



**MINUTES: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP** (Sub Group)

**Date:** Tuesday, 21 April 2016

**Time:** 3.30PM

**Venue:** Chichester District Council

**AGENDA:**

1. Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey and Housing Needs Assessment
  2. Allocating Stes
  3. Little Springfield Farm Brownfield site
  4. CDC DPD site allocation document vs the Parish site selection
  5. Windfall numbers in Ifold
  6. Foxbridge Golf Course
  7. Next stage of the Plaistow & Ifold Parish Neighbourhood Plan
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**PRESENT:** Sara Burrell (SRB); Beverley Weddell (BW) and Christine Gibson-Pierce (CGP); Chichester District Council - Mike Allgrove (MA) and Valerie Dobson (VD).

**APOLOGIES:** Denise Knightley (DK) - Chichester District Councillor – Plaistow Ward

**3.30PM The meeting opened.**

**1. Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey and Housing Needs Assessment**

**1.1** SRB outlined the details of the survey process. The process of the Public Consultations (Jan and Feb 2016) and the information that was presented was briefly explained. SRB explained residents were given the opportunity to view information for all of the sites the steering group had identified and assessed. She explained that the Steering Group had sieved them (based on seeking sites that would take all 10 units of the housing allocation and other sustainability criteria) and presented four sites for residents to rate in the survey. There are four likely sites with a willing owner and large enough to take the allocation of 10 units. SRB acknowledged that CDC are keen on there being a site allocated. SRB advised that none of the sites are within a Settlement Boundary and all are in the countryside therefore as a result they are all contrary to local Plan policy as a result. MA: You are changing policy with the Neighbourhood Plan it becomes part of the development plan just as if CDC were doing it with the Local Plan.

**1.2** SRB: The survey established the Parish is looking for a site suitable for 1,2 or 3 bedroom houses. There is an oversupply of 5 bedroom houses, which we already knew. The Parish has a high aging population, percentage wise it is higher than that of Chichester District as a whole. The Parish is losing the 30-45 year old age bracket, which has dropped quite noticeably between the 2001 to 2011 censuses. Therefore the Parish are looking at smaller bedroom units for the allocation.

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**1.3** The survey identified 44 people who would stay within the Parish if they could find suitable alternative housing. There are four on the CDC register waiting list for the Parish. The survey did not identify a lot of additional need for affordable housing. SRB said that there is a question mark over what constitutes affordable housing. She thought as far as CDC were concerned it was more geared to very low-income families wanting rental. But she thought that because of the high value of property generally the reason the Parish has lost the 30-45 year old age bracket is that they can't afford market housing. MA advised the definition of affordable housing might be about to change through the Housing and Planning bill to include starter homes. That CDC have a policy in the Local Plan of 30% affordable housing and that includes affordable rented through the housing association, shared ownership and now it is going to include starter homes as well but they are waiting on a final definition of starter homes and the detailed regulations.

**1.4** SRB asked if people had to be registered with CDC in order to access those types of affordable housing and if registered with CDC is income important or is it local connection or a combination of both. MA thought it depended on which type of affordable housing was being discussed. If affordable rent, CDC would look for nomination from the waiting list via CDC housing. If shared ownership it is a different process. Linda Grange the CDC Housing Delivery Manager could elaborate. He thought people register interest. On starter homes, there isn't a minimum income, it is just first time buyers under 40 and with a discount of 20% that disappears after a period of time. SRB thought something like that would help to reach that 30-45 year old bracket in the Parish.

**1.5** SRB explained the survey had established the Parish housing need and permitted the Steering Group to zone in on a development site likely to suit that. As Plaistow village has the facilities those sites were more suitable. However a site in Durfold Wood had also been assessed. The willing landowner had a strong argument that his site was no further outside of Plaistow than the CDC DPD Ifold site. The Steering Group therefore carefully reviewed the Durfold Wood site and it was also presented at the Jan/Feb 2016 Consultation with two sites from Plaistow. One Plaistow site CDC had looked at: Land adjacent to Todhurst; however, the steering group did not think CDC had looked at the whole of that site; and the other Plaistow site that was presented, CDC had never looked at: Land opposite The Green. The Ifold site presented was the site noted in the CDC DPD document - Land to the North of Little Springfield Farm. SRB pointed out the Steering Group had increased its size to make it slightly larger, as the density proposed by the CDC DPD was too high at 22 per the hectare and the Ifold characteristic density is 6 to 8 to the hectare. So the Steering Group allocated more of that field to have a lower density more in keeping with the rural locality.

**1.6** A discussion took place about the Public Consultation. It was explained that residents could select a preference on the sites presented in the survey. VD wondered what information had been made available to residents to allow them to choose. CGP explained the information was available on the website post-consultation (presentations, aerial photographs, maps, SHLAAs and photographs). BW added these were all on the display boards at the consultations. VD inquired if constraints of the sites had also been presented. CGP confirmed constraints had been provided along with all the other information as the Steering Group wanted residents to be able to make a very informed decision.

**1.7** SRB advised that the only key piece of information not available at that time was what was the Parish Housing Need. The Steering Group could say the Plaistow sites are effectively more sustainable because they have the facilities but this was not presented because there was not the evidence base to support that until the survey results became known.

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**1.8** The Steering Group now have a situation where Parish residents have made a decision but it is not clear-cut. It was thought the survey return could be analysed in many different ways. The survey identified the most preferred site as Land opposite The Green but this site was also considered the least preferred site. It was thought Land opposite the Green could be perceived as a controversial site as it generated extreme reaction in both directions, though it is well located in the centre of the village near to the facilities. SRB stated that if the Parish brought forward this site a development scheme would have to be top notch due to the historic nature of the village and development would have an impact. The Durfold Wood site came up quite high in the survey. SRB thought that result to be a slight nimby vote from Plaistow and Ifold residents.

**1.9** The Todhurst site was discussed. The covenant in favour of CDC only allowing access across the Hyde Group (housing association) owned land if it is to meet a housing need was mentioned. It was thought development would have less of an impact, the site is well located to facilities but has naturalised over the years. The local primary school, conduct outdoor lessons on the land and local people use it on an informal basis for nature watching. Potentially only part of the site would be needed for development and the remainder would allow for the public use to be formalized by keeping it as a naturalised, green space for the village and it was thought the landowner would be willing. The landowner had said if the village preferred this site he would be prepared to see it be developed provided there was no development that would impact on his own property. There is some issue because of the housing in Ashfield and Nell Ball that have problems with street parking but there may be opportunity to improve that should the site go forward. Of the sites up for selection the steering group thought Todhurst to be the better choice. In terms of market housing it was perhaps from a developer's point of view not so advantageous because the access through ex-local authority housing had a slight stigma (most all sold off to private ownership), but that could suppress pricing and be beneficial to meet housing need for market housing that is not expensive.

**1.10** The CDC DPD site: Land to the North of Little Springfield Farm, Ifold was the least preferred in the survey, which was the strongest outcome no matter how the responses were analysed. The steering group had allocated a larger land area for this site, and presented that, than the size identified in the CDC DPD. It was felt a lower density would be more appropriate to the Ifold character and rural locality. SRB mentioned the Parish Council had responded (18 Feb 2016) to the CDC DPD consultation on that basis and also on the fact that there are reservations about development at the site because Plaistow Road forms a boundary.

## **2. The Brownfield site at Little Springfield Farm, Plaistow Road, Ifold.**

**2.1** The site plan was shown to the officers. The dismissed Appeal decision was discussed and that as a result of that appeal the site had been accepted as redundant for industrial use. It was thought the appeal decision was because the Inspector did not like three, large (7000 sqft) houses on the site and recognized the significant impact of that in the countryside. The officers were advised the Steering Group had assessed the site and that there is huge community support for the use of brownfield (captured in the evidence base). SRB advised the Parish has to do something with the redundant land and it was thought because of its location the best use is residential. She advised that residents did not want to see HGV generation from the site and reminded it still has a B8 use class. BW pointed out the landowner had mentioned the B8 use class to the Parish Council in no uncertain terms and that the recent Crouchland pollution spill showed residents very clearly what B8 traffic to/from that site would be like as the Crouchland trucks had to go into the site to pump out the polluted water from the stream 24x7 in the many weeks of the cleanup operation.

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**2.2** The arrangement and types of buildings on the site were explained, such as the four grain silos and the boundary of the B2 / B8 use class pointed out. The officers were advised the Steering Group felt a scheme of smaller units (1-3 beds) from the identified housing need, would have less impact and the site could take 6 smaller units. CGP pointed out the current B2 / B8 boundary could also be redrawn to make the site a better shape and size, and encompass the mown area between the site and Ancient Woodland to allow for a better laid out scheme than work within the current, wiggly boundary. SRB said a scheme more sympathetic to the site would work well for Ifold residents who may wish to downsize (as learned through the survey) and stay within the Parish. It was a good opportunity to move the site forward and the Parish has to do something with it. CGP advised the original planning application that went to appeal, had a significant number of letters of support from local residents and no objections.

### **3. Allocating Sites**

**3.1** MA asked that having done the consultation and got the survey responses back, had the steering group come to a view as to what we would like to propose to the Parish Council as to the sites. SRB said the view was to propose two sites of 6 units each. CGP said the steering group thought proposing two sites would lessen the impact of development across the Parish and there would be more support for that type of arrangement. SRB agreed that it would create less conflict and both major settlements would feel they are taking a share of the burden of housing. The Steering Group were thinking that the affordable housing would be best situated on the Plaistow site, which brought them closer to the services. MA thought we would only get a maximum of 2 units as affordable and one could be a starter home; on a 6 unit site it would only be one. It was up to the landowner and developer.

**3.2** MA asked if the steering group had taken a proposal to the Parish Council. SRB said the steering group had yet to draft a proposal because the group thought it best to discuss the outline of the proposal first with the officers to ascertain if it would work with the Local Plan and the CDC DPD document.

### **4. The Parish site allocation vs CDC DPD site allocations document.**

**4.1** MA advised CDC had allocated land in the CDC Site Allocations DPD [Land to the North of Little Springfield Farm] because the Parish Neighbourhood Plan hadn't reached that stage. If the Parish gets to a stage in the Neighbourhood Plan where we are allocating land then CDC would withdraw that allocation [the Land to the North of Little Springfield Farm] from the CDC Site Allocations document.

**4.2** MA advised in terms of previous timescales the CDC DPD was going to be delayed, exactly by how long he was not sure. He thought CDC would have to do another round of consultation. CGP inquired what was that new timeframe. MA advised that another Neighbourhood Plan had not been able to allocate housing, so CDC are going to have to allocate the site and now need to take that through CDC cabinet and the council process then go out to consultation. The next council meeting he thought was in July. So there is delay on the CDC side, quite how long he was not sure. He thought it likely CDC would go out for consultation over the summer. He did not have a precise timescale. But there is more time than this Parish thought we had.

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**4.3** CGP asked MA to explain again exactly what stage CDC needed to see the Parish Neighbourhood Plan in. MA responded it had to be in Pre-submission plan stage, which would be enough for CDC to acknowledge that the Parish was moving forward with their plan and CDC could rely on that; and therefore CDC would not have to do the allocation for the Parish. He said the next stage for the steering group is to draft a plan and as we have two sites we need to write to CDC for a Screening Opinion. He said now the Parish had sites we could do that. He advised re: the Todhurst site CDC would need to know exactly where development is proposed on that land and that he had taken a good look at the site. He agreed it was overgrown and that he had immediately flagged whether there could be an impact on the historic and natural environment - CDC would have to consult with Natural England and Historic England. CGP mentioned the steering group were aware of that and were reviewing the site carefully.

**4.4** MA said in terms of the brownfield site the steering group would need to define the site boundary. He realized the Inspector has dismissed the appeal and that it was counter-intuitive to allocate the site but it didn't mean the Parish could not bring the site forward. He advised that CDC and the steering group needs to look at the decision notice very carefully. He would discuss the site with his colleagues. VD advised for her to do the Screening Opinion she would need the plan with policies and the sites; and an agreement from the Parish Council [ratification]. Because then she sends it to the statutory bodies: the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

**4.5** CGP asked because CDC was in year 2 of their five-year plan were they already looking at a review. MA said the five-year review was to do with the Local Plan the Site allocations plan is different. CGP said she asked that because of a discussion in the steering group - if the Parish should present a reserve site in the plan. MA said at this stage to present only a site or sites to take the current allocation. He said if in the future the district gets a new allocation it would be a much easier process for the Parish, as we will have already reviewed sites. MA said because a lot of the sites have been allocated through Neighbourhood Plans and in some Parishes they have lots of builds, the Site Allocations DPD contains fairly limited extra housing provision now.

## **5. Windfall**

**5.1** CGP asked that the windfall issue for the Ifold settlement be discussed. SRB advised the Parish was progressing development of an Ifold Village Design Statement (VDS) because of the need to address the issue of windfall. Not only was it impacting on Ifold character but it was also causing infrastructure issues that the settlement can't cope with. She mentioned a discussion she had with SSE line operators recently where they advised the electricity supply is having issues with the number of houses being built within Ifold. So the settlement not only has foul and surface water drainage problems but also electricity problems. The broadband speed had been improved slightly but remains poor. The Parish needs to address the issues and the officers were advised we have the evidence base from the Jan/Feb 2016 consultation. SRB said the idea was presented for an Ifold VDS that would introduce management of development within Ifold. VD was concerned that there was a lot on the VDS list that was more plan-making emphasis. SRB said that would be amended and some would reside in the Plan and the VDS would cover the other elements. VD said it was very much about what is special about Ifold and its special features and she did not get that from the survey report.

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**5.2** SRB advised the steering group thought it was important for residents to understand if density control were introduced in Ifold that may impact on the land that they own. VD pointed out the survey report talked about the fact that smaller plots within the boundary but she had also noticed residents were not in favour of the settlement boundary moving or removing it. But the report also mentions smaller plots for specialized housing and she thought the steering group would have to be careful about that because it could end up contradicting what's in the VDS. We would have to balance design with density. SRB said the steering group would define what sort of housing would constitute having slightly higher density through a policy. VD agreed we could do that as a policy but take care it doesn't knock the reasons for why the Parish is saying it is distinct - the spacious character. Particularly as the results are both things that we should be wary of a conflict and she suggested we have a design policy in the plan.

**5.3** SRB said the CDC allocation of windfall numbers for the North of the District was quite high and if the Neighbourhood Plan were controlling windfall within Ifold, causing windfall to reduce. She said that to date there are 18 planning consents in Ifold for four or five bedroom houses that haven't begun construction and there have been 42-43 houses built in the last ten years, which is approximately 60 houses. SRB asked if the Parish were not producing that kind of windfall in the future how were CDC going to view that. MA said they would pick that up as part of the Local Plan review if windfall assumptions turn out to be incorrect. If they can't do it with windfall they would have to allocate more land but generally CDC assumptions on windfall have been correct.

**5.4** VD said windfall was difficult because in the Northern Area we were quite different parishes. MA said CDC has assumed this windfall from 2012 to 2029. If those assumptions turned out to be incorrect CDC would probably have to allocate more land next time around, that there is an argument in development that they should not be relying on windfall at all. That CDC should be allocating all the land to needs and any windfall that comes along is a bonus on top. SRB the Parish issue with windfall is that it doesn't carry any recognition in terms of infrastructure. No planning gain for the Parish. MA said from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 CDC will be collecting CIL on windfall. SRB reiterated the problem with infrastructure is a huge problem.

**5.5** BW advised she had just done a representation response on behalf of the Parish to the CDC drainage consultation. MA said all the members from the North East of the district were reminding CDC about their area problems with foul drainage. He said the officers were aware there are issues. SRB reminded him the pumping station for the Parish is in Loxwood, which is over-capacity and the Ifold windfall is causing further problems with people not being able to flush toilets or sewage backing up into gardens. That Loxwood is designated 60 houses too. CGP pointed out Alfold, Surrey also feeds down to the same Loxwood Parish pumping station so the issue is across county lines. MA said any and all drainage problem should be reported to Southern Water. BW said that even though this had been explained to residents that many were nervous to report problems if they want to sell their property because it was thought it could affect the sale. SRB said foul drainage issues have been a problem for at least 20 years and progressively getting worse. BW said it was the same in Alfold but it took until 2013 when so many properties were badly affected that Southern Water began to do something. MA reminded that Southern Water is a private company and residents must report these issues to them.

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## **6. Foxbridge Golf Course**

**6.1** A discussion took place regarding Foxbridge Golf Course, which had come forward as a potential site the week before the January Public Consultation. The officers were informed the new landowner had advised the Steering Group that the business was running at a loss and was keen to develop the site for residential housing. A map of the site was reviewed. The landowner had offered a community facility (the clubhouse) in addition to being having residential housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. The many social events in the club house (monthly pub evenings, Sunday lunches...) were mentioned due to Ifold not having a public house. The officers were informed that during the consultation residents were invited to comment on what they would like see happen with Foxbridge.

**6.2** CGP advised it had been a farm before it was a golf course. The officers said the landowner could sell the land for agricultural use or come up with some other project to convert the existing buildings. They recommended the Steering Group assess the site along with all the others but they noted the site is located outside of the two nearest settlements and there is not a presumption in favour of development. SRB restated her understanding: that if the landowner could prove the current D2 leisure use was not viable it doesn't then effectively become a brownfield site. The officers confirmed her understanding was correct and that it is just a Use Class that has been allowed there that required an extensive area of land.

**6.3** The officers advised that the landowner could make formal representation during the Neighbourhood Plan process and the Steering Group are only obliged to assess the site and determine its suitability for the current plan and reminded that the Parish only needed to allocate for 10 houses and had other site options that looked more suitable.

**6.4** MA suggested the Steering Group advise the landowner he is entitled to make formal representations as to why he thinks the Parish should do something different [than the proposal as agreed by Parish Council] when the steering group go out for consultation on the plan. The Parish Council will then consider all the representations and if they agree with the landowner's representations, the landowner may make further representation when CDC themselves consult on the plan, which will then be considered by an Examiner.

**6.5** The Steering Group were advised to make it clear in the recommendation why certain site or sites are chosen over others, the reasons behind them and ensure it is supported in the evidence base. CGP asked if there should be something in the plan regarding the Foxbridge Golf Course because it was a large land area and if the landowner achieved residential housing of 40+ houses (as per the current suggestion outlined in a leaflet distributed in the Parish) outside of the Neighbourhood Plan it would not bring any improvement to infrastructure such as expanded school facilities, etc... The officers said that was not necessary as the site is in the countryside and countryside policies still apply to if it were to come forward as a planning application. It would then be considered against [Local] plan policies.

**6.6** The Parish concern that residential development at the site would create a fifth hamlet and further fragment the Parish was discussed. It was thought the landowner could propose alternative leisure uses. The officers thought the site had already been promoted as available land over a number of years and had been assessed in the strategic housing land availability assessment. It was considered the site was too remote. CGP asked for the SHLAA as she had not been able to locate one when researching.

**6.7** SRB advise the Parish would not be adverse if the landowner wanted to enhance the facilities to extend the leisure use. VD thought there were policies that would support that. The officers were advised that the steering group would likely not be recommending the site in the plan as they had identified other more suitable options to meet the current housing allocation.

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## **7. Next stage of the Plaistow & Ifold Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

**7.1** SRB said that the Neighbourhood Plan was moving forward in the drafting and the Parish Council will allocate sites within that and move it further forward. MA asked when did we think we would be able to write to CDC. VD asked did we get any consulting help. CGP said the Parish was engaging Colin Smith Planning consultancy that have Local Planning experience and private planning experience. They have started to review the evidence base. CGP said the cost consultancies were quote were in excess of the grants available and Colin Smith Planning were aware of the limitation of the grant obtained by the Parish and had quoted accordingly.

**7.2** CGP asked the officers about the timing and process of an SEA. VD said the Parish should write to her requesting a screening opinion, she then consults the three statutory bodies. CGP said it was possible the Todhurst site may require an SEA if that went forward. The officers advised that until any issues about the sites were identified from the Screening Opinion then it was difficult to determine the timeframe to do an SEA and if an SEA is needed the next stage is for CDC to do a Scoping Review. CDC use [external] consultants to do the scoping. MA said in some cases CDC has paid for the full SEA. BW advised the Parish had not budgeted for an SEA. MA said he would not guarantee CDC would pay for an SEA, they would but CDC would need to be in a position where they were absolutely happy with the sites that go forward. They would not want to pay for an SEA if they knew the outcome was going to be that the sites were unsuitable and if there were other environmentally preferable alternatives.

**7.3** SRB asked if CDC will continue to have *Land to the North of Little Springfield Farm* allocated in their Site Allocations DPD. MA advised the site will stay in the DPD until the Parish gets to the next stage of the plan which is pre-submission. MA advised if the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing CDC will take the site out at the next stage.

**7.4** VD advised the Parish to keep the policies short and succinct in the draft Plan and look at other Parish plans for reference. MA asked the Parish to keep CDC advised on progress. They offered assistance if the Parish had any queries about policy wording. But they did advise they had a number of Parishes they had to help. SRB advised that there were not many in the Steering Group, which is why it hasn't progressed quickly. BW said that there was also not a deadline, which tends to cause projects to falter. SRB said the Parish was very keen to get a consultant on board to help the Parish and keep things moving. That other events in the Parish were also taking up the time of available resources.

**4.55PM The meeting closed.**