

Report of the Chair to the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Steering Committee
Tuesday 26th February 2019

This report is very much an up, date on where we are now in the process of the NP and then some issues we should consider moving forward

AECOM are moving forward with the SEA and are still on track to complete by the end of March, as yet they have asked for some additional information which Roger supplied and he also sent them latest version of the NP obtained from Gary Kirk. They are focusing on Historic England's concerns and have not indicated that they are likely to extend beyond that. We will have to wait and see what the consultation period brings.

HBBC have been working on improving their procedures and the way they work with NP groups, as we are aware there are the statutory requirements and the actions required to reach referendum, whilst some of the timings are prescribed, the way in which the overall schedule is set has been looked at and refined, with the resulting Indicative timetable personalised to Newbold Verdon being set.

We have been asking about the need for a purdah period and the planning department have confirmed this with their legal team and it's there to stay.

Following the timetable set by HBBC themselves, we are due for referendum by December 19.

Ed Walsh and myself had a meeting with HBBC planning department, Miriam Surtees and Brian Sutton. Nicola Smith the Acting Head of Planning was very positive regarding the NP process and was keen to move the process along and work with us to make the it as smooth and straightforward as possible.

Consideration must be given to our response to the ongoing situation with the NP and any Planning Applications that may be put in before the NP is completed. The issues that this could give rise to are

Should we engage with any developers or Landowners before the NP has gone to referendum?

If we do have any meetings to what end?

Are there any legal or procedural pitfalls to be aware of?

As it stands at this time,

During our meeting with the HBBC they we clear that there were no Planning applications from any developers in regards to Newbold Verdon

Ed has had contact with Max Whitehead from Bloors who have indicated they are likely to put in a planning application after the SEA has been completed. They would like to have contact both the NP group and the PC to move forward with any development, to work in line with the NP.

Gary Kirk and the HBBC have both said that having a positive relationship with the preferred developer is not only acceptable but makes good sense, we need to ensure that we do this in the correct manner.

Roger has raise the issue with his thoughts on a way forward I have included this at the end of this report.

The HBBC have an ongoing process of information gathering to form the new Borough wide plans and it feels very like the NP is falling behind, however all those we have spoken to feel this is whilst

an uncomfortable position to be in, the NP will still hold the influence needed to make it very much a worth while endeavour.

From Roger

Doctors Surgery (and other infrastructure matters)

I also feel that any discussions with Bloors about the housing development that did not include all of the supporting expectations especially around that of the surgery could lead these crucial infrastructure elements potentially side-lined when in fact they should be of equal weighting.

Possible Solutions

If, as is possible, Bloors decide to move along with an application prior to the referendum, could the developers and landowner be invited to make representations to the Parish Council to view their plans and to make comments. It may also be possible for this to be widened out at some later stage to the general public.

This would separate the process entirely from the neighbourhood plan but would allow things to progress at a rate agreeable to the developers and, provided the PC believed the other issues of infrastructure were being addressed, it would be sympathetic to the desires of the neighbourhood plan.

Obviously, members of the PC overlap in their role as NP members it would therefore mean that whoever met with Bloors wearing these two hats would be fully aware of the NP expectations. For balance and a different perspective, other parish councillors who have not been part of the NP may well add value to these discussions, which should be minuted and for public record.

Given that Ed and Heather are talking to HBBC tomorrow, could this scenario be raised with them to see what they think and what implications there might be. I have also ccd Gary into this email for his comments.

I think this is a solution that would not compromise the NP process, whilst at the same time it would allow for input into Bloors deliberations.

Sometime later down the line it could then be possible for the PC and the developers to invite residents to consider any proposals whilst avoiding any conflict with the NP .

Regards,

Roger

1. Actions Required to achieve a Referendum

Action

By When and Why

1. Complete the re-drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan, in response to Reg 14 comments

This could be ready by the end of October/early November. (Completed)

2. Completion of the SEA

This is likely to take until the new year, possibly March. An application for technical support can take up to 10 weeks. The length of time the SEA takes to complete is dependent on the scope of the assessment; a limited assessment - just the Historic Environment limited to one development site - will take the shortest time.

3. Final redrafting of the plan in the light of the SEA, if necessary

This may take very little time, it may take longer. It all depends on the findings of the SEA and the implications for the plan. We can shorten this process by updating parts of the NP as the SEA emerges.

4. Submission to HBBC

This may well be April 2019, after the NP has been fully updated following the SEA

5. HBBC undertake final consultation

Another 8 week period. Before HBBC send the NP out for consultation they complete a validation check that the right documents have been included and arrange for printing the Plan and promotion of where the plan can be read.

6. Examiner Appointed and undertakes his/her work

How long an examiner takes is very hard to determine, it is usually an average of two months.

7. HBBC proceed to referendum

HBBC to arrange a referendum within the statutory requirement of 56 working days from receiving the examiner's approval. Best outcome before end of autumn (could be sooner).

2. HBBC Developments

Hinckley and Bosworth have made two decisions that may have a positive impact on the timescale for getting to referendum. Firstly, they have changed their constitution in order to speed up the scrutiny and ratification of plans (moving from over two months to less than 6 weeks). Secondly, they have decided that it is possible to hold referenda at the same time as the District Council elections. The first decision may be more helpful than the second to us and we may now be talking late summer rather than mid-autumn.

3. Changes within our Committee

It has been indicated in no uncertain terms by me, Tim and Ed, that the current leadership structure is far from desirable. There needs to be a rethink about the way the Committee works and who leads that work.

You will see from the actions above that the main thrust for us now will be achieving the SEA and then getting back to submitting the revised plan to Hinckley, who will, in effect, take it on from there. Obviously, there will need to be communications with HBBC and possibly the examiner, but not much else.

So, what do we do whilst waiting for the SEA to be completed and whilst Reg 15, 16 are undertaken?

This is where the changes in the committee structure come in.

Firstly, it is best if only a relatively small group retain the Neighbourhood Plan brief and drive forward Actions 2-7. This is where a new chair of the Committee would take control but supported by Tim, Ed and myself. See agenda item 5.

4. Community Actions

The delay in our achieving a referendum actually presents us with an opportunity to begin to address some of the Community Actions identified in the neighbourhood plan. These, as you know, stand outside the Plan in that they are not policies which require planning permission. We can therefore get on with them, or at least some, in the coming months. It will also mean that we can look to develop a different relationship with the parish council, whereby it takes responsibility for the neighbourhood plan.

You will see from the attached agenda (item 6) that part of our meeting on Monday will be to consider how we might go about doing this and what the implications are likely to be for how we as a group function in the future, and how the parish council responds to the neighbourhood plan.

5. Funding

There is likely to be accost for consultancy advice during the SEA. YourLocale estimate £1,500 should be enough. We can apply for this funding through the Big Lottery Fund.