**Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group**

**Notes of Meeting held on Friday 28 April 2017 in**

**Crowhurst Village Hall**

**Present:** Gareth Bright**,** Chris Davidson, Ros Day, Simon Leader, Martin White, Pat Buckle, 37 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Tracy Hoad, Sonia Plato, Ann Wilson, Willy Wilson

**Introduction**

This meeting focussed on the preliminary results of the Land Use Task Group’s initial assessment of the proposed sites put forward by residents at the four exhibitions, held at different times, in different locations, in the village during the week commencing 27 March 2017.

Martin White opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He explained that without a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Rother District Council (RDC) would make the final decisions on where development will take place. He stated that the Government were due to review the scheme in late 2018 and it was likely that future housing numbers would increase. The Community Infrastructure Levy arising out of any housing development was 5k for a 100m2. This would amount to around 50K-120K for the village depending on the number of affordable houses built and actual size of houses. The CIL can go towards Parish projects to improve facilities and infrastructure e.g a new village hall. Martin White also explained the legitimacy and reason the Task Group had undertaken this work, and the appointment of an independent planning consultant.

**Process**

The first survey, which included a question concerning possible sites, was undertaken in July 2016 and was delivered by the Street Champions to every household in the village to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to respond. The completed survey forms were collected by the Street Champions which resulted in a high response rate. In November 2016 a ‘Call for Sites’ survey was distributed by the Street Champions to enable residents to put forward potential sites for housing development, community use and green spaces. The Task Group listed, in no priority order, all 50 potential sites received. Each site was assessed with the independent planning consultant and the exhibitions gave residents full details of the potential sites, assessment outcomes and the strengths and weakness of each site. Every resident who attended the exhibition was handed a feedback form on which to record whether they agreed with the assessments or not and any other comments they wished to make on the potential sites. 509 forms were completed on 50 potential sites and the Task Group with the independent planning consultant, examined every one as to whether they were available, suitable (appropriate), viable (any issues) and whether the owner had put forward the site. There were disappointingly few comments about sites for community use or green spaces, most respondents being more concerned about housing development.

**Shortlisting**

The results of the analysis were recorded and also shown on a chart, and were presented at the meeting for participants to examine. These can also be found on the Neighbourhood Plan website. The Task Groups deliberations resulted in 5 sites being shortlisted as possible.

The 5 shortlisted sites were:

* Forewood Rise – Sites 3 and 41. Access was an issue.
* Combe Dell/Ashiana – Site 32. Issues concerning access and extension to sewerage system.
* Station Road, East side – Site 1. Issues around access, Network Rail ownership of the road and difficulties in contacting the organisation, flooding.
* Station Car Park Wooded Area – Site 11. Issues concerning Network Rail ownership, access, use and stability of Station Road.
* Area behind The Plough Public House – Sites 18, 34, 35. Access issues.

Each of the 5 sites has difficulties and would need further assessment. A survey would be distributed to the village to decide on their preferred sites and the number, size and style of dwellings on each. Martin White reminded the meeting that each site must have a minimum of 6 dwellings to make up the 20 required by RDC. No decisions have yet been taken about how many dwellings go where. Some general comments had been received and these will be taken into account during the further assessment exercise. As before Street Champions will personally deliver the forms and try to speak to every household. Martin White stated that in view of the Governments possible increase in housing numbers in the future, the Task Group were planning to have a reserve list of sites that could be put forward if Crowhurst was asked to provide more.

He emphasised that the Steering Group needed to bring residents along with it and produce a constructive plan that people can agree to. Your thoughts are driving our work; no decisions have yet been made.

**Feedback**

The overall feeling from the feedback so far is the importance of retaining the character of the village and that most people would rather have a few smaller sites spread around the village rather than one large site containing 20 dwellings.

**Policies**

A complex undertaking is writing policies to underpin the NP. These will cover many areas some of which have come out of previous consultations and we need to clarify these as best we can. These may include farmland protection (not selling farmhouses without the land), floodlighting, transport, safety, hydrology, landscape, environment and heritage, community facilities and infrastructure improvements, NP Reviews/Changes. Extra grant money has become available and will be used for further technical assessments, in the first instance to appoint a landscape architect who will look at views and the effects on developments.

There followed an open question and answer session covering such issues as the stability of Station Road, access to all sites, sewerage system, mains water sufficiency, Crowhurst Park and Upper Wilting sites which are both too far from the village. Discussions have already started with Crowhurst Park who is keen to strengthen links with the village.

**Timeline**

Following the next survey of the 5 sites;

* the Steering Group will draft a Neighbourhood Plan and present it to the Parish Council;
* the draft NP will be available to residents for a 6 week consultation
* Comments will be reviewed and any necessary changes to the Plan made;
* After presentation to the PC again, the final Plan will be sent to RDC who will make it available to residents and statutory bodies for a further 6 weeks consultation.
* After consultation, the Plan will be examined to ensure it meets regulations;
* after the end of the consultation and examination period and any amendments to the NP, a village referendum will take place, organised by RDC as to whether the Plan should be “adopted”.

The regulations state that 50% of those who vote must agree the final Plan.

RDC would like our plan by October 2017 so that it can be included in its own Local Plan for submission for Government approval. If RDC do not meet its deadline and we have a NP it is probable that our NP would stand as the Government is keen on neighbourhoods having plans. A NP gives us control of future development and the referendum will give us the decision for our village.

Martin White stated that contact details for questions/queries are on the website, and residents are encouraged to attend Parish Council meetings, NP Plan Group and Steering Group meetings if they have any questions or concerns.

The meeting expressed its thanks for the detailed, hard work and time given by those undertaking the NP on behalf of the village.

7. **Date of Next Meetings**

7.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Group**  – To be confirmed.

7.2 **Steering Group** – Monday 5 June 2017 at 7.30pm in Crowhurst Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Website: [www.crowhurstneighbourhoodplan.org](http://www.crowhurstneighbourhoodplan.org)

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