

MINUTES OF PUTLEY PARISH COUNCIL – NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP
MEETING

7.30pm, Wednesday 2nd August, 2017

Putley Village Hall, Putley

Present: K. Herbst (Chair (K He); J. Felton (JF); S. Foster (SF); J. Herbst (JH); K. Wollen (KW); G. Prins (GP); T. Beaumont (TB); S. Webster (SW); S. Chilcott (SC)

Also in attendance: D Nicholson; members of Putley Parish Council, namely T Green (Chair) TG; N. Rolinson (NR); J. Denman (JD); M. Hastilow; D. Daly (DD); six members of Putley Parish

1. Welcome and apologies

KHe welcomed members of Putley Parish Council and six members of Putley Parish. She said she was unclear on protocol if matters were to be put before this meeting for a vote. JD said it is the Steering Group's role to make recommendations to the Parish Council. TG agreed and said at this meeting he expected the Steering Group only to have voting rights.

Apologies for absence: E Groves (EG), R Denman (RD) and Kay Harris (KH)

2. Declarations of interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared

3. Minutes of the last meeting

These were accepted as a true record. KHe thanked RD in absentia for his very good notes of the discussion on Point 4: Putley Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP) Draft Housing Delivery Report

4. Draft Putley Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP) 2011-2031

4.1 Presentation by Dr. David Nicholson (DN) and 4.2 Discussion

KHe introduced DN who has been consulting with the Steering Group for more than a year, since the initial brief, which was issued in May 2016.

DN explained he is an independent planning consultant and most of his work comprises advising groups like Putley on the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. He presented slides of the headlines of the PNDP Consultation draft, which the following minutes supplement, particularly where points were discussed. References in italics are to slide titles.

Key issues in preparing the Plan

DN said these headline issues were taken from the original brief.

DN referenced the fact that the draft PNDP addresses the housing requirement set by the Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS). He explained that Herefordshire Council has an overarching plan which sets specific housing requirements.

Speaking to the second point "New housing to be guided by criteria – no site allocations", DN said this was an early view taken by the Parish Council, as an alternative to identifying specific areas of land for development. MH said the idea of being guided by criteria was to avoid settlement boundaries. KHe said there was no requirement in the original brief to DN or in subsequent

discussions with the Steering Group that indicated there should not be settlement boundaries.

NR said that when the Parish Council met with Samantha Banks in November 2015 they had been led to believe that the boundary of the village could be used without setting other settlement boundaries. TG said he felt there was need for clarification. The impression formed in November 2015 was that there could be a criteria based plan which meant there would be no need to pick specific development areas. He volunteered that in retrospect, at that stage, maybe the PC should have explored that expectation more thoroughly. JD said there may have been a lack of understanding on the part of the PC who weren't familiar with the language.

DN said the plan is made up of criteria; it is a criteria-based plan. It's a requirement of the LPCS that it has to be detailed where the main areas of settlement are within the overall parish. The group had concluded these were Putley Common and Putley Green. Herefordshire Council (HC) will expect to see these two settlements defined in some way and, being compact and well-defined, they lent themselves to use of a settlement boundary for this purpose. Whilst other parishes have NDPs without settlement boundaries, these were identified in the draft PNDP to give certainty as to where development can and cannot occur.

NR said that was not his understanding of the original intention. Putley is a scattered hamlet and it was intended the plan would be criteria based so the community can still be scattered.

JH said he understood that could still be the case. If there are farm buildings that people want to convert, having settlement boundaries won't prohibit this.

NR was concerned that having two defined areas might in practice hinder this. He cited an example where HC had insisted on development staying inside the settlement boundaries.

JH said he understood this was a case where sites had been allocated and it was not a criteria-based plan so it was not comparable.

The draft Plan and The policies

Speaking to these slides, DN advised that the plan, in line with usual practice, should have some statement around social, economic and environmental matters (sustainable development).

The draft plan flows from the proportionate evidence from the Open Days held, residents' survey and also DN has looked at the Parish Plan.

Whilst it doesn't repeat the LPCS those policies are referenced.

It adds local detail – mainly on housing.

It meets the minimum housing requirement with headroom.

Policy PUT1: Sustainable development

KHe asked why most of the policies, like this one, reference the LPCS first. DN said it is to show an understanding of the LPCS, conformity to it and commitment to meeting the housing requirements in the LPCS.

KHe read out an email from RD ref paras 3.10 and 3.24 in the full Consultation Draft V1 issued 240717 to the Steering Group, querying whether support for employment is a priority and what is meant by live/work units. DN said if there is concern about this, the place to tackle it is under Policy

PUT5 Economic development in Putley. RD had also expressed concern about mechanical workshops and heavy traffic. DN said that is addressed under Policy PUT8.

Policy PUT2: Development needs and requirements

This slide opened up further discussion about settlement boundaries. KHe read from Weston Beggard's NDP, an example which does not have a settlement boundary: *"7.12 The location of new residential development will need to be directed to the identified settlements within Weston Beggard and Shucknall..development proposals will be supported on sites that lie within or adjoining the main built form of these settlements....7.14 This criteria approach seeks to avoid isolated dwellings in the countryside and instead guide development proposals to sites which lie within and adjacent to the main built form of Weston Beggard and Shucknall."*

KHe said whilst solely criteria-based this is very close to what the draft PNDP is proposing.

JD said the critical wording is "adjacent to". TG said everyone accepts "adjacent to" makes sense. The idea that is contentious is drawing a line.

DN said there needs to be a settlement boundary or a reasonable alternative. An option is to dispense with the line and reword the policy and pick up the point about adjoining the main built form. But he said this would be trading certainty for flexibility. Most parishes when faced with this choice want a settlement boundary. TG asked what the risks of a more flexible approach are. DN said it leaves no cap on housing as some of the relatively larger fields could come forward for housing development.

MH asked for an explanation of the practical difference between a site allocation and very limited settlement boundaries. DN said a site allocation would identify a site for x amount of houses. The draft PNDP does not make site allocation, allowing open market proposals for houses to come forward. MH maintained there was still a lack of clarity.

KHe reiterated that settlement boundaries give the parish more control.

JH said there had been a misunderstanding that once the parish had met its requirement for a minimum 15 houses it did not have to agree to any more. As that is not the case, having a criteria based plan and using the Weston Beggard example of "adjacent to the main built form" risks multiple sites coming forward. This risk had not been previously understood.

MH asked what would be considered "disproportionate development". DN cited an example in Bartestree where the minimum target of 250 had already been met and an additional 150 was considered disproportionate.

(Post meeting note by DN: Bartestree's minimum growth target is 152 dwellings 2011-2031. At the time of the appeal referred to in October 2016, a supply of 146 houses had been identified, essentially meeting the target. The appeal proposal was for a further "up to" 100 dwellings. The Inspector found, and the Secretary of State agreed, that "significant weight should be given to the inappropriate level of growth the scale of the proposed development would impose on this settlement".)

KHe moved to vote on the matter of a settlement boundary but TG and JD said the meeting should first consider the draft in its entirety. GP added that the Steering Group had had extensive discussions on this point and took the view that having a tight line increased the Parish's control. He said the clear view of the Steering Group was that this was the safest course of action and that is what the Steering Group was recommending to the Parish Council.

There followed discussion about live/work accommodation. JD asked if such accommodation would be within the settlement boundary or elsewhere. DN replied it could either be within the settlement boundary or could be conversions. There is a risk associated with business failures, resulting in properties with for example, “very large garages”. KHe pointed out there is a disproportionate number of self-employed people in Putley. TG commented that there is a high incidence of business failure of self-employed people so a high likelihood of being left with “large garages”. GP pointed out that nationally people are known to use proposals for live/work accommodation cynically. DN agreed it is often seen as a way to get planning permission and so care is needed.

Table 2 Housing Delivery, supported by maps of Putley Green and Putley Common settlement boundaries

RD had commented by email that the figures in the table were too precise and may grow. TG asked what information was available about the stock of potential conversions of rural buildings within the parish to support the figure of 6 for rural area windfalls. DN said it was an estimate (extrapolated from the six that had already happened in six years). TG queried why the figure for total housing delivery was 22 when the minimum requirement is 15. MH was concerned that identifying housing delivery of 22 in the draft PNDP weakens any argument of disproportionality if a developer should seek a development that would bring the total above 15. She pointed out 22 is already 50 per cent more than the minimum requirement. DN said the number was intended to give headroom, allowing for changes which might arise through consultation.

KHe said the settlement boundaries would help restrict the number of possible houses anyway. JD asked whether 10 houses could be built within the settlement boundary. KHe replied there were two settlement boundaries – Putley Green and Putley Common so this was not unrealistic. JH suggested the number of new homes could be reduced from 10 to around 6 and that would still enable the minimum requirement to be met with some headroom.

Policy PUT5 Economic development in Putley

JD expressed concern that the support for rural tourism was too open. DN drew attention to the context that proposals will be supported if of a suitable scale. JD was concerned that scale is subjective and suggested DN should think about what further limits could be put in. DN said he would not recommend a limit but would try and tighten up the wording. JD said her concern was particularly over self-catering units which might be developed in existing buildings which could otherwise be used to meet housing requirements.

Policy PUT6 Communications and broadband

There was no discussion.

Policy PUT7 Natural and historic environment

DN said he had taken care not to duplicate the existing controls that govern many of Putley’s environmental and historic assets. SW welcomed the policy.

Policy PUT8 Building design and access

DN drew attention to point 4 “be capable of being safely accessed from the local road network without undue local environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated.” He said the need to mitigate noise impacts could be added in here. TG raised a concern about parking for new houses, given the narrow roads in Putley. DN said he would add in a requirement for provision for all parking for new housing development to be made off road. After discussion, there was general agreement

to leaving in the last paragraph about welcoming modern design approaches. This was not seen as incompatible with point 1 regarding the choice of traditional materials as traditional materials can be incorporated in a modern building.

Community

There was discussion around Policy PUT9: Renewable energy. Norman Stanier, present as a member of the public, explained that community-led renewable energy projects are bottom-up projects initiated by and for the community and could, for example, be something like solar panels on the roof of the village hall. He felt initiatives such as this should be encouraged. DN said this was reflected in the wording.

There was discussion around removing the first sentence: *“Proposals for renewable energy generation will be supported where it is shown that the individual and cumulative impacts on the natural and historic environment, amenity and highway safety are or can be made acceptable.”*

JD said this should be considered in relation to what other energy sources there are in the parish, where there are properties with no gas and a high dependency on oil.

The meeting agreed to leave this sentence in.

Discussion around Policy PUT10: Community facilities concerned why this was all linked to Putley Green. DN said he would change the wording of the first sentence to read: *“Proposals for the enhancement of community facilities, and for new provision which is accessible by a choice of transport modes, will be supported, particularly in and adjacent to Putley Green.”*

Next steps 1 and Next steps 2

There was no discussion. DN said the typical timescale, once the plan is approved and submitted to HC with the Consultation and Basic Conditions Statements, is 6 to 9 months. Thus if this stage is reached by March 2018, the plan could be adopted by the end of 2018.

5. What next?

5.1 The overall programme for the next months

KHe informed the meeting that, given the Parish Council is due to meet on 17th August 2017, she had given Karla Johnson of HC to understand that the draft would be sent to her w/c 21st August (for environmental assessment) with a view to it being returned by 6th September. This would give the Steering Group time to review the Environmental Report on 8th September and then it and the draft plan could be presented to the Parish Council for agreement at their meeting on 20th September. She said the Steering Group is also due to meet on 28th September to engineer how the community receives the draft and the process for them to reply and make comments.

KHe said she was concerned that not all points discussed at this meeting had been resolved. TG suggested a period of reflection and invited DN to attend the Parish Council meeting on 17th August where the draft PNDP is the only item on the agenda.

There was further discussion around reducing the housing delivery number for new build from 10 to 6. JD said she would be proposing to the Parish Council that, instead, the number of new houses is reduced by 2 and the number of windfalls by 2 on the basis of supporting small houses for families and young people rather than what are likely to be larger conversions. TB pointed out that as windfalls are an estimate they are out of the plan's control.

KHe put to the meeting the following: ***“That the Steering Group is happy for DN to proceed with this draft, with minor changes. That we recognise that the settlement boundaries have been left in and that there is a possibility of altering the housing delivery to 18 as opposed to 22 and that we leave that to the Parish Council to discuss.” This was agreed by the members of the Steering Group present, with no objections or abstentions.***

6. Housekeeping issues for the Steering Group

KHe said she is putting together a piece for the Putley Press to publicise the next meeting on 8th September. She expressed concern that the Steering Group had previously had no way of knowing what the Parish Council’s views on the Steering Group’s deliberations on the draft PNDP were. TG agreed to address this.

KHe also emphasised that there is a requirement under Regulation 14 for the draft PNDP to be put on the website and a need for someone to be responsible for receiving comments from the public. She was concerned that this needs to be done by November and the Parish website is not being kept up to date. TG confirmed that Jenny MacCrae has volunteered to act as webmaster, first to support the Parish Clerk in bringing the Parish Council information up to date and second to provide support to the Steering Group, before moving on to supporting parishioners with the rest of the website.

7. AOB

DN confirmed that he would produce a second version of the draft PNDP in advance of the Parish Council meeting and would attend that meeting on August 17th.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 8th September, 7.30pm, Putley Village Hall, Putley