

Emberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

(A committee of Emberton Parish Council)

Minutes of Meeting held virtually –17th November 2020

Present: Jason Bevan- Chairman
Joe Walker – Vice Chairman
Melanie Duncan
Colin Jamieson
Fred Markland

Chris Akrill – Town Planning Service

Karen Goss – Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for Absence were received from Virginia McTierney.
2. **Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda** - There were no Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda.
3. **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 20th October 2020** – The Minutes of the previous Meeting held on the 20th October 2020 were agreed. The clerk to provide the Minutes to the Chairman for signing at the next face to face meeting.
4. **Public comments, questions or representations** – There were no public present.
5. **Review of sites put forward**

School field - It was noted that some issues had arisen regarding sites since the last meeting. Melanie commented that Acorn Early Years Foundation had attended the parish council meeting on the 3rd November and had put forward a proposal for the school and the field and a meeting was scheduled with Simon Sims at MKC. Acorn Early Years wanted all of the site to make it viable and had stated that access to the preschool would be from the front of the building and there would be parking and access onto the field from the High Street for the holiday club. Fred stated that he had wanted to see more detail of the proposal which had been the suggestion from the parish council. Jason commented that it was clear from the proposal that there were two separate schemes which would probably exclude the site being put forward for development. It was noted that the Ward Councillors had not been made aware of the proposal by Acorn Early Years Foundation and whether there had been any form of tender process by MKC. Fred stated that there seemed to be enough woodland in Emberton with Emberton Park and Hollington Wood. Melanie commented that the field was sufficiently big enough to serve both the school and development. Joe responded that he was very supportive of a preschool but tying up the field did not help the neighbourhood plan. Jason asked if Acorn Early Years were aware of the size of the school field. It was noted that the school field was 0.8 hectares up to the playground area with an average of 25 houses to the hectare.

Chris commented that the whole of the field was required to spread out Acorn's business model and went on to comment that it would probably be busy during school times with working parents but might struggle during the holidays. It was noted that the difficulty the steering group had was that MKC had not put the site forward; Peter Beer stated that MKC would consider it if it had local support. A question was raised regarding a possible judicial review on the consultation process of closing the school. Chris responded that during a discussion with Peter Beer it was felt that a judicial review did not hold much weight and the deadline of September had passed. Fred stated that the federation might not know the legal position with the assets. Chris responded that the assets were to be used for educational purposes and any changes might cause issues with the covenant. Jason asked how long the approval for the proposal might be. Chris responded that he didn't think the preschool would require planning permission. Melanie commented that the development classes had now changed with schools moving from D1 to F1 and nurseries from D1 to E so there could be a change of use and there would probably need to be a change of use of the school field under Class F2. Chris responded that the nursery and school field would probably fall under the same class. Fred asked if the Ward Councillors could be asked to chase MKC. It was agreed that Peter Beer was the best contact. **Action: CA/JB** to contact Peter Beer.

Field 13 – Jason commented that the steering group had looked at Field 13 and the consensus was that it was not appropriate. It was noted that the previous Housing Needs Assessment had identified that 43 houses were required and there was now no need for development of that size with a revised HNA of 10 houses. Jason commented that if the settlement boundary was altered as per the discussion, this would naturally bring about windfall development together with the Institute site. Chris responded that this would be the easier option. Fred stated that he felt the steering group needed to be more proactive in order to fend off previously identified sites that might come forward again. Chris responded that by taking no allocation, the HNA target would be reached within 10 years. Fred responded that this was providing that development was in the right place.

6. **Agree changes to V6 of the Neighbourhood Plan** – Chris commented that he had looked at the settlement boundary and there was some scope to allow for incremental development. Chris shared the settlement boundary map on screen for the steering group. Melanie commented that there was a planning application for a new development at the end of Gravel Walk and it was noted that this was in open countryside and not the owner's garden. Chris stated that the same criteria would have to be applied to all gardens within the settlement boundary for transparency and fairness; there was also the conservation area and other constraints to consider. Joe stated that there was recently a planning application for a new development within the conservation area and he would have concerns regarding any development within the conservation area unless it was of good design and there was sufficient access. Chris commented that the steering group needed to have a robust methodology against any potential challenge; increasing the settlement boundary would be the way to go and would be more robust. Chris went on to state that unless MKC put forward the school site, it would be difficult to justify including it as the preferred site in the plan.

Jason asked about the time frames for the plan. Chris responded that there would probably be the referendum in May and the group needed to start thinking about launching some consultation on the revised plan somewhere around Christmas time.

If the group went down the incremental route of change, there would be far less opposition. Jason commented that MKC had a five year land supply so would not be looking for a huge allocation. Melanie asked if there was an option within the plan to include the Institute as a site and let people choose. Chris responded that he would like to include the Institute as a different policy. It was noted that the school field could not be included as a preferred site on the plan as MKC had not put it forward and this would not go down well with the examiner.

7. **Next steps** – **JB** and **CA** to speak to Peter Beer at MKC. **CA** to revise the settlement boundary and **ALL** to have a look at this. **CA** to revise the plan to include a policy on The Institute and windfall development. Melanie asked if the group needed to get advice from MKC regarding starting the consultation. **CA** to have a chat with David Blandamer at MKC. It was noted that it would take 2-3 weeks to get the revisions to the plan in place. Jason commented that prior to the next meeting, there would be a week or so to have a look and check the finished article. **Action: ALL** Fred asked Melanie to provide a report to the next parish council meeting. **Action: MD**
8. **Any other business** – Fred reported that Karen had been chasing MKC's conservation officer for an updated Conservation Area Statement and commented that this was required as a SPD for the neighbourhood plan to protect the conservation area. Chris responded that there was a similar issue in Ravenstone. Fred commented that the current document being used was the 1997 Conversation Statement review. Chris responded that if it reflected Plan:MK policy and national policy it would make it robust enough. Fred asked if this could be appended to the neighbourhood plan. Chris responded that it could be brought up to date and appended. **Action: FM** to share this with CA for inclusion in the plan. **Action: CA**
9. **Date of next virtual meeting** – Monday 14th December 2020 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 8pm

DRAFT