

SUTTON POYNTZ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

RECORD OF SUB-GROUP MEETING

Topic sub-group - Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Date of Meeting 07/02/2018

Time of meeting from 19.35 **to** 22.15

Location of Meeting Springbank, Plaisters Lane

Present: Katrina Blee, Colin Marsh, Jack Winsper

Apologies: Huw Llewellyn

Key Discussion Points

- Each of the three actions arising from the previous meeting on 25/01/2018 were addressed in order.
- KB reported on her telephone conversation with Graham Cox (Trees Officer, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council). Key points emerging from this were:
 1. Emphasis was placed on the issue of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) within the conservation area since they were perceived to offer greater protection. However, this is subject to the agreement of the relevant planning committee and there has been a recent reluctance by elected members to make new TPO's.
 2. Under TPO legislation it is only permissible to consider amenity value, not biodiversity and other factors.
 3. A policy within the Neighbourhood Plan showing community support for tree preservation was likely to have some influence on decision making at the committee stage.
 4. The scope and value of a tree survey, the results of which would assist the decision making process in terms of tree protection remained unclear.In discussion JW introduced the idea of using the Neighbourhood Plan to extend the TPO criteria to include biodiversity considerations. KB considered this would not be possible since it would impact the legislation related to TPO's. KB suggested that there may be an alternative route to tree protection through a policy on trees within the Green Corridor. The sub-group as a whole remained uncertain as to the benefits of undertaking a tree survey and suggested that any such survey would for practical reasons of access be limited to a very general overview of the amenity value of groups of trees. In seeking a way forward KB suggested that if a consultant were engaged to assess potential green space locations we may be able to include trees within their remit and they could advise on the type of information that would add real value.

JW felt that there was a need to focus on the key outcome of retaining the current level of trees and suggested a policy of replacement as appropriate, wherever a tree was felled in the Neighbourhood Area.

It was agreed that KB speak again to Graham Cox regarding an approach to tree protection within the proposed green corridor and a possible policy based upon tree replacement.

- Regarding action 2 CM reported that he had spoken to John Newbould about reviewing the draft biodiversity section within the Place Appraisal and the Section 41 DERC list and he hoped that this would be complete before the March meeting of the Steering Group.

- Under action 3 the draft biodiversity section for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan was discussed and the following agreed.

Introduction – a few minor grammatical changes were suggested together with the addition of further references. KB suggested that the first paragraph refer to the benefits of the AONB and SSSI and that a sentence be included in paragraph 3 to reflect the fact that ‘biodiversity is one of the things that make people feel that Sutton Poyntz is such a special place.’ It was agreed to delete paragraph 5 and incorporate key from here into the section on ‘Context for Policy’.

Under ‘Strategic Objectives’ delete bullet point 2 (consider replacement statement) and replace the first word under bullet point 3 to read “Designating” rather than “Creating”.

Reword the ‘Context for Policy’ section and include reference to the strength of opinion that biodiversity should be enhanced as well as protected as represented in the stage two survey.

JW reported on his review of Policy BNE1 on ‘Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas’. Following research and reference to the Fontmell Magna and Loders Neighbourhood Plans he concluded that this issue was adequately covered by the existing AONB and SSSI protection. It was considered that these aspects could be further underpinned through a policy on green space.

KB reported that she was still working on Policy BNE2 on ‘Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat in Relation to New Development’ and would report back at the next meeting.

It was agreed to delete Policy BNE 3. Those aspects relating to co-operation with other stakeholders on joint projects are to be transferred to the section on Community aspirations/actions. The Tree Preservation aspects are to be transferred out of the Biodiversity section and will probably form a separate section or sub-section within the Neighbourhood Plan.

JW had reviewed Policy BNE 4 on Flood Protection and researched additional supporting evidence. This was drafted in accordance with the structure provided in the template provided by the consultant. A few minor amendments were identified and it was agreed that this topic should be included in a separate section of the Neighbourhood Plan in a restructured format based upon headings of; introduction, policy statement, policy justification and references. It was agreed that the policy should be further amended to incorporate a developer flood mitigation plan.

Policy BNE5 on ‘Tree Preservation’ is to be transferred into a separate section/sub-section as mentioned above. Each of the sub-group to research

tree protection policies included in other Neighbourhood Plans and report back at the next meeting.

- It was noted that any action on green space required input from a third party consultant who had yet to be approached. The scope of work previously provided by Brian Wilson in December was reviewed and in view of the changed circumstances following the objections received by the Steering Group it was agreed that Brian be contacted once again regarding the scope of work and specialist consultancy options.
- The meeting closed at 22.15 hours. The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 21/2/2018 at Springbank at 19.30 hours.

Actions

- 1. Contact Graham Cox of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council regarding possible incorporation of tree protection within green space policy and the value and viability of a policy on tree replacement when tree felling or removal takes place. Action: KB**
- 2. Follow up with John Newbould on review of the Place Appraisal and section 41 draft documents Action:CM**
- 3. Redraft the Biodiversity section for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan: Introduction, Strategic Objective, Context for Policy. Action:CM**
- 4. Produce a revised draft policy statement and supporting justification for BNE2 Action: KB**
- 5. Incorporate the first part of BNE 3 in the aspirations/action points section Action: CM**
- 6. Provide a draft section on Flood Protection Action:JW**
- 7. Research Tree Preservation policies and aspirations in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. Action:KB,CM,JW**
- 8. Contact Brian Wilson (consultant to the Steering Group) regarding scope of work and specialist consultants in respect of Green Space identification and assessment. Action:KB**