.00am to 5.00pm on Saturday 12 November 2016. The meeting would further consider timings based upon the availability of the URC. **Action: All**

In relation to the launch, the following additional features were further considered:

- A rolling video would be created, featuring local stakeholders living and working in the village. This could highlight the characteristics and features of the village, both positive and negative, and potentially how the village had evolved. **Action: D. Mercer to Lead** **Action: All to consider key stakeholders**
- A large map (or maps) of Harrold and, in particular, maps outlining the potential development sites that had been submitted. This could incorporate appropriate extracts of the site location from "Google maps" and local pictures to highlight the site and its surrounds. **Action: All in liaison with Clerk**
- Further consideration would be given to inviting specific stakeholder groups (e.g. local businesses) to a pre-launch event to help identify specific issues. This could also help inform the evidence based reports that are being prepared for each Theme (see below). **Action: All**

## **Theme Groups**

- a) Theme Groups - Background: At the last meeting consideration was given to the need to "gather evidence" to support the issues identified and the emerging policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and possible bespoke surveys, such as the housing needs survey, to evidence the neighbourhood plan outcomes. Planning policy and proposals need to be based upon a proper understanding of the neighbourhood that they relate to in order to ensure that they are relevant, realistic and address local issues effectively.

The Harrold Neighbourhood Plan must, therefore, be based upon robust, properly evidenced, information and analysis of the local area and, in this regard, there was a need to prepare a baseline reports covering the themes: Housing and Built Environment, Infrastructure and Access, Environment and Countryside, Community Facilities and Local Economy. The baseline report will describe in particular (i) the strengths and positive features of the neighbourhood that people value and would like to keep, (ii) the negative features of the neighbourhood that people do not like and would like to get rid off or improve and (iii) those things that the neighbourhood does not have which it would like or issues that should ideally be addressed.

Documents from a neighbourhood planning event had been circulated prior to the meeting that should be useful in outlining sources of evidence (from community engagement, published statistics (e.g. Census), bespoke surveys (e.g. transport studies) and existing policies). The baseline reports should also , therefore, seek to (i) identify the local position/characteristics/statistics/constraints/ barriers, (ii) evidence of local needs, (iii) supporting evidence relevant to the issues identified for consultation, (iv) then subsequently refined to respond to all the issues/actions identified in the consultation launch and (v) identifying/undertaking/commissioning necessary studies to provide essential evidence. The outcome from this evidence gathering process will, therefore, be the identification of the "issues" that the Steering Group consider that the Neighbourhood Plan should address and this will enable the Steering Group, in liaison with a Planning Consultant, to establish realistic, evidence based, "options" for consideration.

- b) Theme Groups - Allocate Responsibility: The Committee considered the Lead Person for the preparation of the baseline reports and assigned responsibility as follows:

Housing and Built Environment:	Draft report to be prepared using commissioned studies relating to housing needs and site assessments.
Infrastructure and Access:	S. Reger
Environment and Countryside:	A. Jones
Community Facilities:	To be determined
Local Economy:	D. Mercer

- c) The next meeting would consider the use of volunteers to support the various Neighbourhood Planning workstreams.

**Date of Next Meeting: Monday 19 September 2016 at 9:30am at the Parish Council Office**

## **HARROLD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: "PLANNING HARROLD'S FUTURE"**

### **DRAFT VISION**

*"To maintain Harrold's strong sense of place and local identity, respecting well designed growth that will help sustain local services, facilities and employment for the benefit of the community, whilst maintaining and protecting its rural setting"*

### **DRAFT OBJECTIVES**

#### **KEY THEME 1 – HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**CORE OBJECTIVE 1 – TO INFLUENCE THE LOCATION, SCALE, DESIGN AND TYPE OF NEW HOUSING TO ENSURE THAT IT FITS WITH THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF HARROLD'S BUILT HERITAGE AND MEETS IDENTIFIED LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS**

#### **KEY THEME 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS**

**OBJECTIVE 2 – TO PROMOTE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS (SUCH AS IMPROVED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, CAR PARKING, PEDESTRIAN WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTES) NEEDED TO SUPPORT NEW DEVELOPMENT AND TO ENCOURAGE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE MOVEMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, MOTORISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

#### **KEY THEME 3 – ENVIRONMENT AND THE COUNTRYSIDE**

**OBJECTIVE 3 – TO PROTECT THE PLACE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF HARROLD'S SPECIAL LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENRICHED COUNTRYSIDE AND TO ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTES TO THE OPEN SPACE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND PRESERVES THE NATURAL FEATURES IN THE DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE**

#### **KEY THEME 4 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**OBJECTIVE 4 – TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE LOCAL FACILITIES, AMENITIES AND SERVICES WHICH PROVIDE A COMMUNITY FOCUS AND HELP SUSTAIN THE VITALITY, HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL RESIDENTS**

#### **KEY THEME 5 – LOCAL ECONOMY**

**OBJECTIVE 5 – TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HARROLD AS A RURAL SERVICE AREA AND TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND LOCAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS IN THE VILLAGE**