

Neighbourhood Planning Project Team

Meeting 10th February 2014

Next Steps: moving forward

The table below explores the main issues about which we have undertaken further consultation through the questionnaire (35 returned) and which were discussed/raised at the January Workshop (attended by 33 people).

There is an emerging consensus on most issues apart from **new housing development**, where opinion, as expressed in the Questionnaire returns, is almost equally divided. There is also less consensus on two other issues: whether we should create a **'local list'** of positive buildings and structures in our villages; and whether we should be doing more to promote **renewable energy**. Both of these issues achieve approximately two-thirds support in the Questionnaire responses, with one third opposing.

The more detailed analysis below provides an agenda of possible and actions and decisions to move forward to drafting policy proposals for the Plan. In some cases, further work or advice may be required.

Issue	Commentary	Action/Decision
<p>1 Design Guidance</p>	<p>Almost universal support for this from the Questionnaire responses (33 in favour and only 2 against). From the Workshop discussions, people would seem to favour a positive approach based on examples of what is good, rather than just listing what's not permitted, and an approach that does not rule out modern design. Some aspects of the Conservation Area status enjoyed by Hough could perhaps be extended to Gelston and Brandon. Hedgerows were also raised as important at the Workshop.</p> <p>(Strong ties into Section 7 'Renewables' below in relation to solar panels.)</p>	<p>How do we produce a set of clear proposals that can be turned into policies for the Neighbourhood Plan?</p> <p>Can we showcase examples of good development, including some modern design?</p>

Issue	Commentary	Action/Decision
<p>2 Local List of positive unlisted structures and buildings</p>	<p>Majority support for this proposal in the Questionnaire responses, although quite a few against it (20 in favour and 10 against). Much of what people have suggested is in fact already listed, or identified within the SKDC Conservation Area reappraisal. Others include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the old well in Brandon - stone walls on Hough High Road and Grantham Road; well doors and brickwork surrounds - cobbled pathway (India Rubber Hill) - Hough Grange cluster of buildings 	<p>Our approach to this so far will not meet SKDC requirements, and so we might want to just draw attention to some of the unlisted features that people have identified as being of value (which in turn adds weight perhaps to design guidance), and wait for SKDC to get round to doing a proper Local List?</p>

<p>3 Recreational hard-surface facilities on the Playing Field in Hough on the Hill</p>	<p>Majority support for this proposal in the Questionnaire responses (23 in favour and 6 against) However, one of the discussion groups at the Workshop were not supportive of the proposal. Some people didn't support it because they felt it wouldn't be used, or they wouldn't themselves use it.</p> <p>Suggestions for other areas for recreational facilities not put forward.</p>	<p>We should perhaps explore this proposal further, seeking advice from SKDC on what might be appropriate so that we can be clearer what's involved and required.</p>
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<p>4 Improved Access to the Countryside</p>	<p>Very strongly supported by the majority of respondents to the Questionnaire (30 in favour and 3 against) and the issue featured strongly in the Workshop discussions with widespread support. However, the challenges currently faced by our local farmers because of walkers and others not adhering to footpaths was also raised.</p> <p>Improved signage was suggested as a helpful approach for walkers and farmers alike.</p> <p>Several people have also strongly objected to the current 'BOAT' status of the Loveden Hill track, asking if this could be changed so that it is open to walkers and horse riders only.</p>	<p>Requires partnership and co-operation with landowners, which may best be pursued through the PC.</p> <p>We have not flagged up the ending of the Permissive Paths (and field-edge boundary treatments) in 2016 – need to add this in.</p> <p>Need to make enquiries about how BOATS are changed.</p>
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Issue	Commentary	Action/Decision
<p>5 Local Green Space</p>	<p>Almost universal support for the designation of Loveden Hill as a Local Green Space in the Questionnaire responses (32 in favour and 2 against).</p> <p>Several other areas also suggested, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the old Priory field in Hough on the Hill - the Wilderness in Hough on the Hill - Bosom Hill - Fox Wood - old quarry workings to the east of Hough - Brandon village green adjacent to the church - Protection Wood 	<p>Our Plan should highlight the very positive actions undertaken by current landowners in and around Loveden Hill (ACTION MT) and we should include the proposed LGS Designation within the Plan to support their good work into the future.</p> <p>Do we wish to consider any of the other areas suggested for such designation?</p>

<p>6 New Housing Development</p>	<p>Current SKDC policy prohibits new development other than ‘rural exception’ affordable housing (in perpetuity) on brownfield plots:</p> <p><i>Social Rented is housing for rent from Local Authorities and Registered Providers (Housing Associations)</i></p> <p><i>Intermediate Housing is housing that is part sale, part rent under shared-ownership schemes offered by Housing Associations</i></p> <p>Views on this issue are almost evenly divided (16 in favour and 17 against). Most of the people who support the provision of more affordable housing do so because they want a balanced community. Those against do not believe the villages are appropriate locations because of lack of public transport and other facilities.</p> <p>One of the discussion groups did favour allowing one or two owner occupier starter houses to be built, affordable to young couples, in each of the villages. Inevitably some people raised previous planning applications they have made for development that have been refused. However, development of this kind is currently prohibited in the Local Plan.</p>	<p>This is a difficult issue for us to decide, and the cards (and time) are stacked against us. Options:</p> <p>1. Continue the Plan with no proposals for new housing at all.</p> <p>2. Discuss with SKDC precisely what they might consider or allow. Then follow this through by possibly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asking SKDC to work with us on a housing needs assessment, if required; - put a call out to the whole community to scope possible sites; - or, in the Plan, just outline the types of housing development that would be welcomed, but without identifying sites.
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Issue	Commentary	Action/Decision
<p>7 Renewable Energy Provision</p>	<p>There is majority support in the Questionnaire returns for small-scale renewables, but only if they are not visually intrusive (21 in favour and 12 against). Some people also remain opposed to energy schemes that are unviable without subsidy.</p> <p>Community-energy schemes were seen as favourable at the Workshop, and are now being actively supported by Government, both in terms of policy and funding. New Policy just announced - see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-energy-strategy</p> <p>At the Workshop it was commented that the need for farmers to be 'carbon neutral suppliers' means they are finding it necessary to install renewable energy in the form of solar panels and turbines to meet this demand.</p>	<p>One of our new residents in Hough is a solar expert (that's his business) and he is promising to write a short piece explaining what our options for a community solar scheme might be, for further consideration and possibly for discussion with local farmers about use of barn roofs etc.</p> <p>If this looks like a runner, we could identify this in the Plan (which would greatly strengthen its ability to meet the Five Basic Tests). We could also go on to apply for financial assistance through the <i>Rural Community Energy Fund</i> which provides up to £20k for feasibility studies, and can then provide an unsecured loan of up to £130k to pay for detailed business planning and planning applications.</p>

<p>8 Roads & Transport</p>	<p>Quite a lot of support at the Workshop for trying to get speed limits (and weight limits) down on the COO1, or some more signs (like the flashing ones).</p> <p>Also support for continuing to do press for action on potholes and verges – but absolutely no support for road widening.</p> <p>There is some support for the creation of passing lanes on verges.</p>	<p>Whilst our Plan should raise these issues, they may be beyond its scope?</p> <p>It has already been suggested the PC ought to be considering installing some flashing signs in partnership with the County, possibly using a precept increase to fund it (but with maintenance by the County).</p>
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