

Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group

Minutes of meeting held by Zoom on 12th November 2020 at 7.30pm **DRAFT**

Present: Chris Merricks, Dave Ainslie, Christine Edwards, Dick Reeve, Mark Shaw, Margaret Simpson, Ron Simpson, Tony Streeter, Geoff Thompson, Howard Thompson, Janet Thompson
Also present was Peter Leppard (Town Clerk's office) and Clive Keble (from design:midlands).

1. **Apologies for absence:** These were received from Andrew Jenkins, Edward Baines and Pat Taylor.
2. **Declarations of interest:** There were none.
3. **Chair's opening statement:** Chris Merricks welcomed the continuing good progress being made.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020:** It was resolved unanimously to confirm these as a correct record.
5. **Public speaking:** No members of the public were present.
6. **Neighbourhood Planning Champion's update:** Ron Simpson spoke of a recent national meeting of Neighbourhood Planning Champions, which considered, with support from AECOM, how to strengthen the influence of Neighbourhood Plan content on local Planning Authorities' decision-making, especially as Development Control arms of Planning departments could sometimes be less aware of Neighbourhood Plans than their Policy colleagues in the same department.
7. **Consultancy support:** Clive Keble (design:midlands) spoke about his intended approach to the work for which he had been engaged by this Group. Among the points in the ensuing discussion were:
 - a. Is RCC's draft Local Plan robust enough? – CK will review it.
 - b. Uppingham has ambitions which exceed what the draft Local Plan proposes, and it is important that our Neighbourhood Plan highlights these.
 - c. Our proposed housing numbers may differ from those suggested in the draft Local Plan.
 - d. The effect of the proposed St George's development on A6003 traffic levels has not yet been thought through.
 - e. Options for safeguarding a possible bypass route were discussed.
 - f. Station Rd is an important employment location, needing to be protected and enhanced.
 - g. The rationale deployed to assess formally the submissions in response to the Call for Sites must be consistent and fair, developed in advance, and documented.
 - h. Some items in the existing Neighbourhood Plan in the general text need to be additionally written into the Policies, without which they have no force.
 - i. The optimal time to undertake a health-check of policies is pre our Plan's submission, rather than now.
 - j. CK will speak with the sub-group chairs individually in around 2 weeks' time to review outputs so far.
8. **Updates from sub-groups:**
 - a. **Economy:** Ron Simpson explained that the sub-group is continuing to collect and update information. In particular, it has recently re-engaged with businesses to provoke their further interest. Ron also mentioned the importance of including improved broadband in the sub-group's deliberations.
 - b. **Housing:** David Ainslie noted that the Call for Sites has been published, closing on 31 December. (At December's NPAG meeting, we should review whether any reminders need to be sent re the Call for Sites.) There is also a desire to review the restriction in the current Neighbourhood Plan on 1-bedroom social housing.
 - c. **Environment:** Miranda Jones will again be reminded to circulate an update from this sub-group.
 - d. **Transport & Amenities:** The first meeting of these now-merged sub-groups has yet to be held; Howard Thompson undertook to call one.
9. **The Elms:** There is a newly-formed Elms Residents' Association. It was resolved unanimously to recommend to the full Town Council that this Association be invited to have a representative as a member of NPAG.
10. **Meetings attendance:** It was noted that we are now reaching the most important stage of NPAG's work on Plan revision, and that lack of full attendance at NPAG, apparent over the last few meetings, will impede full consideration of the issues. **All NPAG members are particularly asked to attend the next meeting.**
11. **Date of next meeting:** This was agreed to be on Thursday 17 December at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.