



ALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEETING NOTES

WEDNESDAY 28th AUGUST 2024

In attendance:

Mike Heelis – Chair (MH)
David Allan – Vice Chair (DA)
Rob Fowell – Community Representative (RF)
John Grace – Community Representative (JG)
Richard Parratt – Community Representative (RP)
John Bound – Community Representative (JB)
Councillor Suzie Burns – EHDC Representative (SB)
Councillor Graham Hill - ATC Representative (GH)
Pat Harris – Interim Town Clerk (PMH)

Councillor Don Hammond (ATC) – observation capacity

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Peter Holden (PH) Community Representatives and Councillor Annette Eyre who was attending a Mayoral event.

Not required: Adam Harvey & Jenny Wood (EHDC Officers) & Leah Coney (ONH)

Ex-officio – Councillors Annette Eyre & John Chubb

2. Updates since Last Meeting & Actions Arising:

2.1 MH noted that the group had not met for almost 4 months and it needed to re-centralise but acknowledged that it was in the Town Council's hands for a decision on proceeding to Reg 14. MH advised that both he & LC briefed the Town Council on 4th May at which time the feeling of the Council was that time was on their side with regards to proceeding to the next stage – the Regulation 14 Public Consultation. MH briefed the group as follows:

- Draft NP went before Full Council on 5th June with full allocation at which the following Resolutions were passed which stated the Town Council:

1. *RESOLVED*

to proceed to a Regulation 14 consultation but not before 14th September and that a group of representatives could be given until the end of July to come back with any new proposal for the site allocations to be included in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which would then be put to the Full Council Meeting on 4th September. The alternative sites and accompanying assessment / information should be submitted to the Town Clerk by the end of July.

2. *RESOLVED*

To delegate to the Town Clerk any amendments to the draft Plan including spelling, grammatical errors, or amendments to wording, which do not change the nature of the policies, as required, prior to publication for the Regulation 14 consultation.

- Thus the proposed Reg 14 on 8th/9th June was delayed with no date currently agreed as to when it will take place
- There is a Councillor Workshop on 29th August to which both MH and LC would be present as well as representatives from the group comprising of the Holybourne Village Association (HVA)/Save Windmill Hill Fields/Alton Society/ACAN + others. The objective of the workshop was to be an interaction session to allow Councillors to engage with the representative group, the Steering Group Chair and its Consultant and once satisfied of their understanding and that all questions arising had been answered, the Councillors would then go into their workshop session to discuss the Town Councils position
- The Draft ANP will be on the Full Council Agenda for the 4th September meeting and this meeting would be held at the Assembly Rooms.
- MH confirmed that 4 other NP have been submitted to EHDC with no allocations included, Liss & Bramdean being the latest to submit theirs.

2.2 In regard to the Local Plan, indications are that given the uplift in numbers following the Governments position and the revised standard methodology on house building:

- EHDC is looking at an increase of some 499 per annum (up from 575 to 1,074),
- EHDC had written to Angela Rayner regarding the increase in numbers and that it was an unfair burden given that 57% of the region was within the National Park leaving 43% of the area to accommodate the numbers. There will be more emphasis meaning the local housing need requirement is mandatory.
- The responses received from the Call for Brownfield sites had highlighted limited opportunities sufficient to fill the larger numbers being required.
- Alton remains as the only Tier 1 settlement in the District at this time although it remains to be determined as to whether other towns would be afforded the same designation Alton is the largest settlement in the Local Plan area, with the most facilities and services, and therefore it is likely to mean that more home would be required.
- Reiterated that Alton Town Council had submitted a strong rejection of the inclusion of Neatham Down in the Local Plan.

2.3 EHDC had received a response from the approach for KC opinion on challenging the standard methodology at the end of July – the standard methodology was sound.

2.4 There is no update from EHDC at this time as to whether it will need to re-run its Reg 18 although anticipated but the Government has allowed more time for Local Plans submissions therefore:

- The current Neighbourhood Plan is still valid until 2026 and gives some protection, although in the planning industry, expert opinion suggests that whilst it is still included in the NPFF consultation which is out for responses, this may well be an error and we await the outcome.
- Local Plan – EHDC does not have a 5 year land supply and applications submitted will be assessed on tilted balance.
- The Government has already indicated its desire to build new towns and a report in the Sunday Times (last week) suggested that the M3 Corridor between Winchester-Basingstoke was on the list noting this took in the A31.
- The Town Centre Masterplan is an annex to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan
- The Transport Strategy (as published as part of the NP 1 definition process) only 2 of the junctions proposed have been delivered in Alton and 5 are still on the waiting list!

2.5 MH confirmed that the Consultants Draft Site Assessment Report and the updated SEA are published on the Town Council's website under Neighbourhood Plan/ANP3

<https://www.alton.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

2.6 Acknowledged the great work that the group had already done .

3. Review of Housing Allocation Approach and Draft Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 To be determined by Alton Town Council at their Full Council meeting on 4th September. All documentation and supporting material has been published. The version of the Draft Plan contains Full Allocation to go forward to Reg 14 Consultation.

4. Site Allocations

Completed.

5. Confirmation of Policies

Completed.

6. Update on Public Engagement/Communications & Next steps in the Project Plan

6.1 All agreed that whilst there is no update to the previously published project plan, strong communication will be required for the Reg 14 Consultation if it is given the green light to proceed.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 The group discussed the next steps as to whether a phased approach will be required i.e. (i) a Neighbourhood Plan without allocation – does not prevent forward momentum in reviewing and (ii) it may well require a group to be set up looking at the Town Centre Masterplan and looking at NDO's – a 2 parallel approach! The general consensus was that all aspects considered, it would be best to continue with the group recommended non-housing allocation option as a way forward to Regulation 14 consultations at this time.

8. Next Meeting of the Steering Group

The next meeting has been scheduled **MONDAY 9th SEPTEMBER at 1.30 p.m.** – meeting invite already issued.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 p.m.