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**NOTES OF MEETING**

**Meeting:** Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

**Date & Time:** Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00pm

**Place:** Council Chamber, The New Town Hall, Commercial Road

**PRESENT:**

**Chair:** Cllr David Northam

**Steering Group Members:** Colin Marsh, Howard Atkinson, Jon Orrell, Michael Bevan, Penny Quilter, Phil Watts, Rob Cheeseman

**Project Support:** Michele Williams, Jane Biscombe

**Special Attendance:** Matt Piles, Corporate Director - Economic Growth & Infrastructure

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	BY WHOM
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies:</b></p> <p>David welcomed everyone and introduced Matt Piles, who was here to discuss item 3.            Apologies were received from Michael Bevan.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Minutes &amp; Matters Arising:</b></p> <p>Minutes of last meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> August were approved.</p>	Upload onto website	Michele
3.	<p><b>Matt Piles – Brief on NPPF Changes &amp; Impact on Local Plan &amp; Neighbourhood Plan:</b></p> <p>This item was brought forward to enable Matt to leave immediately after due to some work issues he needed to deal with.</p> <p>Matt introduced himself and gave a bit of his background – he was formerly the Project Officer for the Relief Road and the Olympics. He was an engineer, and he is Weymouth born and bred so is very supportive of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>He advised that the new government are keen to increase the no of housing across the country and for Dorset this is roughly 20,000. The previous government did not enforce ‘duty to cooperate’ which the new government are keen to enforce.</p> <p>Developers have said that there is not sufficient land to build this new number of houses on existing brownfield sites. The government are therefore reviewing the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and consulting on a process of releasing Green Belt land, this includes creating a new designation of ‘Grey Belt’ land.</p>		

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	<p>DC are now responsible for moving the 5 Local Plans (LP) into 1, but have concerns regarding where new housing will be built / who will be building these new homes and who these new homes are for?</p> <p>The biggest issue is the definition of what 'Affordable Housing' is? There is still discussion needed around this to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Concerns raised that developers' will renege on their commitment to 'Affordable Housing' and question asked if there is a way we can tie it into the LP and Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>A hold up on housing development across Dorset has been the new Nutrient Neutrality regulations – this has now been addressed by Dorset Council and this should enable halted development to progress.</p> <p>Dorset Council (DC) will work with others to review the Town Centre Policies.</p> <p>DC are seeking a developer to take on all of some of the key brownfield sites in Weymouth; viz North Quay, Bowling Alley and the Peninsular.</p> <p>Matt expressed his frustration when developers come back to DC and say they cannot now deliver what they initially promised. DC are currently developing a Housing Strategy and this will hopefully identify what an 'Affordable Home' is.</p> <p>Matt was asked, given the changes coming through government, and the emerging Local Plan should we pause the Weymouth NP. He strongly recommended we should bring the WNP forward to DC and Referendum. He mentioned that whilst the government has stressed the presumption in favour of sustainable development we should look to allocate development in preferred places and check with DC.</p> <p>Matt was asked about Devolution – he said DC were responding to the request to Register Interest. PMN DC have submitted to Government an interest but favour a non-mayoral approach working with other neighbouring local authorities as a 'Heart of Wessex' area.</p> <p>Matt also responded to questions on use of Assets and highlighted that DC were conducting a review of all assets with the intention to use assets for the community.</p> <p>He noted the concerns ref water infrastructure, the complex interaction of different responsible bodies and pointed to the work</p>	<p>Action: DN/PQ</p>	

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	being done on harbour defences. He suggested we write expressing concerns.		
4.	<p><b>Red Policies Summary:</b></p> <p>This item was not discussed as ran out of time. Another meeting to be arrange to look at this.</p>		
5	<p><b>George Venning Update:</b></p> <p>David advised that we had received the latest update to the Viability Report which DC would like to view although not necessary as only revised and no major changes.</p> <p>DC advise we should remove any policies that do not get allocated but SG agree to retain as evidence of decision making. Some discussion around whether we can increase the density to 30 dwellings per hectare to help achieve the housing shortage?</p> <p>Some concerns that increasing density might affect the quality of the builds. To look at previous developments and how they have look?</p> <p>Although keen on community led development but need to be aware it takes a lot of hard work to get these developments and can result in less housing which then results in increased cost for infrastructure.</p> <p>David advised he has been to Bridport to look at their community development and will arrange a visit for SG members if they would like to visit. Most keen to visit – would be good to know how the Affordable Housing fits in – need more affordable living not just affordable homes.</p> <p>Point raised that some of the language can be construed so that it give developers an opportunity to not meet our aims.</p> <p>Some questions to put to George Venning:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- text indicates that with calculation now creates buffer but there are not any calculations? Need to clarify.</li> <li>- need some clarity on additional factors i.e. St Nicholas Street – but only words at the moment no supporting evidence.</li> </ul>	<p>Research previous development</p> <p>Feedback to George on queries raised</p>	<p>Michele / David / Colin</p> <p>David / Colin</p>
6.	<p><b>Forward Plan:</b></p> <p>Colin checklist circulated and needs to be incorporated into our Forward Plan – Rob and Michele to work on this with Colin. Any comments to Michele by end of the week.</p> <p>Need to chase AECOM re new HNA – Michele to action.</p>	<p>Contact AECOM</p>	<p>Michele</p>
7.	<p><b>Frequently Asked Questions / Comms / Door-to-Door Leaflet:</b></p> <p>Agreed to publish our FAQ's onto website.</p>		

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	BY WHOM
	David to take an update to Full Council on 16 <sup>th</sup> October once agreed at TAG, on where we are at and advise that at November Full Council we will be hoping to seek the Council approval of our Submission Plan.		
8.	<b>Any Other Business:</b> Nothing brought forward.		
9.	<b>Dates of Future Meetings:</b>  <b>Date:</b> Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024 <b>Time:</b> 7pm <b>Venue:</b> Council Chamber  <b>Date:</b> Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 <b>Time:</b> 7pm <b>Venue:</b> Council Chamber		

Meeting ended at 09:05pm