Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Forum *DRAFT No.1 - 16/01/2024*

Notes of Steering Group Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024.

Held at the Blackbridge Community Centre, Horsham.

Attendees : Trudie Mitchell, Diane Sumpter, Ruth Fletcher, Morag Warrack, Francis Vernon, John White, Ron Bates and Malcolm Gilbert attended as an observer.

Apologies were received from - John Steele, Andrew Cooke, Sue Brundish & Graham Sitton.

The discussion started at 7.30 pm

1.0 Welcome

1,1 - Ron Bates opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and apologised on behalf of John Steele who is unwell and that Ron Bates will chair the meeting. Ron Bates handed out a revised agenda for the meeting.

2.0 Notes of Last Meeting.

2.1 - The notes of the meeting held on the 24th October 2023 were approved by all present, with one correction in Note 3.1 - Tim Morris should be Tim Thomas.

3.0 Treasurer's Report

3.1 - Diane Sumpter reported that it was most likely that the Special Charge distributed by Samatha Wilson of HDC Finance in April 2024, Blueprint will receive £2000 to be used to assist with the Blueprint running costs. This money when received will be deposited in the Blueprint General Account.

4.0 Governance process for handling CIL

4.1 - It was hoped for a resolution by the end of September 2023 but no information has been received. John Steele contacted John Milne at the beginning of 2024. John Milne has agreed to find out what progress has been made and let John Steele know the outcome.

4.2 - Trudie Mitchell said that at the forthcoming quarterly Neighbourhood Council meeting it is hoped that the CIL procedures will be made known.

5.0 Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023

5.1 - The Regeneration act 2023 was enacted at the end of 2023. It is likely that the changes within the Act will not have any immediate effect so we should carry on and expect CIL to be sorted out as before.

5.2 - The NPPF is currently advisory but in the future will be statutory.

6.0 Horsham District Local Plan Reg.19 Consultation

6.1 - The Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation period is from 19th January to 1st March 2024.

6.2 - It was agreed that Blueprint should make comments on the proposed Local Plan and that Steering Group members should take time to read the content of the document particularly for the unparished area of Horsham. With regards to comments the Government Inspector is only looking for a Local Plan that is sound, not new ideas.

6.3 - Comments should be forwarded to John Steele who has agreed to collate these into one response from Blueprint for discussion at our next meeting on the 12th February 2024.

7.00 Update from HTCP

7.1 - Ron Bates reported that he had recently talked with the Rookwood Golf Course management who confirmed that discussions with HDC were still progressing and are positive. Ruth Fletcher from her knowledge confirmed this to be so..

8.0 Update on Horsham Bid

8.1 - An email from Horsham Bid was distributed to all Steering Group members on 05.01.2024.

8.2 - Following discussion it was agreed to invite Rachel Noel from Horsham Bid to a future

Blueprint Steering Group meeting to give an update on progress.

9.0 New Blueprint Website

9.1 - John White explained that the contact Blueprint email address will be :- secretary@horshamblueprint.org

9.2 - John White confirmed that the Blueprint website has been set up using 'hostPresto' at a lump sum cost of £50.00 per year. The website address - horshamblueprint.org

9.3 - John White will talk with Andrew Cooke on the practicalities of extracting the Blueprint website from Andrew Cooke to John White.

9.4 - John White stated that an access password needs to be agreed. Ron Bates said he will ask John Steele, as Chairman, to propose a password.

9.5 - John White confirmed that he is already putting Blueprint information on the website. As the information content increases additional separate pages can be added for specific information such as Blueprint Letters on Planning matters.

9.6 - Discussion took place regarding adding the dates of future Blueprint Steering Group meetings in advance to give the opportunity for residents of Denne, Trafalgar and Forest to attend meetings.

9.7 - Discussion took place about including information on Blueprint Steering Group members on the Blueprint website. It was unanimously agreed that only name and photograph should be included with no individual contact details. It was felt that the contact should be made through the secretary.

10.0 Update on Neighbourhood Plan Non Policy Actions

10.1 - Safer and more appealing streets for pedestrians and cyclists (HDCF)

10.1.1 - Francis Vernon had previously issued to all Blueprint Steering Group members via email a proposal - 'Make London Road and its North Parade junction a place for people instead of cars.'

Discussion took place on the proposal and it was agreed by all present to support the proposal in principle and Francis Vernon was asked to contact Nigel Dennis, WSCC Councillor to seek his views on this proposal.

Francis Vernon was asked to develop this proposal further by providing costings and a business case and to keep the Steering Group members informed as information.

10.1.2 - Francis Vernon had previously issued to all Blueprint Steering Group members via email a proposal - 'Actively support proposals for an area-wide 20mph scheme in the Forest NC area.'

Discussion took place about the proposed 20mph speed limit contained within the area bounded by Harwood Road; Comptons Lane; St Leonards Road; Brighton Road and the Railway line. The proposal is that the current speed restrictions on these perimeter roads would remain as currently exist at 30mph or 40mph.

Discussion took place on the proposal and it was agreed by all present to support the proposal in principle and Francis Vernon was asked to follow up on what the process is to progress this proposal and also to find out what local residents think.

Diane Sumpter stated that Forest NC will support this proposal in principle and publicise it in their Newsletter and asked Francis Vernon to write the words for the Newsletter.

10.2 - Riverside Walk (Horsham Town Community Partnership)

10.2.1 - Riverside Walk extension through the Rookwood Golf Course discussions continue between Rookwood management and HDC.

10.2.2 - Diane Sumpter stated that if the Hornbrook farm gets the go ahead to develop housing on this site then it will be proposed that it hoped to include a new improved route for the Riverside Walk. The route will be extended through this site along the side of the stream at the bottom of the site at the rear of the houses in Dickens Way. This will be an improvement to the existing route through the existing housing estate.

10.3 - Housing Co-operative (Andrew Cooke)

10.3.1 - Andrew Cooke had previously issued to all Blueprint Steering Group members via email an update about his discussion with Peter Beckley of the North Horsham Community Land Trust. In the absence of Andrew Cooke this item will be included in the next meeting's agenda.

10.4 - Expand Local List (Horsham Society)

10.4.1 - Ron Bates stated that the work on the proposed expanded Local List of local historic buildings in Horsham will be concluded at the end of this week. Once this proposed Local List is concluded it will be issued to Sean Rix, Chief Conservation Officer for HDC for their comments by the end of January 2024. Following this review both HDC together with the Horsham Society will agree on the buildings to be included and a way forward which will include consultation with the building owners.

10.4.2 - Discussion took place regarding the out building at Chesworth Farm, which may soon be used by Men in Sheds, and should it be included as one of the buildings on the proposed update to the Local List. Malcolm Gilbert of the Horsham Society agreed to review this building.

10.5 - New Conservation Areas (Horsham Society)

10.5.1 - Horsham society will progress the work on new conservation areas in Horsham once work on the Local List is concluded.

10.5.2 - Discussion took place that Blueprint and the Neighbourhood Councils be kept informed as this work progresses and in whose name would any proposed new conservation area go forward to HDC. This will be discussed by the Horsham Society Executive on a way forward.

10.6 - Protect and designate twittens and other Paths (Horsham Society)

10.6.1 - Ron Bates reported that the work on twittens started by Nigel Friswell was well done. Unfortunately Nigel Friswell is suffering from ill health and has passed the information gained to Malcolm Willis of the Horsham Society to progress this work in the future. New volunteers are needed to help progress this work but none have come forward. Discussion took place as to a possible source for volunteers and it was suggested to contact the HDC Volunteer Section.

10.6.2 - Discussion took place on what are the necessary procedures to register twittens and hopefully secure them for future generations. The Neighbourhood Councils requested that the Horsham Society inform them of the work that is required.

10.6.3 - The Blueprint Steering Group members requested that Malcolm Willis be asked to join one of the steering group meetings in the future to talk of progress achieved on twittens and paths and an update on the work that still needs to be carried out.

10.7 - Protecting Horsham Park (Friends of Horsham Park)

10.7.1 - John Steele has been in contact with Sally Sanderson who has let it be known that in her discussions with HDC it has been agreed to give more time to the new administration for them to try and come forward with an alternative solution for protecting Horsham Park for future generations than those provided by those offered by 'Fields in Trust'. The purpose is to achieve robust protection for Horsham Park so that future administrations don't give it away or use it inappropriately.

10.7.2 - Ruth Fletcher requested that John Steele make contact to review the latest position.

10.8 - Protecting Chesworth Farm (Friends of Chesworth Farm)

10.8.1 - Diane Sumpter confirmed there have been discussions about Chesworth Farm being considered to be a nature reserve in the future but no decision has been made. Discussion took place that Blueprint is in a position to support such a proposal but not take the lead.

10.9 - Culture Activities (HDC)

10.9.1 - John Steele has been in correspondence with John Olson, HDC Cabinet member for Culture about the cultural strategy for Horsham in the coming year. John Steele asked for Blueprint to be consulted and offer support so that Blueprint does not come up with a separate strategy.

10.9.2 - Discussion took place and from this it was thought worthy that Blueprint should put forward its views on culture for the town. Morag Warrack put forward the Green Film Festival and further discussion identified that HAODS is in need of premises.

10.10 - Signage and Wayfinding

10.10.1 - Generally the signage and paving works are around the town centre and in particular Carfax and Bishopric. The proposed work planned to start in Carfax has been postponed for a time.

10.10.2 - John Steele has proposed a town trail where the direction signs are embedded in the pavement for people to navigate their way around the town. Ruth Fletcher asked that John Steele contact her with these ideas as consultants are already looking at proposals for the town.

10.11 - Public Realm improvements (Neighbourhood Councils)

10.11.1 - There is no additional news at this time other than 10.10 above.

10.12 - Problems with Littering

10.12.1 - There is a Facebook page named 'Keep Horsham Tidy' administered by Laura Thomas, wife of Tim Thomas. Recent information seems to indicate that no one is now leading this activity. Discussion took place and it was stated that HDC has a new website application to register overflowing bins / damaged bins. No further discussion took place on this matter.

11.0 - Any Other Business

11.1 - Ron Bates put forward Air Quality as a topic for the next meeting.

11.2 - Ron Bates put forward a Town Council as a topic for the next meeting.

12.0 Date of Next Meeting

12.1 - The next Blueprint Steering Group meeting will take place on Monday 12th February 2024 starting at 7.30pm and held in the Blackbridge Community Centre.

The meeting finished at 9.30pm.