

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of virtual meeting held on 17th May, 2022 at 7.45pm

- 1. Present,** Margaret Arger, Chairman (MA), Cllr. Joan Buller (JB), Tom Burnham (TB) Robin Oakley, Secretary (RO), Colin Love (CL), Robin Kenworthy (RK). Cllr. John Perry (JP)
- 2. Apologies for absence:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan (PR) (Unwell) Cllr. Adele Sharp (AS) (Attending another meeting). MA announced that Colin Bowden has resigned from the Parish Council for health reasons but she has invited him to continue his membership of this Group.
- 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 20th April, 2022:** Agreed.
- 4. Matters arising.** At the previous meeting JB had offered to obtain details from MBC about the amounts of S.106 money being held in respect of housing developments in Staplehurst. The result of this enquiry is as follows:-

Planning Application 14/502010/OUT Hen & Duckhurst Farm (David Wilson Homes - Dickens Gate) £377,912.74 to be spent on improvements at Staplehurst Railway Station by 14 January 2031.

Planning Application 15/510186/FULL Land at Fishers Farm (Redrow) £297,257.61 to be spent on improvements at Staplehurst Railways Station and a new pedestrian crossing on the A229 Station Road between Station Approach and Fishers Road, currently with no 'Spend By Date'. The pedestrian crossing has been constructed and is in use.

From the foregoing it would appear that there is a total of £675,170.35 to be spent on the railway station which, since recent changes in control, appears to be owned and operated by the Department for Transport. This allocation of monies appears to have been made on the assumption that there would be a shopping area at the station, as shown on the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. However, the station car parking and turning area have already been the subject of major improvement and refurbishment at the expense of the railway authorities, and it has become clear that there is no need for a new shopping area at the station since the opening of Sainsburys supermarket.

It is understood that by law, the S.106 monies cannot be re-allocated to other projects and if so this would mean that the money would have to be returned to the developers and Staplehurst would lose the benefit of this money. JP said that he would take the matter up with Mr. Jarman at MBC to see if there is any way of preventing this loss of funds.

In the meantime group members agreed to prepare a list of things which could be paid for from S.106 monies. This is important in view of the proposal for construction of 100 new modular homes to be built at the end of Lodge Road which is likely to be submitted for planning approval by Ilke Homes in the near future. S.106 money from this project should be allocated to projects listed by the Parish Council.

MA suggested that the area outside the railway station needs an information board which gives information such as location of bus stops, a street map of Staplehurst etc., location of care homes and the Kent Adolescent Hospital.

A suggestion was made that the station car parks could benefit from planting of some trees and bushes, but it was pointed out that whilst this would improve the appearance of the car parks, it could affect the security of the area, especially for passengers returning to their cars in hours of darkness.

A suggestion was made that the parish council, with the permission of the railway company, should carry out a survey at the station, in (say) September, 2022 and March 2023, to discover the places from which passengers travel to use the station. The actual survey could be carried out by this group.

5. **Review of Neighbourhood Plan Policy GW1, Objectives O10 & O11, and policy E1.** Cllr. Sharp has contributed some minor wording additions and these will be added to the document by the Secretary.
6. **Consideration of Edge Examples O1, O2 & O3.** Some discussion took place on these examples but the general feeling was that they are alright as they are.
7. **Appointment of Chairman for the next meeting on 15th June.** As MA would not be available to chair this meeting, JP agreed to chair the meeting.
8. **Work objective for next meeting.** It was agreed that Policy E1 should be examined and any amendments discussed and agreed.
9. **Any other business.** It was noted that RK had had a successful meeting with Alan Smith of the Kent Messenger which had resulted in a very good article on the problems experienced by users of mobility scooters on footways and road crossings, published on May 12th, 2022.

MA made the point that MBC needs to be more pro-active in informing parishes when it is meeting housing targets.

CL made the point that we need to concentrate on policies and make extra access available to the countryside.

JB said that the Group needs to look into countryside access in Policy E1 at the next meeting and members were asked to look at E1 and come up with suggestions at the next meeting.

JP noted that MBC aim to build 1000 affordable homes at sites within the borough for local people and he had discovered that MBC had considered using the Tesco-owned site between the railway and George Street for this purpose. He said that he had pointed out that this would break the policy of 'no building North of the railway' and that the ground is very boggy and subject to flooding.

10. Dates of future meetings are as follows:-

Wed. 15th June

Wed. 27th July

Tues. 16th August

Tues. 20th September *

- The Chairman indicated that it will be necessary for somebody else to stand in as Chairman as she will not be available.

Robin Oakley 18th May, 2022