

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP  
June 7, 2017.

1. **Present:** Colin Love, Joan Buller, Robin Kenworthy, Tom Burnham, Gillian Smith  
John Kelly, Margaret Arger – Chairman.
2. **Apologies:** Robin Oakley, John Perry, Sam Lain-Rose.
3. **Membership of Group:** no change. Adele Sharp to be asked if she wishes to remain a member of the group.
4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** agreed for signing at next meeting.
5. **MBC Draft Plan:** following last meeting NPRG responses had been discussed at Parish Council and been agreed. Comments passed to MBC.

**6. Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Update:**

Joan Buller had circulated a resume of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan which is a consultation document and highlighted Section 5: Strategy Considerations Cross-boundary Strategic Planning and Duty to Cooperate

5.1 The Council is required to ensure that it has fully considered the implications of any cross-boundary strategic planning issues, including those relating to housing, infrastructure, employment and the environment. Examples of cross boundary issues might include:

- how the growth and development needs of the wider area can be accommodated
- the impact of London migration to the borough
- the impact of the A21 improvements
- ensuring adequate mitigation for the Ashdown Forest
- transport connections with Maidstone
- routing of heavy goods vehicles

The consultation document gives 5 options for the 12,960 houses Tunbridge Wells have decided as their housing number. A second call for sites has been made. Following discussion by NPRG it was agreed any development would add to usage of the A274/A229 going through to Maidstone. Would also impact on bus and rail services, education and health provision. It was recognized Tunbridge Wells had put a great deal of work into this, but had not demonstrated sufficient consideration on the impact any of the proposed options would have on the infrastructure of Cross-boundary Strategic Planning and Duty to Cooperate. The NPRG strongly supported the PC responding to the consultation on the cross boundary issue making the point about the impact of housing etc on neighbouring boroughs, particularly on traffic and education."

Joan Buller reported a meeting of the Station Redevelopment Group was to go ahead with representatives from MBC including Rob Jarman which would look towards economic refurbishment using 106 money from both Maidstone and possibly Tunbridge Wells. MBC

have already had a meeting with Network Rail and it was strongly viewed any redevelopment should be NP led. The land search ownership of land in the Station Approach/Lodge Road area had highlighted 15 approx. owners. It would also be clarified who owned the land between the railway and George Street, which has recently been fenced off.

Staplehurst Parish Council have a meeting with Kent Highways linking in with the Judicial Review at the Headcorn Road/Marden Road crossroads. Due to safety concerns for both pedestrian and road users, CCTV at the crossroads was suggested which would it was felt give definitive feedback. The Parish Council members of the NPRG agreed to raise this proposal with the Parish Council. It was also suggested the Parish Councils letter to MBC raising concerns about MBC Planning Committee's handling of the Traffic Lights and Fishers Farm proposals, together with MBC's response, should be made available to the Judicial Review. The Parish Council members of the NPRG agreed and would ask the Parish Clerk to arrange.

- 7. Future of Village Centre:** The Village Centre Management Committee had written to the Parish Council expressing their view of aiming on refurbishment of the building and their wish for the Youth Club site to be included. The Village Centre Redevelopment Group are to meet June 15, 2017. It was felt the Youth Club Committee should be involved in discussions as should the community in general in ascertaining their views for the site.
- 8. Gipsy and Traveller Sites:** Joan Buller and Tom Burnham raised their concerns regarding the lack of consistency from MBC Planning Committee on five recent applications where 2 sites were refused sighting policies and a further three were approved with no mention of the same policies. Discussion followed regarding Planning Committee abstentions. At this point John Perry and Sam Lain-Rose joined the meeting. The Parish Clerk has written expressing concern over the lack of consistency regarding recent applications and use/lack of policy and a copy to be handed to Kent Highways at their meeting to highlight same. John Perry and Sam Lain-Rose expressed the need to strengthen the Neighbourhood Plan regarding Gypsy and Traveller policy.
- 9. Railway Tavern:** back on the market for freehold or free of tie lease. Recent application refused by Planning Committee on grounds of being a community asset. Post Office have decided no changes at present to the Post Office site but this might change, especially if parking availability changed on the Railway Tavern site.
- 10. Sainsbury's:** MBC have a meeting with Sainsbury's in July. John Perry and Louise Brice to attend.
- 11. AOB:** rumour of Marks and Spencer's closing in Maidstone discussed and the detrimental effect this would have on the centre of the County Town.

**Meeting closed 9.43pm. Next meeting July 5, 2017.**

**M.A. Arger.**