

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENT D – STEERING GROUP MEETING NOTES

### **Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting**

**14 February 2017**

#### **Meeting Summary**

##### **Attendees**

##### **Steering Group members**

Cllr Brian Ellis (Chair) - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Nicola Linacre - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Teresa Heritage – Hertfordshire County Council  
Cllr Mary Maynard - Harpenden Town Council  
Geoff Newman – Community Representative  
Cllr Peter Barrett – Harpenden Rural Parish Council

##### **Support Officers**

Carl Cheevers - Town Clerk, Harpenden Town Council  
Amanda Balson - Nexus Planning  
Leanne Williams - Nexus Planning  
Alasdair Buckle - Nexus Planning  
Phil Wright – Projects Officer, Harpenden Town Council

##### **Apologies**

Jonathan Flowers - Community Representative

#### 1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves. The Chair explained that three community representative positions were available on the steering group with one still to be recruited to.

#### 2. Steering Group and Working Group Updates

CC clarified that there were five themed working groups (TWG) covering Housing, Social Infrastructure & community facilities, Transport & Movement, Environment, sustainability & design, and Employment and Retail.

An update was given on recruitment to TWG's. These would have a membership of a maximum of 8 individuals and would include a mix of community representatives and Town Councillors (max 3). The Town Councillors have been recruited to the TWG and a public nomination process was open. So far there has been a good response to this with the closing date for the public to nominate themselves being 17 February 2017. There would be further opportunities to recruit to the TWG in the future.

It was clarified that TWG members don't have to be subject experts – they need to know Harpenden and be clear thinkers and objective.

Programme Plan – This was introduced to the group and CC explained it would be updated and amended this week. It was agreed that it is desirable to run the Referendum in line with a local election to save on costs. It was noted that SADC are responsible for funding the referendum. The target is May 2018, but this may prove to be a bit tight as CC highlighted

that when the neighbourhood plan (NP) goes to examination, timescales are beyond the steering groups control.

Colleagues from Nexus ran through the stages of the programme with discussion from the rest of the group. It was highlighted that we would need to check with SADC as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required. **ACTION – PW to check with SADC**

The steering group discussed the programme and emphasised the following:

- The Chairs of TWGs need to be firm in regard to maintaining momentum
- The Final Draft NP will be signed off by Harpenden Town Council prior to examination
- It was important to understand outputs and what 'good looks like'
- It is important to have an initial meeting of all TWG members to clarify requirements and expectations
- It would be sensible to do a call for sites at the outset

The draft terms of reference for the steering group were agreed and it was confirmed that the steering group, and TWG, would be closed meetings. Notes of the steering group meetings will be available with the Neighbourhood Plan once published.

It was noted that terms of reference for the TWGs were in development. Concern was expressed over the overlap between some TWG. It was agreed that it is important for the steering group to clarify the scope and remit of each TWG in the TOR.

The Steering Group considered each TWG and listed the areas that they felt each would cover. The results of this will be reflected in the draft terms of reference for each TWG which will be circulated to the Steering Group. If any areas without a TWG home are identified, the Chairs of the TWGs could be asked to determine which TWG they should sit in.

CC informed the Steering Group that he and Councillors were due to meet with SADC's spatial planning manager and would get his view on housing numbers and what the plan looks like.

### 3. Communication and Engagement Strategy

This had been circulated to the Steering Group. CC clarified that this now needed to be translated into an action plan of what was needed in the first engagement, what is needed to be achieved.

It was commented that we needed it to identify the key issues, and help to identify objectives and vision at the end of the engagement. There needed to be a questionnaire/household survey at its heart. There had to be public engagement events in different areas of the community (not just town centre). The Steering Group agreed that it was fine to go and speak to and engage with different groups and organisations provided that the Town Council was leading the engagement.

It was clarified that there was a need to differentiate between engagement and statutory consultation. Consultation is not a decision and the Steering Group is the Governance that decides on what to accept.

It was clarified that the first engagement is about identifying key issues. This stage of engagement is about asking for people's initial thoughts whilst at the same time familiarising them with the process.

The second round of engagement follows agreement of objectives and vision by the TWG, and tests these objectives and vision with the community. It will look at the potential sites identified for retail, employment and housing. Nexus will produce a consultation report at the end of stage 4 consultation which informs the development of planning policies. The rest of the stages were spoken about.

#### 4. Baseline Report

Nexus updated the Steering Group that good progress was being made with this report. Its purpose was to make all parties aware of context, background for the Steering Group to note.

#### 5. AOB

The group were informed some funding was being sought from Government to support our NP community engagement activities.

A request was made for a Steering Group meeting length to be included on the next invitation.

***ACTION - PW to arrange next meeting date.***

## **Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting**

**7 March 2017**

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Attendees**

##### **Steering Group members**

Cllr Brian Ellis (Chair) - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Peter Barrett – Harpenden Rural Parish Council  
Cllr Nicola Linacre - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Mary Maynard - Harpenden Town Council  
Geoff Newman – Community Representative  
Jonathan Flowers - Community Representative

##### **Support Officers**

Carl Cheevers - Town Clerk, Harpenden Town Council  
Phil Wright – Projects Officer, Harpenden Town Council  
Amanda Balson - Nexus Planning  
Leanne Williams - Nexus Planning  
Alasdair Buckle - Nexus Planning

##### **Apologies**

Cllr Teresa Heritage – Hertfordshire County Council

#### 6. Introductions

The Chair welcomed Jonathan to his first meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

#### 7. Presentation of Working Draft Baseline Report

Alasdair outlined the key points of the draft baseline report supported by Amanda and Leanne. Steering Group Members contributed comments which included:

- Many people that work here do not live here
- Cycling routes north to south will be less challenging than east to west
- High traffic volumes Redbourn Lane – used as a link from the M1 to the A1
- In addition to the sports clubs listed we have two tennis clubs, indoor and outdoor bowls clubs, and a groundless hockey club
- Local History Society are conducting a town survey to identify houses with significant character or historical importance
- Is employment dependant on particular industries? e.g. financial
- Useful population data could include turnover of housing stock and length of time living here
- The prevalence/significance of Harpenden's use of community social media infrastructure should be noted
- Does mode of travel to work category include drive to the station
- Not everyone will perceive that there is a high provision of parking
- Hitchin is in the same political constituency and not mentioned as a neighbouring town
- Include the explosive growth factor since the 1970s

**Action – SG Members to feed comments on the draft baseline report to Phil as soon as possible and before 0830hrs Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March**

8. Call for sites and Site assessments

Leanne presented this subject, referenced to four draft forms, with discussion involving steering group members and Nexus colleagues. Discussion included:

- Whether assessment criteria should be disclosed when the Call for sites goes out to developers. It was decided that the full assessment criteria would not be disclosed at the time of calling for sites however the headline areas for assessment would but without disclosing the RAG criteria
- The group considered we were likely to receive up to 20 site nominations rather than hundreds.
- There was some discussion about the detailed assessment criteria which would be finalised at the next meeting.
- It was suggested that the War Memorial would be the point to measure to in the Town Centre should that be needed for any of the criteria
- Question was raised about having a flexible assessment criteria for differing site usages
- Discussion took place on whether to assess the strategic sites as this may have significance for other site assessments. It was pointed out that strategic sites had undergone a lot of analysis and assessment and that decisions had been made based upon need.
- It was clarified that the sites would be coordinated at the Town Hall, by the steering group, but Nexus would be happy to check and review as we go along
- Steering group would take the lead in completing the site assessments and this would not be a task for the Themed Working Groups.
- It was agreed that we would accept site nominations from non-owners but that we would do follow up work with owners at the assessment stage.
- It was clarified that the Town Council could submit sites through this process
- It was clarified that if a site was deemed unsuitable for one usage following site assessment then the SG could go back to the owner to see they would be willing for it to be used for another purpose

**Action – SG Members to feed comments on the four draft forms and this subject to Phil as soon as possible and before 0900hrs Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

9. Engagement

Update provided - Have been working to get the most time consuming tasks completed which has been production of materials.

The survey signed off by Councillor Ellis, and response reply envelopes are currently with the printers. The target for the completed products to arrive at the distributors is Friday in time to meet our distribution target of before the end of W/C 20 March.

We have venues booked for engagement events – Batford 29 March, Park Hall 5 April, Kinsbourne Common Hall 11 April.

Currently working to finalise plans for targeted engagement including railway station commuters and young people.

Nexus presented drafts of the exhibition posters. It was agreed that some greater context was needed on them and they needed to accurately reflect the responsibilities of each themed working group.

It was agreed that we needed to be upfront that we cannot change certain things for example travel conditions upon the railway. However we can influence access routes to the station.

**Action – SG Members to feed comments on the draft posters to Phil as soon as possible and before 0830hrs Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March.**

**Action – Phil to research photo library to find suitable images**

#### 10. Themed Working Groups induction session

The group talked through the agenda Themed Working Groups induction session which was noted

**Action – Phil to ensure all SG members have a copy of the good NP example**

## **Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting**

**12 April 2017**

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Attendees**

##### **Steering Group members**

Cllr Brian Ellis (Chair) - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Terry Heritage – Hertfordshire County Council  
Cllr Nicola Linacre - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Mary Maynard - Harpenden Town Council  
Geoff Newman – Community Representative  
Jonathan Flowers - Community Representative

#### **Support Officers**

Carl Cheevers - Town Clerk, Harpenden Town Council  
Leanne Williams - Nexus Planning  
Alasdair Buckle - Nexus Planning

#### **Apologies**

Phil Wright – Projects Officer, Harpenden Town Council  
Nicola Wyeth, Community Representative  
Cllr Peter Barrett – Harpenden Rural Parish Council  
Amanda Balson - Nexus Planning

#### 11. Action notes from the last meeting

The group reviewed the action notes from the previous meeting and agreed that they had all been covered off. These were:

- SG Members to feed comments on the draft baseline report to Phil as soon as possible and before 0830hrs Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March
- SG Members to feed comments on the four draft forms and this subject to Phil as soon as possible and before 0900hrs Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March
- SG Members to feed comments on the draft posters to Phil as soon as possible and before 0830hrs Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March.
- Action – Phil to research photo library to find suitable images

#### 12. Update on engagement exercise 1

Carl gave an update as to the latest numbers on the questionnaire which was c1,800. The group noted that this was a good response that should provide us with some clear themes that need to be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that there had been a mixed attendance at the drop in sessions with the Park Hall session being busiest at c65 people. However whilst numbers were not always high, those that did attend took the opportunity to put forward their views on the various themes that we are covering. These views will be collated alongside the feedback from the questionnaire.

It was anticipated that we would be receiving the engagement 1 report during the first week in May for consideration by the TWG at their May meetings.

Carl shared the following early themes from the engagement:

- Transport and Movement – Car parking and future capacity of roads had been a recurring issue coming forward. Also noted as being a regular comment was the need to encourage greater walking around the town.
- Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities – School places and the 4<sup>th</sup> secondary school had dominated comments. Better Healthcare facilities were mentioned regularly.
- Employment & Sustainable Design – Protection for the village feel of Harpenden and making sure new development fitted with existing areas.
- Employment & Retail – Need for visitor accommodation in the Town. Need to protect the Independent nature of local businesses. Less Charity shops.
- Housing – Affordable Housing needed particularly for young people from Harpenden that won't be able to afford to live here in the future.

### 13. Baseline Report

The latest version of the Baseline report was considered by the group. There were a number of additions/amends and data sources that the group requested to be included. These include:

- Using appropriate terminology to present Crime figures
- Exploring Deprivation position further using ward profiles
- Covering surface water flooding which is a problem in the Town

The group recognised that this document had come a long way and with these final amends should mean that it is a strong baseline document that gives good context to the NP.

At its May meeting, the SG will sign off the final version of the Baseline report.

**ACTION – SG members to forward any additional comments to Alasdair to enable completion by the end of the month.**

### 14. Themed Working Groups

The steering group welcomed the opportunity to have early sight of the work of TWG so far and appreciated that the draft vision and objectives would be further worked up over the next 4-6 weeks prior to each TWG making recommendations to the steering group in May.

Carl highlighted that each of the TWG had looked for clarity as to whether it was just planning matters that they were to be considering in their role or whether they could look at projects/initiatives that were not necessarily about land use/development but linked to a vision for Harpenden in the future.

The steering group agreed whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is primarily about land use and development they would want to take the opportunity to capture wider action and improvements that could be made to Harpenden. It was agreed that a separate plan of improvements would be populated as the NP process continued and would be reviewed and owned by the Town Council.

The group looked at the information from each of the TWG and agreed the following actions that had been requested of them:



- Environment & Sustainable Design – Agreed to change the name of this TWG to the Sustainable Design rather than Sustainability & Design to distinguish between the role of the TWG and the steering group
- Environment & Sustainable Design – Agreed to amend to ToR to replace the words ‘green policies’ with ‘sustainable design’.
- Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities – It was agreed that this group would have responsibility for overseeing any objectives for visitor accommodation and that this would be added to this TWG’s ToR.

#### 15. Call for Sites

The group noted that the call for sites period had yet to close and that an update on those put forward would be circulated the following week after the deadline.

The group considered how they would assess the sites put forward and the criteria that would be used. The group reviewed the criteria that had been circulated and felt that it seemed to cover the key areas. There was a request to include an additional section for ‘other comments’ in case there was an area that only came to light once the call for sites had closed and been received. However the group felt that the final sign off on the criteria and process for assessment should be deferred until after they understood how many applications had been received.

**Action – Phil to circulate the list of submitted sites the following Monday.**

#### 16. Any other Business

None Next meeting 19 May 2017

## **Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting**

**19 May 2017**

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Attendees**

##### **Steering Group members**

Cllr Nicola Linacre (Chair of this meeting) - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Chris Canfield - Harpenden Town Council  
Jonathan Flowers - Community Representative  
Cllr Terry Heritage – Hertfordshire County Council  
Cllr Mary Maynard - Harpenden Town Council  
Geoff Newman – Community Representative  
Nicola Wyeth, Community Representative

#### **Support Officers**

Amanda Balson - Nexus Planning  
Alasdair Buckle - Nexus Planning  
James Singer - Nexus Planning  
Phil Wright – Projects Officer, Harpenden Town Council

#### **Apologies**

Cllr Peter Barrett – Harpenden Rural Parish Council  
Carl Cheevers - Town Clerk, Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr Brian Ellis (Chair) - Harpenden Town Council  
Cllr David Heritage - Harpenden Town Council

### **1. Action notes from the last meeting**

The group reviewed the action notes from the previous meeting and agreed that they had all been covered. These were:

- SG members to forward any additional comments to Alasdair to enable completion by the end of the month.
- Phil to circulate the list of submitted sites the following Monday.

### **2. Brief update on the new Neighbourhood Planning Act**

Alasdair gave this update. In summary, the provisions slightly strengthen the role of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Engagement 1 Report – Brief Summary of Key findings**

James outlined the key findings of the Engagement 1 Report. James said that the age spread of respondents provides a robust base for the Neighbourhood Plan. Teresa commented that this age spread compared favourably with recent District surveys. Mary commented that many people aged 18-24 registered as resident are actually away

elsewhere such as at university, and that a significant number of family houses turn over every 15 years impacting on the 31 – 50 aged group, whilst older people remain. Jonathan commented that there are significantly different opinions between 25 – 49 year olds and older people. Jonathan also pointed out that Engagement 2 needed to actively target the younger age bands.

**Decision – Steering Group signed off the Engagement 1 Report.**

**4. Agree Visions, Objectives and Policy intentions from Themed Working Groups**

SG considered draft VOPs from TWGs and agreed final draft VOPs for each themed area as follows. Policy intentions were taken away for consideration by Nexus to produce a list for use in Engagement 2.

**Action - Nexus to produce a list of policy intentions from the TWG meeting records for use in Engagement 2.**

Environment & Sustainable Design

Vision – The vision was not amended and remains as below.

**Maintain and enhance the character of Harpenden, its neighbourhoods, communities and green spaces. Develop Harpenden as a sustainable and low carbon town.**

Environment & Sustainable Design Objectives – agreed as follows without amendments, with the exception that objective 8 was removed as a crossover with the Transport and Movement theme:

1. To maintain and enhance the quality and character of all the varied green spaces including Harpenden Common, Batford Springs, Rothamsted Park, Kinsbourne Green Common and Lydekker Park.
2. Protect Harpenden’s key views and outlooks ensuring the visual impact of development is minimised.
3. To improve and develop public access to green spaces, to rivers and to the natural environment, including developing and enhancing green chains and corridors.
4. To encourage and enhance biodiversity
5. To require developments to promote sustainable living, be of sustainable and energy efficient design including incorporating green technologies.
6. Maintain and enhance local character and heritage through sensitive design.
7. To require development to reduce flood risk through sustainable solutions.
8. (To require development to design residential streets giving prime consideration to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and to encourages initiative to adapt residential streets which will prioritize pedestrians and cyclists) – **This Objective was removed.**
9. Encourage and support community renewable energy projects and initiatives that develop Harpenden’s environs as a low carbon area.

Transport and Movement

The vision and objectives were agreed with the addition of just the four words shown in red.

**Vision - That Harpenden residents are able to walk and cycle around safely and comfortably, and travel is managed via predominantly environmentally friendly, interchangeable methods, with the appropriate quantity and quality of public transport, cycle storage and parking provision, in an atmosphere of sustainable growth and significantly reduced pollution.**

#### Transport and Movement Objectives

1. To create an environment that promotes walking, cycling and public transport as first choice modes for all residents and to ensure that the services supporting these modes are in place, from high quality safe routes to reliable and sustainable transport services.
2. To integrate modes of transport, for example through strategically located cycle hubs.
3. To create motor vehicle free travel plans for getting to and from all Harpenden schools from all areas of Harpenden.
4. To reduce road traffic pollution and improve air quality.
5. To ensure new developments include proportionate to scale transport infrastructure including sufficiently wide roads and pavements, cycle lanes, cycle parking, bus laybys, and sufficient public transport and parking provision.
6. To ensure new developments increase the density of walking and cycling routes and provide safe new crossings where appropriate.
7. Ensure car parking within the town supports the viability of the town centre.

#### Employment & Retail

The Steering Group made minor wording changes to the vision and some objectives, decided that objective 8 should become objective 1, and objectives 9 and 10 should become policy intentions instead. The revised versions follow:

**Vision - That Harpenden has accessible thriving and flexible retail areas, with a vibrant, attractive Town Centre that encourages people to spend time there, by offering a diverse range of quality retail and other Town Centre uses. To create a sustainable economy that protects existing, and supports new employment use where appropriate, making Harpenden an attractive and accessible place for both employers and employees to work.**

#### Objectives

1. To support a high quality offer through improvements to existing employment and retail areas including new and redevelopment opportunities
2. Maintain retail and employment centres that are adaptable and keep pace with technological development and other innovations
3. To provide a community 'village' atmosphere for the Town Centre where residents, visitors and those employed in local businesses can relax and socialise, at all times taking in to account the viability of the surrounding retail units
4. To increase footfall to the Town Centre and Southdown
5. Manage an attractive eating, drinking and entertainment scene that transitions through the day into a thriving evening economy

6. Support the principle of residents having easy access to small local convenience shops based on local needs across the town
7. Protect existing employment and retail sites and encourage full usage
8. To Support small and medium enterprises including business start-ups and homeworking, through encouraging flexible working practises, shared offices and workshops

It was commented that policy was needed to support what is now objective 6 above. Mary stated that policy was required to support what is now objective 7 above.

#### Housing

The Steering Group changed just two words in the vision and objective 3. Objectives 1 – 5 were accepted, but the red objectives 6 – 9 were removed. Objective 9 was considered to be covered by the Environment and Sustainable Design group. Objective 8 was considered to be outside of planning. It was commented that a policy for number 5 would be a delicate matter requiring careful consideration. The agreed vision and objectives follow below:-

**Vision – To have a mixed housing offer that is affordable, well located and designed and that has the ability to meet the aspirations of different ages and demographic groups and flexibility to integrate and maintain people throughout their lifecycle.**

#### Housing objectives

1. Those that grow up in Harpenden should have the capability to live here should they wish to.
2. Encourage starter homes and intermediate housing including support for Key workers
3. Support the redevelopment of housing stock that is coming to the end of its lifespan
4. Provide a mix of housing that meets current gaps in housing market specifically 1to2 bed flat/bungalow and 2 to 3 bedroom family homes
5. Support the ability for older people to downsize should they wish to

#### Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities

The Steering Group removed just two words from the vision and made no changes to the objectives.

**Vision - Maintain and enhance a vibrant cultural and community life through excellent school and health care provision, high quality sports, leisure and community facilities and accessible social infrastructure.**

#### Social Infrastructure & Community Facilities Objectives

1. An accessible place, at a good school, for every child whose parents want to see them educated in the town
2. Support the provision and enhancement of facilities for faith groups, voluntary community groups representing all ages and schools that are easily accessible for community use
3. Enhance the provision of sports, leisure and cultural facilities that meet the needs of all age groups

4. Support the aspirations of Harpenden's sports clubs to deliver excellent facilities
5. To ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of the population of Harpenden and surrounding villages are met and plan for the future provision of services to accommodate an expanding and ageing population
6. To ensure development includes appropriate provision of services infrastructure including high speed broadband, gas and electricity and contributes to the quality of services infrastructure throughout the neighbourhood plan area
7. Support the development of additional overnight accommodation, including hotels, to address the needs of visitors to the town

## 5. NP Overarching Vision

### **Action - Nexus to draft this vision from the TWG visions and submit it for SG consideration and comments.**

Jonathan said the vision needed to reflect that Harpenden is a community and has not collapsed into being simply a dormitory commuter town. Teresa emphasised that the voluntary sector is huge in Harpenden – charity, church, community and would like to see the vision somehow reflect this.

## 6. Call For Sites

### **Decision – Steering Group signed off the amended site assessment forms.**

Nexus had looked further at our list of sites to be assessed and had found that a number of sites included in the SHLAA 'Harpenden and Surrounds' were actually outside of the Harpenden NP area. This reduced the number of sites to be assessed to 69, still a relatively large undertaking.

A discussion took place about the assessment of green belt (GB) site. It was agreed to assess them all but make it clear GB sites cannot be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

There was discussion about whether it was necessary to invite developers to present to the SG as part of the assessment process. It was considered appropriate to reduce the size of the list through assessment before inviting developers to pitch. Later during the meeting Amanda said that it is best to engage with developers during the assessment process as questions have been asked of plans where this did not happen.

It was noted that the difference in levels of information available on the SHLAA sites, depending on whether they were on the 2009 or the 2016 list, would only impact the assessment process from the aspect of the level to which they assist in completing the data within the detailed site suitability proformas.

## 7. Agree Plan For Engagement 2

A table representing a draft plan of activities during engagement 2 was considered. A style of questions for a survey was also considered (which was based on people being asked to indicate their views from strongly agree through to strongly disagree, on the visions, objectives and policy intentions for each of the themed areas, with space included for their free flow comments).

### **Decision – Steering Group agreed Engagement 2 includes a survey to households and businesses.**

Jonathan stated that there should be pre-publicity of the survey warning people in advance to look out for its arrival – social media and Herts Advertiser newspaper adverts.

Nicola Wyeth would like one clear logo to circulate on social media that people would then associate with the NP and it could be used consistently for all communications.

Nicola Wyeth stated that editorial content was better than just adverts. Mary suggested a Community Representative member of the Steering Group could write a letter to the newspapers.

**Action – Phil to speak with Carl in regard to editorial.**

**Nicola Linacre advised the group that HTC were in the process of appointing a Communications Officer and once the post was filled, information could also be fed to the public through HTC Facebook and Twitter accounts.**

Jonathan said we should aim to reach more 25 – 40 year olds through asking all local schools to include updates in their weekly emails to parents.

It was also suggested that A4 PDF posters bearing the agreed logo could be sent to schools.

Other suggestions included using Radio Verulam and Nicky Line radio, September's Forum (for engagement 3), Harpendia, History Society, and children's centres.

Four events are required for the next round of engagement, to include Southdown. Amanda said these should be very late in the engagement period if we are to include lists of sites because we are being very optimistic to think we can complete the site assessments in the timescales given. Amanda needs these dates very soon.

The matter of an evening event for all TWG and SG members together as part of engagement 2 was raised, where TWG Chairs could share their TWG's vision and objectives. It appeared that SG members in the room, with the exception of Jonathan, were currently available on evening of 4 July.

**Action – Phil to check availability of David Heritage and Brian Ellis for evening of 4 July.**

## **8. Sign Off Final Baseline Report**

Alasdair emphasised that this document needed to go public sooner rather than later. A few comments were passed to Alasdair at the meeting.

**Action – SG members to pass any additional comments to Alasdair without hesitation.**

**Action – Alasdair to update and send Phil latest version during the following week.**

**Action – When received from Alasdair, Phil to;- (i) publish on HTC website, (ii) send to Ron Taylor of Harpendia, Herts Advertiser and St Albans Review.**

**Decision – SG signed off the Baseline Report and do not need to review it again.**

## **9. Programme Update**

Provided by Alasdair.

## **10. Any other Business**

Nicola Wyeth raised the idea of a presentation being delivered to SG on planning to provide inspiration and good ideas. Comment was made that Council Officers would talk process and not ideas. It was decided that in principle, SG were interested. Amanda said she would

be able to suggest someone appropriate through her contacts. Jonathan said it would have to be pre-policy stage.

Jonathan had a guide to Neighbourhood plans which he will look at and share if it is good.

**Next meeting 6 June 2017 10am in the Council Chamber.**



## **Steering Group 6 June 2017 1000hrs – 1600hrs**

### **Summary**

Attendees

Members -Brian Ellis (Chair), Chris Canfield, Rod Cooley, Jonathan Flowers, Teresa Heritage, Nicola Linacre, Geoff Newman, Nicola Wyeth

Nexus –James Singer, Amanda Balson

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies – Peter Barrett, David Heritage, Alasdair Buckle

1. Nexus reported that they and Carl had a positive meeting with SADC on 30 May.
2. The Steering Group signed off the Harpenden vision.
3. Site Assessments

Much discussion took place about the importance of ensuring consistent and fair application of assessment criteria throughout the process.

The group then embarked on assessment of some of the sites, again with a great amount of discussion to ensure consistency. Some sites were assessed against the criteria and initial scores recorded on the correct form.

Some discussion took place about inviting developers but no final decision was reached.

4. AOB Feedback was provided by the group on the draft NP logo.

## **Steering Group 16 June 2017 1000hrs – 1600hrs**

### **Summary**

#### Attendees

Members -Brian Ellis (Chair), Chris Canfield, Rod Cooley, Jonathan Flowers, Teresa Heritage, Nicola Linacre, Geoff Newman, Nicola Wyeth

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies – Peter Barrett , David Heritage, Nexus

1. The Steering Group assessed five sites not previously assessed at all – sites 2, 15, 16, 41 and 45. All scores were recorded electronically directly on to the appropriate form.
2. The Steering Group assessed sites 7, 8 and 9 in detail. All scores were recorded electronically directly on to the appropriate form.
3. The Steering Group then had a long discussion on whether any developers should be invited to present to them and the criteria to decide this. It was considered that sites who had scored green did not need to be invited in, and that a threshold for those who had not scored high enough to score green, but who could perhaps uplift their scores into green through providing additional information to the SG was required. It was agreed that Carl would set out options to define the threshold, to SG members, in such a way that SG members would not know what the outcome of the option they selected meant in terms of the number of developers to be invited. This way, the individual decision of SG members in regard to this would have no bearing on who ended up being seen.
4. The Steering Group then completed re-assessing all sites. All scores were recorded electronically directly on to the appropriate form.

## Steering Group 4 July 2017

### Summary

#### Attendees

Members -Brian Ellis (Chair), Peter Barrett, Rod Cooley, David Heritage, Teresa Heritage, Nicola Linacre, Geoff Newman, Nicola Wyeth, Chris Canfield (part)

Nexus – Alasdair Buckle, James Singer

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies – Jonathan Flowers

5. Phil gave an update on engagement 2 activities so far
  - Town Notice Boards, two weeks of full page newspaper ads, social media – all in advance of 19 June
  - 19-21 June – Surveys delivered, and re-delivered to town centre and Southdown shops week after
  - Leaflets and surveys inside Youth Connexions
  - All schools and a number of other specific school and scout contacts enrolled to help, assisted by Nicola Wyeth
  - As of 4 July – 705 paper surveys returned and 131 completed online = 836

6. Carl gave an update on the HNP story so far.  
His presentation included a number of items that the DLP allows or expects the HNP to do, including relevant to green belt, provision of centres, and local green spaces. It contained a number of questions for Steering Group to address in a process that revisited the entire overall approach to site assessment and interaction with developers.

Rod Cooley, with statistical expertise, asked whether greenbelt should simply be a yes /no answer after all sites had been assessed the same so as not to bias the scores.

Extensive discussion took place during which it was pointed out that the NPPF required a special circumstance for development within greenbelt, but it was also clarified that District have given the HNP the remit to consider this. The outcome was that the SG agreed that the two categories of biodiversity/landscaping/green infrastructure and appropriate use should be reassessed for each of the green belt sites without greenbelt influencing the assessment scores.

Two lists will be produced. Greenbelt sites and non-greenbelt sites. The steering group would consider the list of non-greenbelt sites in the first instance.

7. All green belt sites were reassessed by SG in regard to categories of biodiversity et al and appropriate use. New scores recorded into the assessment record.
8. Substantial discussion took place to determine criteria for inviting developers. Nexus recommended meeting all developers, (to ensure developers are fully engaged in the process) apart from those sites which do not have a realistic chance of being

allocated. The idea of what constitutes a realistic chance' was discussed by the group.

The group concluded that they would not invite those sites scoring as red or amber as there was no reasonable likelihood of them increasing their score into the green, but all others would be invited.

The SG agreed the approach that SG would split into small groups and see developers on a tight schedule on two dates [28 and 31 July]

Carl pointed out that all call for sites work had to be completed by early September. Nexus will help provide some general meeting questions. It was highlighted that we may not have contact details for all sites.

## Steering Group 2 August 2017

### Summary

#### Attendees

Members -Brian Ellis (Chair), Jonathan Flowers, David Heritage, Teresa Heritage, Nicola Linacre, Geoff Newman, Nicola Wyeth, Chris Canfield

Nexus – Alasdair Buckle

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies –Peter Barrett, Rod Cooley

#### 1. Impact on the NP due to delay to the SLP - Alasdair

This was an item added to the agenda. Alasdair explained that the position of the SLP presented an important opportunity for the NP to fill any void in up to date planning policies for the area.

Part of this opportunity meant that the NP needed to take control of relevant planning policies that would have been in the SLP. The steering group agreed to review these and identify the ones that should be transferred to the NP.

The lack of an SLP creates challenges for the NP's Call for Sites process specifically its ability to identify suitable green belt sites. Assessments of green belt sites might be accurate now, but not by the time the SLP comes into force and any identification of green belt sites in the NP in the absence of an SLP may lead to challenge at examination.

It is therefore prudent for the NP to concentrate on urban site allocations, and not green belt sites.

It would be useful for the SG, separate to the NP site assessments, to complete its own assessment of green belt sites to be fed into the SADC green belt sites assessment process for the SLP.

It was noted that the delay in the SLP process could lead to 'open season' for developers. It was further noted that it was not the NP that has caused this situation and that the NP does not have the power to allocate green belt sites.

There could be general policies relating to sites over a certain size e.g. that they must provide certain infrastructure such as schools. It was commented that mitigating impact on roads needed very carefully worded policies with careful assessment of road capacities and impact.

Perhaps there could be general policies for North, E, S and W.

It was noted that Bishops Stortford had used a contingency policy approach.

**Action** – Alasdair offered to research policies in other NPs and send them to us.

The group agreed that they needed to revisit the comms strategy for the NP ahead of the formal consultation in October.

It was agreed that an agenda item for this would be added to the next meeting agenda.

#### 2. Engagement 2 Report – Alasdair

Alasdair stated that 1305 responses was a good response to the survey. (A town about half the size of Harpenden that Nexus were working with received approximately 200 responses, comparatively, far less than Harpenden).

The report is very positive and generally shows good support for the visions and objectives. Based on the report, there is no need to remove any of the visions or objectives.

It was noted that survey responses from people aged under 25 remained low despite the greater number of publicity channels used this time round.

**Action** – Phil to send Alasdair bullet points of all the effort made to engage younger people in the NP for inclusion in the report.

### **3. Call for Sites**

**Decision** – SG agreed to remove sites 24 and 25 from the assessment process due to emails from persons responsible for the sites not wishing them to be considered for development

Site 45 remains to be addressed.

The Public Halls will be assessed as a site so that the NP can say what we would like to see happen to that site.

Carl updated the SG that 20 non green belt sites had been considered, and 11 of these had hit the green threshold, providing approximately 76 dwellings, (not including Pan Autos). However it was noted that this dwellings figure may not reflect the updated plans for each site that were shared through the developer meetings.

**Action** – Phil to review urban sites for which no developer had been traced so far.

Next meeting 6 September 2017

## Steering Group 6 September 2017

### Summary

#### Attendees

Members -Brian Ellis (Chair), Rod Cooley, Jonathan Flowers, Nicola Linacre, Nicola Wyeth,

Nexus – Alasdair Buckle, Amanda Balson

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies –Peter Barrett, Chris Canfield, David Heritage, Teresa Heritage, Geoff Newman

#### 1. Update on Project Timescales

Carl gave an updated proposal for the projects timeline which was agreed. It was acknowledged that this was still challenging and fast track.

Deadline	Milestone	Who
4 September	First Draft NP to PW that incs Chapters 1-4 and Visions and objectives for each theme chapter	NEXUS
6 September	Consider First Draft NP and provide feedback	SG
11 September	Final Draft Policies complete and submitted to Nexus	TWG and PW
22 September	Second Draft NP to PW that inc feedback from first draft, policies and agreed sites for inclusion	NEXUS
29 September	Consider Second draft NP and provide feedback inc updated information on Call for Sites	SG
13 October	Final draft NP to PW and circulated to SG	NEXUS and PW
20 October	Approve Final Draft NP for consultation	SG
25 October	Start statutory consultation	SG
5 December	Close statutory consultation	SG
15 December	Engagement report to PW and out to SG	NEXUS
19 December	Consider engagement report and make amends to final Draft NP.	SG
10 January	Amended final draft NP to SG	NEXUS
17 January	SG recommend Final Draft NP to Town Council	SG
19 January	Town Council Agenda circulated	CC
29 January	Town Council approve Final NP	HTC

There was some discussion about Themed Working Group input into policies post 11/9/17 and Carl explained that it was always the plan that the Steering Group would own the policies and asked for acknowledgement that SG would own the policies after 11/9/17. Jonathan pointed out that terminology was important and that draft in the timeline table needed to be 'Final' draft for the TWGs on 11 September.

## 9. A) Additional Item – Update on the new Local Plan – Alasdair

Alasdair highlighted some key points which included;-

- It is a new **single** Local Plan
- Plan period is 2018-2036
- Housing numbers – The target will increase dramatically. Likely to be 15.5k compared to old target of 9k
- Suggests old SLP broad locations should remain
- A new call for sites will be launched
- Seeking sites that will enable strategic housing growth (garden village/town)
- Illustrates an exploratory approach by SADC to deliver the housing requirement
- Local Plan timetable is for it to be submitted to Government in March 2019 which would mean an estimated adoption in mid 2020
- Our NP approach to dealing with green belt sites is correct
- What is the overall effect of the new local plan on Harpenden?
- What broad sites are they considering for Harpenden?

Carl highlighted that we need to do more work on policies for area zones should a development come forward for a particular area outlining the conditions that would apply. Jonathan added that a Town zone was also required.

Nexus will lift policies from the SLP and DLP for SG to decide upon whether or not they are included in the NP.

Carl will be seeking more detail on the milestones in the new Local Plan.

Alasdair clarified that District could allocate an urban site that was not included in the NP. To mitigate against this risk, the NP needs to articulate clearly why unallocated sites are unsuitable for development.

## 10. Draft Neighbourhood Plan

The first draft was discussed in some detail.

Text explaining that a NP is primarily about land use, and stronger statements such as Harpenden is under attack, or vulnerable, an insurance policy were also considered to be appropriate for inclusion.

Discussion took place about including that people's views had been taken into account e.g. you said we did. Next engagement should include acknowledgement that people have been listened to.

Carl raised that Geoff had strong views that Harpenden should not be referred to as a village or village feel. Jonathan suggested the community be consulted on this.

The order of the chapters and the vision will be reviewed at the next SG meeting.

**Action** – The next updated draft NP will be sent to SG Members on Friday 22 September. **SG Members are to send their comments on the next updated draft NP to Phil by midday on Wednesday 27 September for processing by Phil and Carl.**

## 11. Call For Sites



The Steering Group considered the list of urban sites that have scored green and approved all for inclusion in the NP with the conditions that Southdown and Batford Industrial Estates are protected as commercial sites, and 63 High Street is included as an employment site.

A discussion took place about the status of protection of Southdown Industrial Estate.

**Action** – Phil to clarify this status.

Post meeting. David Heritage clarified that Southdown Industrial Estate (apart from the small residential part) is protected as an employment site, as is Coldharbour Lane.

The following is copied off of SADC website-

### **Article 4 Direction - Changes of Use from Office / Light Industrial / Storage and Distribution to Residential**

#### **What is an Article 4 Direction?**

National planning rules allow many changes of use as 'Permitted Development'. A planning application is not required for permitted development. Where it has good reason, the Council has a local planning power - a Direction under Article 4 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 - to remove permitted development rights

#### **Where are the proposed Article 4 Direction areas?**

The Council has decided to use Article 4 directions in this way, but only in the most strategically important employment locations in the District:

#### ***Local Businesses and Services***

- District Local Plan Review (DLPR) Employment Area (EMP) 1 Coldharbour Lane (remaining)
- DLPR EMP 3 Southdown Industrial Estate

The Article 4 Directions are non-immediate. This means any Direction cannot come into force until 12 months from the notification date.

**Action** – Phil to extend the next meeting by an hour.

### **12. Communications and Engagement 3 Plan**

Members agreed to send in their thoughts on the key messages that are required

Next meeting 29 September 2017

## **Steering Group 29 September 2017**

### **Summary**

#### **Attendees**

Members - Peter Barrett, Chris Canfield, Jonathan Flowers, David Heritage, Teresa Heritage, Geoff Newman, Nicola Linacre, Nicola Wyeth,

Nexus – Alasdair Buckle

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies – Rod Cooley, Brian Ellis,

#### **1. Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

Almost the entire meeting comprised of Carl displaying the draft neighbourhood plan electronically, page by page, on the screen whilst the Steering Group commented upon it. These discussions will result in edits to the draft. These will be completed by Nexus by 13<sup>th</sup> October for recirculation to Steering Group Members in advance of the next meeting on 20 October.

#### **2. Engagement 3 Plan**

Phil gave a brief update on the key activities planned for engagement 3.

**Next meeting 20 October 2017**

## Steering Group 20 October 2017

### Summary

#### Attendees

Members - Brian Ellis, (Chair), Chris Canfield, Rod Cooley, Jonathan Flowers, Teresa Heritage, Geoff Newman, Nicola Linacre, Nicola Wyeth

Nexus – Alasdair Buckle

Carl Cheevers, Phil Wright

Apologies – Peter Barrett, David Heritage

#### 1. Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Most of the meeting comprised of Carl displaying the draft neighbourhood plan electronically, focusing discussion on issues previously commented upon by Steering Group Members. These discussions would result in edits to the draft prior to printing today.

#### 2. Objectives/Policies Table

It was decided to remove TM08 as this was not required. If someone wished to bring forward an eco-friendly delivery hub in Harpenden, the NP already protected employment sites in which this could happen.

This table had identified a gap in respect of SI03. Carl had suggested an additional policy to fill this gap –

#### ADEQUACY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

All applications for 10 or more dwellings shall be accompanied by evidence of responses from utility providers – water, drainage, electricity, gas – that their existing networks have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development without negative impact on existing users. In the event that providers are unable provide such confirmation, applicants must provide impact studies of the extent, cost and timescale for any required works of upgrading.

The Steering Group accepted this policy and suggested broadband should be added to it.

A policy to support cycle storage mentioned in TM02 was raised and T10 was the appropriate reference for it.

#### 3. Delivery Section

This was discussed and some suggestions made to tweak it.

#### 4. Site Assessment Summary

The format for this document was discussed and agreed. Members were clear that it needed to emphasise the clear, transparent and objective process that the Steering Group had gone through.

All sites in this draft document were reconsidered by the Steering Group.

The sites of the Public Halls, and the Memorial Hospital were discussed. Because neither site had submitted to the call for sites process by the land owner, it was decided that they could not fairly be allocated within the Draft Neighbourhood Plan due to an inconsistency of available information compared to other assessments. It was decided the plan should contain comments about both sites.

The Steering Group (SG) decided to include 63 High Street as a residential site. Previously the SG had expressed preference to include it as an employment site, but it had scored green when assessed as a residential site, and this was the preference of the land owner.

#### **5. Separate Action Plan For Consideration By Harpenden Town Councillors**

During the meeting two points were made that should be added to the separate action plan which would be put before Town Councillors for their consideration, completely separate to the Neighbourhood Plan. These were

- HTC should be involved in any process by SADC to review parking standards
- HTC should work together with SADC to bring forward a CIL

**Next meeting 30 November 2017**