

NP Update Report – June 2019

On the 20th May SHDC made contact and advised Mrs Deborah McCann (the examiner) had decided to request an exploratory public meeting for Strete Neighbourhood Plan.

The objective of the meeting was to specifically explore in detail, with a representative of the Strete Neighbourhood Plan, South Hams District Council and a representative of the owner of Cox's Farm Field, issues arising from the plan in connection with the delivery of housing across the plan period.

A public notice was displayed in the village notice boards and on Strete website informing the exploratory meeting would take place at 2pm on Tuesday 11th of June 2019 at Strete Parish Hall.

The meeting opened with DM explaining the examination of the plan is to ensure it meets the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (introduced by Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011).

The exploratory meeting process is new and has been added to assist examiners in their role.

Mr Duncan Smith of SHDC was asked to comment on where Strete NP sat within the recently adopted Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.

DS confirmed there was no minimum target in the JLP for housing in the village although there was a recognised need for some housing. SHDC supported the decision made by the community of Strete to proceed with a NP that included a vision for housing.

R. Clark representing Strete NP was asked to comment on how Cox's Farm Field was determined to be the site for housing development.

RC explained that with a tight settlement boundary, as recommended by SHDC and Natural England, a site assessment determined that Cox's Farm Field is the only and most sustainable site to accommodate a viable housing development to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. Consultation with regulatory organisations to ensure all the necessary environmental and historical aspects of the site have been considered and included, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment Report that supports the plan.

Extensive discussions by Steering Group members to confirm and agree CFF was the preferred site for housing development was concluded before consultation with the community took place.

DM asked if consultation with the landowner had taken place.

RC confirmed Mr Charles Dixon of Strete Estate responded to a public Call for Sites advert in the local press offering two sites for development consideration in December 2016.

Initial correspondence culminated in a meeting with CD and members of the Steering Group for Strete NP in August 2017. CD expressed his concern at the way the group were delivering the NP without consultation with the landowner. In particular:-

- The size of the housing development
- Conditions to accompany a housing development – Car Park, Footpath & Open Space
- Principal Residency Requirement

These points were confirmed by CD in his comments to DM at the meeting.

Correspondence with CD continued through to October 2017 when CD informed the group that unless the conditions were removed from the NP the site would be withdrawn for development. RC informed CD of the SG's unanimous decision to retain the Principal Residency Policy. This resulted in no further dialogue or correspondence with Strete Estate. Following recommended changes to the plan that were subject to a Regulation 14 six-week Re-Consultation period, only response comments were received from CD.

DM concluded that the current impasse could only be resolved if the parties involved agreed to enter into discussions to address the concerns of each party. DS suggested an initial meeting be arranged to establish if suggested changes to policy wording could be proposed for consideration and possible acceptance.

CD explained his client had recently died and that the estate was in probate which could take several months to conclude. DM informed the meeting of the intention to suspend the examination of Strete NP for six months to provide an opportunity for all parties to meet and discuss the objection to the allocation of Cox's Farm Field for residential development in Strete NP. At the end of the six month period DM will consult on the progress made and consider whether to extend the period further or recommence the examination of the plan as submitted. DM closed the meeting at 4pm.