

Minutes of the meeting of Hungerford NP project team held on Wednesday 24th April 2024, 7pm in the Community Room, Fire Station.

Present – Cllr Richard Hudson (RH), Cllr Helen Simpson (HS), Chris Scorey (CS), Cllr Jerry Keates (JK), John Ryder (JR), Cllr James Cole (JC), and Town Clerk (TC)

1. **Note apologies** – Cllr Keith Carlson (KC), Cllr Alistair Fyfe (AF), Cllr Claire Winser (CW). Also, Denise Gaines, who is stepping down from the committee due to other commitments.
2. **Agree minutes of 6th March 2024** – JK proposed the minutes, seconded by HS, all in favour. We are waiting for a response from our solicitor, reference the Marsh Lane Allotments letter. Dates are awaited from West Berks Council (WBC) for our timetable. Other actions are complete.

3. **Response from Consultation (now closed)** – We received around 100 responses to the consultation and a lengthy (but incomplete) response from WBC. All the comments have been tabled in a spreadsheet and sent to our consultant.

It was noted that little of our Draft NDP has statutory status, and many points are non-policy actions. It is therefore important to focus on the housing sites and land use. Other legislation such as National building regulations will deal with requirements for the environment, Biodiversity net gain is covered under the Environmental Act etc.

WBC has suggested we take our time with progressing the plan possibly to tie in with the delays on the WBC Local Plan.

ACTION: Speak to DG to find out if this is the reason.

We are still waiting for some responses from WBC, notably from Highways and Drainage.

ACTION: TC to chase WBC for their outstanding responses.

ACTION: TC to request WBC send their response in word format, rather than pdf, so we can add a column for our comments.

ACTION: WBC's response needs answering point by point. It was agreed CS would comment first and circulate to all team members for feedback.

ACTION: As the comments need to be read alongside the draft NDP the Clerk will print hard copies of the draft NDP for everyone who needs one, along with copies of the WBC response. Amendments to the draft NDP can be shown as tracked changes.

ACTION: TC to check how much more NDP budget is available.

WBC are implying that some areas are missing in the plan, more conservation work is required and some changes to the text are needed. It was noted that Eddington is included in the settlement boundary of Hungerford. We could include a list of areas such as SSSIs and what is done to protect the land. Improving the tow path for cycling is difficult as it is protected. It was noted that cycling on Freemans Marsh and the Common is not permitted which is the landowner's choice.

The spreadsheet tabling all the public and WBC responses was viewed by all on the large screen. Our consultant had included his comments and highlighted using purple text some questions he would like the NDP team to feedback on. Each point was then looked at individually.

- Is there an alternative vehicle access to the Smitham Bridge Site. No this is not feasible.
- Cycle Routes. We could show NCN4 and include info on Sustrans generally.
- Local Green Spaces. Most are owned by WBC or Canal & River Trust. It was queried that HUNG8 should not be called a LGS as that has a specific designation.

ACTION: Obtain guidance and check what the criteria are for a LGS and what protection there is without it. Should all playgrounds be designated as LGS?

ACTION: RH to speak to our consultant to request he summarizes all the comments received from the consultation so that we can make this information available to the public. This will include the areas that responded.

It was noted that the lower part of Smitham Bridge Road site is not being built on and there is no flood risk on the part that has been identified for housing. It was added that there is a monitoring station near the bridge which will contain historical records. That evidence base can be used to prove there have been no flooding issues.

ACTION: CS will circulate the link for the monitoring station to all.

4. Review the timeline.

We are still waiting to hear further from WBC. We can't respond to them until we receive all their comments.

The next step is for WBC to conduct a 6-week public consultation on the amended plan (Regulation 16). Following this the plan will go to examination and be looked at by an inspector, before going to Referendum.

5. **Any other correspondence** – One response was received several weeks after the end of the consultation. The respondent been advised they will have the opportunity to comment during the next public consultation (Reg 16).
6. **Next meeting date** – Wednesday 29th May 2024, 7pm. Fire Station Community Room.

Meeting finished at 8.30pm