



**Minutes of a Special meeting of The Hook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Hook Parish Council Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 19.00 hrs Bartley, Hook Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN**

**Present:**

**D Davies NPSG/HPC  
E Fordham HPC  
J Orchard NPSG/HPC  
C Terrey HPC  
J Bonnin NPSG/HPC  
A Yates HPC  
J Worlock NPSG/Chair HPC  
R Cowell HPC  
Martin Whittaker NPSG  
Anne Atkins NPSG/ EO HPC  
Sue Mesher NPSG  
Sandra Smith NPSG  
Brian Birchfield (NPSG District Councillor)7:50  
Rob Leeson (District Councillor)  
Jonathan Glen (County Councillor)  
Janet West NPSG  
Barry Deller NPSG  
Annalie Hadfield AO HPC  
Christine Randall NPSG/ Minutes  
Mark Hughes (AECOM) – technical support**

**18.01 Welcome and Introductions**

Councillor Orchard welcomed the attendees and explained that the meeting was called to brief all of the Parish Councillors, the District Councillors and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the content of the material to be presented to the residents at the consultation to be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Councillor Orchard introduced Mark Hughes who was employed by AECOM as a sub-consultant to Locality/DCLG to provide independent technical advice to the NPSG. Mark's brief was to prepare a masterplan to influence the future developments within the village centre and Mark explained the findings of his study and the proposals that which would form part of the draft Neighbourhood Plan to be shown to residents at the consultation.

District Councillor Leeson informed the meeting that the Reg 19 consultation starts 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

**18.02 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Paul Clewitt, Hook LHS, J Burke HPC, S Hinton HPC, Ranil Jayawardena MP, Angelo Arulchelvam NPSG and Mike Morris (District Councillor)

### **18.03 Presentation by Mark Hughes Technical Support AECOM on the proposed Masterplan for Hook Commercial Centre**

The presentation by Mark Hughes illustrated the various built form and environmental issues that have been identified within the proposed boundary that will comprise the Hook Village Centre. He then explained the reasoning behind the proposed Vision for how the Village Centre should be encouraged and promoted to regenerate over time. The residents will be encouraged to comment on this draft Vision and contribute to a final "Masterplan" which will form an integral component of the Neighbourhood Plan and hence influence all future development within this proposed boundary.

Mark illustrated that the regeneration of the Village Centre is so pivotal to Hook by showing the first slide with almost all the SHLAA sites that may come forward for development in future years. There is likely to be development pressure on the Village, in addition to permitted development pressure. It is imperative to strengthen the commercial and community services related activity in the village centre and there could be competition from a new settlement at Murrell Green if this potential development comes forward. There is an excellent opportunity for re-generation of the Village Centre as further services will be required by the increase in population. The initial development proposals will enhance and strengthen the existing village centre and the more strategic plans could include a reduction of traffic volume through the centre which could make an opportunity for better relationship between traffic and people movements that would promote retail related activity.

The second slide illustrated the detailed issues with the current Village Centre. Mark talked about his impressions of the current Village which may be different from how others see the Village. Mark observed traffic congestion and a number of buildings that do not contribute to the townscape. At various points the façade of the building wanders back and forward with a mix of uses. Mark would have expected to see a lot more retail outlets, public services and restaurants and noticed that there is a lack of focus within the village centre. The Centre appears congested and tired with only the villages mosaic of any real interest in the existing street scene and that is not readily apparent to a visitor. There is some open space but this is not attractive. There are some buildings that if meshed better with the adjacent buildings could result in a more coherent street scene. There is an opportunity, if the existing buildings could be demolished and replaced, for the area occupied by Grand Parade to become a village square. A space to congregate would result and include provision for a market square that would bring additional footfall and make the surrounding retail outlets mutually supportive.

The regeneration could be viewed as a series of large developments with an opportunity to treat curbs and pathways differently and make the village centre a place to go and stay.

Mark used a third slide to illustrate all of the regeneration opportunities that the Draft Masterplan could provide.

This could include creating a sense of place within the village square and improving the green spaces so they all knit together making Hook Centre a desirable destination.

Some of the proposals are short term, some medium term, some longer term.

The Masterplan is a blue print that will change over time, depending on what development opportunities come forward

The Masterplan is Intended to generate conversation and residents should be encouraged to comment as both good or bad comments welcomed.

Members then asked questions about what improvements are possible in the medium term. It was suggested that the Elms Road junction with the A30 should be made less prominent as that could improve the flow of traffic on the A30 at this junction and enable an improvement in the street scene.

Members questioned what was Mark asked to do to which he replied to study Hook Village and come up with a plan that identified a village centre, identify the issues and opportunities for a greater critical mass that was appropriate for a village centre and provide for a better space for attracting a high level of people activity.

Members asked what is the art of the possible? what can we do? Can we remove buildings?

Mark explained that there are several ways to make a start, tactical- tidy up planting policy by means of a good Neighbourhood Plan, strategic - identify a plot or several where developers can be encouraged to maximise both commercial opportunity and improvement of the built form, it is for the residents to decide what outcome they wish to see.

Mark advised Members that it will come to the stage when something has to happen due to the evident deterioration of several of the existing buildings. If we have a clear vision there is a better chance of achieving significant improvements when this comes forward.

District Councillor Leeson asked if the NPSG can write policies about the Village Centre. Mark replied that it is certainly possible and there is funding from Central Government available to make it happen, Mark will send details. When the policy is included in the NP and a line is drawn around the Village Centre this will give status to control any future development proposals. Residents can influence the masterplan and endorse it with the NP Policies that could include transport and access to services.

The Members who will be present at the consultation were encouraged to talk with residents and to encourage residents to scribble or put post it notes on the plan, i.e. encourage interaction.

Members asked about a possible time frame for implementation of the Masterplan this was suggested as between now and 2032.

**Actions for Mark:**

Mark will send some examples of policies implemented in other Neighbourhood Plan areas.

There is a booklet that details the approach taken to this draft masterplan and it will be available at the consultation.

There is some funding available for further work and Mark will send details.

**18.04 Preview of the Boards that will show the key parts of the draft Neighbourhood Plan document, to include objectives, policies and aims.**

Then slides were provided which showed the content of the boards to be used at the consultation. Discussion followed on the content and amendments were agreed and the revised content will be circulated to the NPSG tomorrow.

**18.05 Preview of the Boards that will provide a summary of the current draft Local Plan as it would relate to Hook**

District Councillor Leeson presented slides that contain the content of the boards to be shown to residents at the consultation. Councillor Leeson will be attending both consultations to answer any questions.

**18.06 Conclusions/actions**

**Councillor Orchard thanked all those attending and asked them to encourage residents to attend the two public consultations.**

**18.07 The meeting closed at: 9:25**