

Minutes of the meeting of Hungerford 2036 project team held on Wednesday 22nd February 2023, 7pm in the Fire Station Community Room, Hungerford

Present – Denise Gaines (DG), Chris Scorey (CS), Cllr Richard Hudson (RH), Jon Shatford (JS), Steve Bickell (SB), Cllr Helen Simpson (HS), Cllr Jerry Keates (KC), Cllr Keith Carlson (KC), Town Clerk (TC) and John Ryder (JR).

1. **Note apologies** –, Cllr Claire Winser (CW), Cllr Ellie Yakar-Wells (EYW), Cllr Alistair Fyfe (AF),
2. **Agree minutes of 18th January 2023** – HS proposed the minutes, seconded by RH. One abstention.
3. **Update on actions from last meeting** - Navigus Planning has been appointed to carry out the site assessments from the second call for sites. They will require a licence to access OS maps to include in the consultation information to be submitted to various bodies. **ACTION:** KC to check and complete the draft licence for Navigus. All previous actions are complete or on this agenda.
4. **Navigus Planning - Progress on consultation work and site assessments** – DG talked through the progress with the site assessments. Feedback will be required from WBC highways and drainage, AONB, Thames Valley Environmental Research Centre, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust and Natural England. **ACTION:** TC to ask Navigus precisely what criteria is used to determine that a site would ‘not be developable within the next 15 years’. **ACTION:** TC to forward info to the 6 consultees once the maps determining the boundaries have been obtained. **ACTION:** TC to ask Navigus about the sites marked HUN24 and 25 on the draft map as H2036 are not aware of them.
5. **Review the timeline.** RH had produced a slightly altered timeline. He advised preparation of the draft NDP, and the evaluation of sites are scheduled to be completed by the end of March. At present we are on track however the latter could take longer. Navigus will continue to work on the NDP alongside doing the site assessments. DG advised H2036 are not a council body so decisions will not be affected by the pre-election period. The changes to the NPPF offer more protection of the AONB than previously.
6. **Enterprise units – J Ryder.** JR advised there are no new start up initiatives in Berkshire however Wilts, Somerset and Hants are more proactive. Wilts has an enterprise network ‘Castledown Enterprise Centre in Ludgershall near Tidworth. Those units are new build enabled through partnership funding however Hungerford could utilise an existing building. JR is setting up a meeting with the WBC economic development team and has been in touch with Hungerford Chamber of Commerce. It was suggested he also approaches Chris Boulton of Greenham Trust as they have offered support for similar initiatives, and Penny Post who have a local business directory. JR is interested in exploring circle trading locally. It was noted that there is an adequate supply already of land dedicated for Employment use. The inclusion of apprenticeship schemes was discussed of which the majority of training is government funded. **ACTION:** JR to continue to explore this topic with a view to including as an employment initiative in our NDP.
7. **Feedback from Town Strategy Meeting** – JK commented that WBC had failed to inform and organise the event and consultation effectively. Information from the meetings hasn’t been shared and key members were not invited. Landowners were not consulted about strategies involving their land. The questions asked in the consultation were not all relevant and although 784 responses to the survey were received only 62% were local. The suggestion of widening footpaths along the canal would need permission of surrounding landowners and could be restricted because of areas of SSSI and Common land. The strategy focused on the

town centre reaching from the Bear roundabout to Atherton roundabout but included the improvement of links to the town such as from the station. It was noted the Local Plan Review includes reference to the Town Strategies. **ACTION:** A zoom meeting has been called to discuss the shortcomings and will be held on Friday 3rd March with WBC. Four members of Town & Manor will join.

8. **Policy for high street/industrial areas** – DG explained there is concern over businesses in the town centre being converted to residential. In the Local Plan Review, SP22 is the policy dealing with town centres (see a couple of the relevant extracts from this policy below) and SP2 covers development in the AONB.

7.36 The policy encourages retail uses to be the focus of the primary shopping area, as defined on the Policies Map, however other appropriate Class E uses such as cafes will also be acceptable. Changes of use within the primary shopping area from Class E to other uses will only be permitted where they do not result in a disproportionate concentration of non-Class E units that would be harmful to the vitality of that centre.

7.37 The Council recognise the importance of providing a diverse range of uses within existing centres and will seek to retain and enhance existing town centre markets, where appropriate. The importance of residential development within a town centre is also recognised as adding vitality to centres, providing activity outside of normal business hours. However, residential that would result in the loss of ground floor retail space and would impact upon the vitality and viability of the centre will not be permitted.

ACTION: DG has reviewed the changes proposed in the LPR and will draft a response to the consultation.

ACTION: TC will circulate DG's response to H2036 for further comment and submit before the deadline of 4.30pm on Friday 3rd March 2023.

CS advised that Town & Manor has responded to the consultation. They broadly support it but found DM7 not sound. This addresses safeguarding an area for future expansion of the sewage works. T&M has suggested an alternative area that is more appropriate to the one allocated. **ACTION:** He will forward his response to DG for inclusion in H2036's response.

ACTION: Request HTC also respond to the consultation.

9. **Kennet & Avon Community Rail Partnership** – RH explained Kennet & Avon CRP are looking for support with their campaign to achieve an hourly service from Thatcham to Westbury with the addition of a station at Devises. They are putting in a bid for funding in March. H2036 expressed their support of including it in the NDP.
ACTION: RH to draft a letter of support for the approval of Full Council and will advise the CRP of H2036's support in the meantime.

10. **Consider applying for funding from Locality** – **ACTION:** TC to apply.

11. **Any other correspondence** - None

12. **Date of next meeting** - Tuesday 4th April 2023, 7pm Fire Station Community Room

Meeting closed 8.30pm.