

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of virtual meeting held on 15th June, 2022 at 7.45pm

1. **Present**, Tom Burnham (TB) ,Cllr. Joan Buller (JB), Robin Oakley, Secretary (RO), Robin Kenworthy (RK). Cllr. Adele Sharp (AS)
2. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan (PR) (Away) Cllr. John Perry (JP)(Attending MBC meeting), Margaret Arger(MA) (Away).
3. **Minutes of Meeting held on 17th May, 2022:** Agreed.
4. **Matters arising.** None.
5. **Consideration of Policy E1 and Edge examples O1, O2 & O3.** It was noted that the heading referred to the 'long-term edge of the village' but RO pointed out that Staplehurst was no longer a village. After some discussion TB suggested that perhaps it would be better written as 'long term edge of the built up area'. It was pointed out that giving access to land on the perimeter of the built up area could be difficult as most of the land is privately owned. It was noted that there is a KCC footpath map which is displayed in Bell Lane Car Park and JB suggested that an updated version of that could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. RO pointed out that the railway is the northern boundary, Pinnock Lane and Frittenden Road are the south west and south east boundaries respectively, Jubilee Field is the Eastern boundary and Dickens Gate is the western boundary. After some discussion it was agreed that the Policy E1 and the Edge examples did not appear to require any amendment.
6. **Section 106 and CIL monies.** JB said that three pedestrian crossings were required in Headcorn Road, High Street, (opposite the Community Centre), and in Cranbrook Road. Some discussion took place concerning the proposed spending of nearly £700k from S.106 agreements for a revised road layout at the railway station, which would conflict with the new car park laid out in 2018. It was agreed that when the NP was drafted prior to its publication in 2016 the station area looked very different to what is there now, there having been considerable improvements to the car parks and the parking areas in front of the station where people await passengers coming off trains. Following the Covid pandemic the number of people using the station had decreased, as indicated by the fact that on 20 January 2020 there were 484 vehicles parked compared with 347 on 26 May 2022. Added to this a new Sainsburys Supermarket and Argos store have been built nearby. It was felt that the station improvements already carried out were sufficient although RK suggested that the steps leading down from the Maidstone Road into the North East corner of the original car park should be replaced with a ramp. However, it was noted that any ramp would need to be quite lengthy in order to give an acceptable gradient and would probably need to extend as far as the Platform 1 lift tower. It was agreed that there is a need for an information board to be provided outside the station, to inform arriving passengers as to the layout of Staplehurst, showing road names and locations of care homes and the Kent & Medway Adolescent Hospital, locations of bus stops and times of buses on Service 5, etc. TB noted that the junction of Station Approach and Lodge Road was used extensively by rail passengers from the Lime Trees and Dickens Gate estates and those arriving by buses which terminated at the station. He considered the junction to be hazardous for pedestrians, especially for children going to and from the station as they travelled to schools in Paddock Wood and Tonbridge, and suggested that a pedestrian crossing and improved footway might alleviate the problem. It was agreed that the Group would recommend to the Parish Council that it seeks a meeting with MBC, Kent H & T and Southeastern Railway and review the meeting notes from earlier meetings of the Station Development Group. It was noted that the Station and the railway is now owned by the Government and any expenditure of S.106 or CIL money on the station would benefit the Government, rather than Staplehurst's infrastructure for which it is intended. Subsequent to this meeting RK submitted a list of suggested items for payment by S.106 and CIL and these have been sent to all Group members. Subsequent to this meeting TB submitted a copy of a plan

for the station car park which was part of the S.106 agreement made with the developers of Dickens Gate and this has been forward to Group members.

7. Work objective for the next meeting.

It was agreed that Policies H1, 2, & 3 would form the work objective for the next meeting.

8. Any other business.

- (i) RO reported that at the Parish Council's Planning Committee meeting on 13th June, 2022 he had drawn attention to the following:-
Natural England have stated that if there is evidence of untreated sewage being discharged from treatment works into water courses, this could be a valid reason for refusing planning applications in the area served by the treatment works. Water discharged from the Staplehurst treatment works goes into the River Beult. After some discussion the planning committee decided to recommend to the Parish Council that it should send a 'Freedom of Information' request to Southern Water asking if there has been any discharge of untreated sewage into the River Beult, (which is a SSSI) over the last five years, and if so, the quantity discharged.
- (ii) RO reported that Ilke Homes, the developers of 100 new homes to be built on land at Lodge Road have been invited to attend the planning committee meeting on 4th July to present their plans and answer questions from the public. RO said that ideally there would be a list of questions prepared to cover such items as the form of heating, i.e. gas boilers or heat pumps, whether solar voltaic panels are to be fitted on all houses, details of vehicle charging points and rainwater harvesting.
AS said that she had already raised the matter of solar panels when Ilke met the council privately and was told that there would be solar panels fitted but they would not be connected to the supply network as the network did not have sufficient capacity to receive the solar generated power. After some discussion it was agreed that this appeared to go against Government policy and the Group agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that they send a 'Freedom of Information' request to UK Power Networks Ltd. to ask whether this is a fact and if so, when they propose reinforcing their infrastructure so that they and their customers can benefit from the generation of solar energy. A response is desirable before 4th July,2022.

9. Dates of future meetings are as follows:-

Wed. 27th July

Tues. 16th August

Tues. 20th September *

- It will be necessary for somebody else to stand in as Chairman as MA will not be available.

Robin Oakley 16th June, 2022