

Storrington, Sullington and Washington

Neighbourhood Plan

WASHINGTON

PARISH COUNCIL

Steering Group Meeting

The Chanctonbury Room, Parish Hall,
Thakeham Road, Storrington,

6.30 pm Tuesday 8th March 2022.

**Minutes**

**Present:** Storrington & Sullington Parish Councillors – Cllr Anna Worthington-Leese (Chairman of the Steering Group), Cllr Richard Jerman, Cllr Lisa Wheatley.

Washington Councillors –Cllr Patrick Heeley (Vice-Chairman of the Steering Group), Cllr Christine Beglan, Cllr Tony Lisher
Tracey Euesden (Clerk to Storrington & Sullington Parish Council)
Zoe Saville (Clerk to Washington Parish Council)

1. **To welcome and Co-opt New Member of the Steering Group (Cllr Tony Lisher).**

It had been proposed that Cllr Lisher would join the Steering Group, and this was

**UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**2. To Agree amended Postproduction Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.**

The amended Terms of Reference were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Horsham District Planning Framework – To discuss the Steering Group’s position with regard to the site selection process and to consider way forward for future meeting with HDC.** Members discussed the various and significant proceedings since the SSWNP became a “made” plan. Whilst it was always acknowledged that the SSWNP would need to be reviewed in line with the Local Plan, the changes to National Planning Policy and the increase in housing numbers imposed upon HDC by the Government had not been envisaged.

 HDC had initially indicated its intention of engaging with Parishes to identify additional sites that could be included in the revised Plan for development. However, no engagement whatsoever had taken place and HDC had simply produced a Plan that contained sites that had previously been assessed as inappropriate and unsustainable. Whilst it was recognised that the Pandemic had prevented face to face meetings from taking place, it was pointed out that there had been several ways to meet virtually and HDC could not use this as an excuse for not involving Parishes in the process to produce the Plan. An attempt to rush the Plan through at a Cabinet Meeting in August 2021 had only been thwarted by unexpected changes to the NPPF by Government.

 As a further complication, Natural England’s position statement regarding Water Neutrality has resulted in HDC being unable to approve any planning applications that cannot demonstrate water neutrality and delays in the process to produce the Local Plan. Whilst this situation has resulted in uncertainty about the level of housing HDC can plan for, initial indications from HDC are that housing numbers would be reduced. There has been no confirmation that the Government has, so far, agreed to this, and clarification should be sought from HDC.

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Mrs Worthington-Leese’s opinion was that HDC should be developing several different scenarios for site allocations (based on differing housing numbers), creating a ‘hierarchy’ of acceptable sites, so that when a resolution to the water issues is finally found, the Plan can be finalised quite quickly, thus preventing an influx of speculative developments being allowed at appeal due to the absence of a “made” Plan.

During the last few months, there has been a change of Leadership at HDC, and the new Leader has committed to a more locally led approach to the Plan and promised to arrange meetings to hear each Parish’s views about site allocation. With this in mind it was agreed that the Steering Group should review some sites that were originally put forward for development in the SSWNP but were reduced or discounted by HDC during the site assessment process and that priority should be given to those that are Brownfield or within the Built-Up Area Boundary.

 After a discussion about individual sites, the following proposals were **AGREED** in order of priority.

* Ravenscroft – numbers increased from 35 dwellings to 78 (including small houses and flats).
* Bellacre – allocation for 25 homes.
* Lucking’s Yard – allocation for 20 homes (to be confirmed with the Landowner).

*Back up site if numbers require.*

* Chantry Lane Industrial Estate (Backup site for up to 100 homes)

A list of questions to be asked at the meeting with HDC was also drawn up and these are:

* Where do Neighbourhood Plans fit when the new Local Plan is finalised?
* What are HDC’s requirements from Parishes in terms of housing numbers?
* What is being done to progress the Local Plan?
* What is HDC’s definition of Windfall sites?

**4. Any other business.**

It was agreed that the minutes from this meeting would be added to the agenda for adoption at each Parish Council’s next meeting.

A discussion took place about whether to expand the Steering Group to include neighbouring parishes, but it was decided to await the outcome of the meeting with HDC to clarify what further role the group will play in producing the Local Plan

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

Signed: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. . Date: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ..

Chairman