

Summary Note of the Hailsham Area Action Plan Steering Group Informal Briefing held on 14 December 2015

Present:

Cllr Helen Wheeler	Arlington Parish Council
Paul Soane	Chamber of Commerce
Ellen Reith	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Lesley Collinson	Hailsham Town Council
Cllr Frank Berry	Hailsham Town Council
Phillip Mathews	Hailsham Forward
Cllr David White	Hellingly Parish Council
Cllr Bernie Goodwin	Polegate Town Council
Cllr Ann Newton	Wealden District Council (Chairman)
Cllr Nigel Coltman	Wealden District Council (Deputy Chairman)

Supported by:

Nigel Hannam	Wealden District Council
Marina Brigginsshaw	Wealden District Council

Apologies:

Hannah Packwood	Environment Agency
Murray King	Hailsham & Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Penny Shimmin	Team East Sussex (Local Enterprise Partnership)

The Steering Group overseeing the development of the Hailsham Area Action Plan met informally on 14 December to be briefed on the proposed approach and their role.

Following introductions by the Chairman, Cllr Ann Newton, and by those present, Nigel Hannam explained that the session was being held to bring the proposed steering group members together before initiating the formal meetings in the New Year. The briefing included: an introduction to the wider Wealden Local Plan and the purpose of the Area Action Plan; the proposed project and program approach; the role of the Steering Group and the key areas of work including initial views on what good outcomes would look like.

Nigel Hannam presented a set of slides covering these points.

The background and rationale to the Wealden Local Plan and the Issues, Options and Recommendations document was explained along with the preferred option for the proposed growth in and around Hailsham and the proposed approach in relation to infrastructure.

The basis of Area Action Plans generally was explained along with the proposed approach for the Hailsham Area Action Plan (HAAP). Namely to adopt a programme and project approach with a Steering Group (in project terms a Project Sponsor Group) who would:

- Oversee the development of the HAAP
- Represent their organisations and provide two way communications
- Promote the work of the HAAP
- Remove obstacles
- Have the authority to take decisions
- Contribute constructively to the process

- Support the wider communication activities
- Support the Working Groups
- Deliver the outcomes

In addition it was proposed there would be working groups for specific areas including:

- Community including residents
- Infrastructure
- Business including retail
- Environment
- Developers, land agents, consultants and designers
- Communications and engagement

This approach and the working groups outlined were generally accepted with discussion on the possible need for sub groups under Infrastructure given the size and breadth of this area, a recognition that infrastructure transport issues were much wider than the A27, a need for a clear understanding of the Community Infrastructure Levy funding stream, an awareness of flood, water in and water out aspects, that design issues were important to ensure the retention of the town's feel and soul, and that future proofing was important for example in relation to broadband availability and the smart cities approach. It was recognised that it was important to engage and work with developers if at all possible and to include in this land agents, consultants and designers.

It was identified that an important area would be to improve inequalities and the socio economic standing of Hailsham and the surrounding area through a variety of means including increasing skills and workplace wages for those living and working in the area and attracting and retaining young professionals.

The need to obtain young peoples views was recognised as key and the opportunity to involve the Hailsham Youth Council and the Community College 6th form was highlighted and endorsed.

A valuable discussion on what the ideal outcomes would be covered a range of areas:

- Overall the outcome has to be to make Hailsham and the surrounding area better, it must improve on the current position, there has to be a net benefit
- The housing must match the need including affordable housing and smaller housing for starter homes and to enable older people to downsize
- There should be suitable recreational and leisure facilities including green spaces
- The town centre should be vibrant and retain and build on the market town heritage, which will require good town centre access, appropriate sized units to attract key retailers alongside a more modern market facility, increased town centre residential and a resistance to out of town retail parks
- Brownfield sites should be developed as far as possible
- The provision of infrastructure is critical including transport, schools, health facilities, community and social facilities including for younger people
- As is the provision of quality employment which attracts a range of socio economic groups and improves local earnings and reduces out commuting
- High quality and speed broadband and mobile connections are important as is supporting home working and live work units and starter units

- A master planning approach is needed to ensure these elements come together and engaging with developers and more importantly land agents is important to ensure a successful implementation
- This will all need community involvement, for the community to feel that the councils have represented them in developing the plans, that infrastructure has been delivered and that promises have been fulfilled.

It was recognised that in relation to communications it was necessary to counteract rumour and misinformation, use a variety of channels of communication including hard copy and local press as well as electronic and social media and that all had a role to play in this.

The next steps were identified as:

- Developing the Steering Group terms of reference
- Producing a more detailed project plan / roadmap
- Developing a communications and engagement plan
- Agreeing a communication following the briefing
- Setting dates of future meetings
- Initiating the Working Groups
- Researching Area Action Plan and similar best practice

The need for community involvement and engagement was repeatedly stressed and this is one of the key areas for ongoing activity between now and the first formal meeting of the steering group and beyond.

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