NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE ADDINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM HELD AT MOUNT HERMON ON MONDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Parish Council: Cllr Naylor (in the Chair) and J Markham (Clerk)

Civic Society: J Robinson (Society Chairman), J Hindle (Environment Group)

Village Residents: K Appleyard, A Taylor, M Wood

Bradford Council: B Caulfield, E Higgins

Kirwells: M Wellock

1. Housing Site Allocations

Copies of Bradford’s draft site assessment methodology (May 2016) and initial advice from officers in response to queries raised had been circulated, and volunteer members had prepared a template site assessment matrix, together with a number of exploratory pro forma site assessments by way of testing use of the system.

Prior to discussion of these documents, Cllr Naylor noted that Bradford’s methodology remained subject to final amendment, and would probably not be available in final form until the end of the summer. He and BMDC officers then updated the Forum as regards the status of Bradford’s Core Strategy, still subject to the ministerial Holding Direction. The process was now affected by the added uncertainty caused by the publication of the housing White Paper, currently out for consultation, which could lead to changes in planning guidance (NPPF), the guidance itself being subject to further consultation. It was considered likely that the White Paper’s proposals, particularly relating to the potential changes to the boundary of the green belt, could affect the work on the Allocations DPD and NDPs. In the light of these uncertainties, Mr Caulfield noted that neighbourhood groups working on preparing an NDP could either temporarily suspend their own work themselves, pending the establishment of a clearer framework for it, or continue to develop preparatory work through community engagement and collection of evidence within existing policy and guidance.

BMDC officers then provided detailed advice on the process of carrying out housing site assessments. The following key points were noted:

* Although both Bradford Council’s site assessment methodology and planning guidance were subject to change, assessments would need to conform rigorously to current requirements (meaning that revisions to work carried out now could be necessary at a later stage).
* The number of houses allocated to a neighbourhood area in the Core Strategy was to be regarded as a minimum and used flexibly (meaning that, in Addingham, it would not be sufficient to identify sites for 200 houses and no more).
* To ensure robust and thorough housing site assessments, the process required the assessment of sites for uses other than housing, eg employment, retailing, green spaces.
* Also, local groups could not restrict themselves to the assessment of SHLAA sites and those only within village boundaries – again, to produce a robust comparison of sites for planning purposes, those identified within a settlement area needed to be analysed against other possible sites in order to identify the most sustainable and appropriate locations for growth. This part of the process thus required a search for sites, including land in the green belt, and involved engagement with land-owners and developers.
* However, under current planning guidance, neighbourhood plans could only promote sites within a settlement area, and therefore, if sites outside the area were required to accommodate at least the minimum target housing allocation, the site assessment work would have to be submitted to the planning authority for consideration within Bradford’s Allocations DPD.

After discussion, and noting Mr Caulfield’s point that, in spite of uncertainties surrounding the approval of site assessment methodology, the Core Strategy, and potential revisions to planning guidance, it could still be helpful for the Forum to continue with preparatory work on site assessments through community engagement and collection of evidence, it was agreed to recommend the following to the Parish Council for consideration at their meeting on 15 February:

Recommendation: That the Parish Council proceed to consider housing site allocations as part of the neighbourhood planning process, and, through the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Forum, assisted by Kirkwells, continue to include work on the assessment of housing sites for development in a first draft of the Plan, as the basis for consultation with the community.

1. Development of Plan – First Outline Draft

Mr Wellock presented the first outline draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, providing the policy context and a basic structure for further work by the volunteer groups tasked with developing the separate themes and sections. It was noted that work on the history and background was to be contributed by historian, Arnold Pacey.

In response to a query as regards the content of the Plan, BMDC officers advised that objectives relating to matters outside the scope of a neighbourhood plan (ie not relating to the use of land) could be included, as long as they were referenced as such, eg by recording an action for future consideration by the Parish Council.

As work continued on the drafting of the Plan sections, it was agreed that copies of all material would be passed to BMDC officers for information and comment.

1. Vision Statement

The draft vision statement, to be inserted in the Plan at section 5, was approved at this stage as the basis for further development as work on the draft Plan progressed.

1. Notes of Meeting held on 19 December 2016

The notes of the meeting held on 19 December were approved.

1. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that Locality Grant funding of £3600 had been awarded for expenditure on the Neighbourhood Plan to 31 March 2017, and that a set of display boards had been purchased for use at the next consultation events.

It was noted that a Forum member had yet to be appointed to lead the task of collating data from the open events held to date, including the initial event organised by the Parish Council in November 2015. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

1. Communications

It was noted that a number of means were being employed to publicise work on the Plan, primarily the website and the new village newsletter, and that these could be supplemented, as necessary, whenever updates were available, by press releases, presentations at village meetings held from time to time, such as the Environment Group’s open meeting in May, and by use of Addingham Quack. BMDC officers drew attention to the Statement of Community Involvement on the Bradford website, which informed the preparation of the Core Strategy. In that it offered advice on how to engage with different community groups, it could be applied during a neighbourhood planning process. (NB It predates Localism and doesn’t mention neighbourhood planning.)

1. Dates of Next Meetings

To take the form of afternoon workshop meetings – dates to be confirmed outside the meeting, subject to availability of Kirkwells to attend

***[Next meeting now confirmed: 3 March at 3.30pm in Mount Hermon]***