



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Ref: D&L//Bengeo NP Working Party

30 June 2017

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN WORKING PARTY

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Bengeo Neighborhood Area Plan Working Party will be held on:

**THURSDAY, 06<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017  
IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD  
AT 2.00 PM**

The Agenda is attached.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Whelan'.

Mr J Whelan  
Town Clerk

Councillors: S Newton, L Radford, S Dunkley and P Ruffles

**AGENDA - MEETING OF THE BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING  
WORKING PARTY TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 06 JULY 2017 AT 2.00 PM IN  
THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Members' declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (as defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012) where these Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

- a) Have not already been entered into the register and
- b) Relate to a matter to be considered

To note that such interests so declared must be formally notified to Town Clerk and the Monitoring Officer at East Hertfordshire District Council of the interest within 28 days.

To receive Members' declarations of Declarable Interests in accordance with Hertford Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013).

**5. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public may speak about specific items on this agenda which contain a recommendation, provided they have advised the Town Clerk of their wish to speak no later than midday on the Friday before the meeting (or midday of the last working day of the week before the meeting). A list giving details of the name(s) and relevant agenda item(s) will be circulated to Councillors before the meeting commences.

**6. PROGRAMME**

To approve the proposed strategy of developing the Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan – **PAPER A**

## **BENGEO NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN – PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### Introduction

This paper provides a briefing on the Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan (BNAP) and covers arrangements for its development and associated risks; some resources that were successfully used in the development of similar Plans; an indicative timetable and resources required for both development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The paper also makes recommendations within each section to advise Members of the key challenges and possible responses to them. The aim is to ensure that the public facing engagement work on the BNAP has a clear understanding of the correct procedures for developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

On 19 June 2017 Hertford Town Council Development and Leisure Committee resolved to establish a Working Group made of the four Councillors of Bengo Ward and the role of this group will be to take the BNAP project forward.

On 27 June 2017 East Herts District Council approved the designation of Bengo Ward as a Neighbourhood Plan and the work for BNAP officially commenced.

The references in this note to ‘Steering Group’ should be read as the wider community based Steering Group needed to progress the work on the BNAP.

### Plan Development

The elaboration of BNAP can be divided into several stages:

- i) Getting Started
- ii) Developing a Vision and Objectives
- iii) Developing the Plan
- iv) Independent Examination
- v) Referendum

#### i) Getting Started

##### *Actions*

First step for a Neighbourhood Plan is to define the Neighbourhood Area and apply for area designation. Hertford Town Council applied for the designation of Bengo ward as a Neighbourhood Area on 13 April 2017. The purpose for the proposed BNAP advised to East Herts District Council is:

*“A Neighbourhood Plan for the Bengo Ward would allow the local community to have a direct say about the challenges that the local community has identified (such*

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*as pressures on green space, transport, schooling and healthcare, and the need to accommodate a growing population in East Herts). The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to help ensure that development makes a positive and beneficial contribution to the wider community and is supported by improvements to local services and infrastructure”.*

The request was published for a six-week consultation period, which commenced on 13 April 2017. The consultation closed on 25 May 2017 and the approval was granted by the Council’s Executive on Tuesday, 27 June 2017.

### ***Challenges***

There are expected challenges to the development of the work for the Neighbourhood Plan. The initial meeting that took place on 24 June 2017 was successful, with about 120 residents turning up to find more about BNAP. However, not all areas of the ward were proportionally represented at the meeting. General publicity for the project should help, together with direct approach to known community groups and/or local management to promote the BNAP work to everyone.

### ***Working Programme***

This will serve as a guideline to ensure that work for BNAP can be monitored and kept in the right parameters.

Attached at Appendix A is the programme of work for the ongoing development of the Sele Neighbourhood Area Plan. The bulk of the work is programmed for a period of 12 to 14 months. This is preceded by a period of establishing the Steering Group and followed by a period of submission and examination of the draft plan. The Plan is “made” if approved in a referendum.

The indicative overall programme from 1 July 2017 is:

*Stage 1:* 4-6 months to establish Steering Group (July 2017 to October/December 2017)

*Stage 2:* 12 months to undertake the development of the Plan up to consultation on a draft plan (January 2018 to December 2018)

*Stage 3:* 6-8 months for submission of draft plan, examination and referendum (January 2018 to August 2018)

This results in a timetable for adoption of the Plan of 22-26 months.

An initial meeting of the Community Steering Group will take place on 12 July 2017 from 7pm at Bengeo Club. It is expected that residents, local councillors, Hertford Civic Society, and representatives from from local churches, businesses and schools will attend. The aim of the meeting will be to establish how the Steering Group members will work with the Working Party, set some of the group’s priorities and meeting dates, as well as desirable skills to add.

To ensure the good functioning of the Community Steering Group, some rules should be put in place and also the members would have to declare their interest

in the area. Appendix B contains an example of reference and objectives for a Steering Group that have been used for a Neighbourhood Plan in Bishop's Stortford.

It would be helpful to develop a Communications Strategy for the Plan. Appendix C shows an example of a clear and concise communications strategy that could form the basis of the BNAP communications strategy work. The communications audit at six months is an excellent feature of the strategy. It is recommended that the key objectives/principles of the BNAP work are articulated as the development by the community of the policy and intended outcomes. That is what can make BNAP a genuine success. The participation of residents and others is an important pre-cursor.

### ii) Developing a Vision and Objectives

The development vision for Bengoe is an aspiration for the future that the wider community needs to develop and own.

The members of the public will have sufficient opportunities to consider what they want to achieve and this will be elaborated in both the Action Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. An ambitious, holistic vision will mean that various factors are taken into account, such as medium and longer term economic development; improved connectivity in the ward and with the adjacent areas; high quality environment, etc. These are related to planning deliverables and the community must ensure that their vision has an appropriate relationship with the East Herts District Plan, expected to be approved in 2018.

The planning deliverables can form objectives that arise from the high level vision.

### iii) Developing the Plan

This comprises the following:

- Writing policies and a plan of how to implement the policies
- Checking BNAP intended policies against the current version of the District Plan
- Consult on the pre-submission draft and making necessary amendments upon receipt of feedback

For BNAP for policy work could include: housing mix for new residential development; open space provision or improvement; improving connectivity for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists within the Bengoe Ward and linking to existing businesses and shops.

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The key point in developing the Plan is what evidence is needed to inform the preparation of and the implementation of its policies. Taking for example the issue of proportion of affordable housing to be provided in the land allocated for residential development in the draft District Plan. The policy requirements are very clear for the proportion of affordable housing that residential development should provide. It is also clear on the housing mix (number of 1 bedroom, number of 2 bedroom units etc.) and also the tenure split for any affordable housing provided.

These requirements are based evidence contained within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and East Herts Viability Report. For the BNAP to request levels of affordable housing or types of housing that is different to the draft District Plan, convincing evidence will be needed to provide convincing evidence as to why this should be the case.

However for policies requiring improved connectivity between the development areas in Bengoe Ward and the existing community there is not a need for too much factual evidence. In this case the volume of local support for the improvements would be sufficient evidence together with a location/route of the intended improvements.

Policies need to be distinct from the Draft District plan policies and recognise the unique characteristics of Bengoe Ward. The critical point here is that the policies need to be clear enough such that a decision maker can apply that policy.

### iv) Independent Examination

When submitting the Plan the Steering Group must also prepare and submit the following:

- A map or statement which identifies the area of the Neighbourhood Plan
- A consultation statement
- A “Basic Conditions Statement” which demonstrates that the Plan has regard to other local and national policies

### v) Referendum

Will be a single question as to whether the Bengoe Ward community would wish to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan

### Indicative Timetable

As discussed above.

### Resources for Preparation and Implementation of the Plan.

#### *Plan Preparation*

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Funding of £9,000 is available from the Locality organisation. This may be supplemented by a further £6,000 subject to demonstrating that 'complex' issues are in place in the area, such as very high traffic.

Hertford Town Council approved in October 2016 that £10,000 be allocated to form its own funds to help fund development of the Neighbourhood Plan for Bengo ward.

All costs will need to be carefully monitored during plan preparation to ensure they are kept as low as possible. From the experience of Sele Neighbourhood Area Plan this was sufficient, however Bengo is a larger and more populous area. The total cost of plan development will become clearer as the detailed work programme is developed and agreed with the Steering Group.

Administrative support will be needed within Hertford Town Council, which will include costs of printing, venue hire, website establishment and maintenance and producing literature and leaflets.

### *Plan Implementation*

Depending on the nature of the policy outcomes there may be no direct cost to Hertford Town Council of implementing these policies. For example if the Neighbourhood Plan contained policies about provision of open space within the new residential development then the provision of that land would not be a cost to the Council. Other outcomes such as improving existing or constructing new cycleway within the Bengo Ward would have a direct cost implication. However, the objectives that the community sets in the Action Plan could be at least partially supported by Hertford Town Council, should a decision to implement some of the Action Plan objectives be approved.

The S106 agreements requires that a clear proportion of funds generated from land development are passed to local authorities where the planning permission for new development has been granted. This reinforces the need to involve landowners and developers in the Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Pointers and Experience from other Neighbourhood Plans

**Duston Council** (population 15 000 – area in need of affordable housing) in Northamptonshire on Vision:

- The group has been advised by their LPA that a good vision does not have to be very long (e.g. half a side of A4) but will:
- Be long term, for example looking forward 15, 20 or 25 years, or the period that is covered by the Local Plan (2029).

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- Be strategic, setting out a broad picture of your aspirations for your neighbourhood but will not include lots of details.
- Describe what you want your neighbourhood to look like, so people can form an image of the homes, businesses, shops, community facilities and open space it will contain.
- Consider what land use and development challenges will need to be addressed over the period covered by your Neighbourhood Plan.

**Holbeck** (inner City area of Leeds – large parts of the NP area have been vacated awaiting regeneration of that housing stock). Their top tips are:

Choose your time when reporting back on surveys or activities. Don't report if you've nothing to say – wait until you can give clear information and outcomes.

- Don't promise things you can't deliver – be clear about what the neighbourhood plan can and can't do.
- Build a comprehensive body of information of what you've done and why.
- This will help demonstrate to people how your plan is progressing.
- The learning process is very important – pick up advice and tips wherever you can.
- Make newsletters and other material colourful and eye catching
- If you set up a website think about how much time it will take to keep it up to date, who will do the updating and how you want to use it

Applications can only be made for funding that will be spent within 6 months of receipt or the end of the financial year within which they are being sought, whichever is the earlier.

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**Appendix A**

**Neighbourhood Plan project planner 20152016 201520162016**

PROJECT/EVENT	SELE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLAN (SNAP)
ORGANISER	HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL



## Paper A

PROJECT PHASE	PROPOSED START DATE	PROPOSED END DATE	ACTUAL START DATE	ACTUAL END DATE	ANY COMMENTS
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA</b>					
Submit Neighbourhood Area application				<input type="text"/>	
Decision on Neighbourhood Area				<input type="text"/>	
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM</b>					
<u>Set up and promote Neighbourhood Forum</u>				<input type="text"/>	
Steering Group meeting to plan workshop				<input type="text"/>	
<b>EARLY STAGE PLAN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES</b>					
Initial meeting with East Herts Council					Town Clerk
Develop a community engagement strategy					In progress
Public workshop held				<input type="text"/>	
Establish plan scope/ draft vision and objectives		End May 2017		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Second round of public consultation	15/07/2017	23/07/2017		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE</b>					
Evidence gathering	Ongoing	Ongoing		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<u>Review existing evidence</u>		End July 2017		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Meetings with East Herts Council		End Sept		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
				<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Neighbourhood Team – Terms of Engagement

Role & objectives

In embarking on neighbourhood planning the primary objective of Bishop's Stortford Town Council is the creation of a binding plan/policies for the ASRs and immediately affected areas which, *in the context of the assumption that development will occur substantially in line with the current Local Development Plan (or successor documents)*, will result in the creation of a desirable addition to the Town.

To achieve this objective the Neighbourhood Plan team will work with Bishop's Stortford Town Council to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the area designated as a neighbourhood area, comprising Silver Leys and Meads Ward. From the outset the expectation is that the Neighbourhood Plan process will be seen through to conclusion however the Council does not rule out the possibility that the process may be curtailed if the objective has been achieved through a for-shortened programme. At the same time the Council does not rule out the possibility that one or more Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders may be required, in addition to a Neighbourhood Development Plan, to achieve the objective.

Relationship of the Neighbourhood team to the Task and Finish Group and Council  
The work of the Neighbourhood Team will be overseen by the Neighbourhood Plan Task and Finish Group of Bishop's Stortford Town Council the members of which will also be members of the Team. The Task and Finish Group will report periodically to Full Council on the progress of the plan

The Draft plan will require the approval of the Town Council prior to submission for independent examination.

Assumptions which will be made

For the purpose of the neighbourhood plan exercise it will be assumed that ASRs 1-5 will be developed substantially in accordance with policies BIS3 and BIS8 of the Local plan 2007 (saved policies) and other policies referred to therein, taken together with the resolution of East Herts District Council made on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 wherein it was resolved that "the Local Plan Second Review 2007 Reserve Housing Sites and the Bishop's Stortford Areas of Special Restraint and Special Countryside Area be brought forward for development". It will also be assumed that the development will comply with the National Planning Policy framework.

This assumption will be reviewed upon publication of East Herts District Council's preferred options document (expected February 2013) and the East Herts District Plan (expected 2014) but will otherwise not be subject to challenge by the Team.

By joining the team individual members or organisations are *not* indicating that they support these District level policies. They are free to challenge them *outside the*

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*activities of the team* on condition that the publicity surrounding such challenges does not undermine their participation in the Neighbourhood Plan (for example their challenge/publicity could object to the District policies, but make it clear that, in the (unfortunate) event that they are implemented, the policies of the neighbourhood plan are better than the situation without the neighbourhood plan.)

### Attendance, process

Members are expected to attend at least two thirds of ordinary meetings of the team. Members should give apologies to the Chief Executive of the Town Council if they are unable to attend.

Members may be asked to undertake research or other assignments between meetings. They should feel under no obligation to agree to such requests however, once they have agreed, would normally be expected to complete the work they have agreed to do.

Meetings will take a combination of formally chaired engagements and more interactive workshops/brainstorming sessions.

Members of the team are expected to work together in a spirit of positive and professional cooperation towards the rapid achievement of the overall objective. Team members should not adopt 'filibustering' or other techniques to delay progress and must respect the views of other members, even if they differ from their own.

### Chairmanship, leadership and facilitation

The Chairman will be elected by the team/selected by the Council. Some meetings may take the form of a facilitated workshop. The Team is free to adopt working practices which suit the purpose and will not be bound by Council Standing Orders nor to follow formal processes during the bulk of its discussion. The exception is that documents to be submitted for further examination by the Task and Finish Group or the Council must be formally approved by a simple majority of the team.

### Other Matters

This is a living document and will evolve as the process progresses.

**Beer Neighbourhood Development Plan  
Communications Strategy**

**INTRODUCTION**

A Neighbourhood Development Plan<sup>1</sup> (NP) is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. The foundation of a good neighbourhood plan is a robust programme of consultation and engagement. Effective community involvement is essential right from the beginning of the process. It will create a well informed plan and a sense of ownership. Getting the recognition, views, assistance and support of a whole range of other, interested bodies and parties is also essential if the plan is to have authority and credibility. A successful Communication Strategy is a prerequisite.

**AIMS**

The aims of the Communications Strategy are to achieve:-

- Better communication, leading to better feedback and decision-making
- Improved two-way information flow
- Better information and communication channels to enable community participation
- Increased awareness and understanding of the Neighbourhood Plan, its purpose and relevance

**PRINCIPLES**

Our Communications Strategy is based on four key principles:-

- *the right information,*
- *to the right people,*
- *in the right medium,*
- *at the right time*

These principles include a number of key factors:

- Communication must be meaningful and appropriate
- Information must be accessible
- Quality mediums and methods must be used whenever possible
- Communication channels must allow information to, through and across all levels
- Information must be relevant and in plain English
- Consideration needs to be given to the needs of people with disabilities and those whose first language is not English
- The process must be transparent

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<sup>1</sup> As introduced by the Localism Act 2011

**TARGET AUDIENCES**

We want to reach everyone with a stake in the future of the area including people living, working or doing business here, those who deliver services to the local communities and people who have influence over the future of the area. We want to continue the dialogue with communities based on where they live and people in communities based on common interests. We want to communicate and listen to people who others have traditionally found hard to reach and hard to hear.

**MESSAGES**

It is important that all our communications have as much impact as possible. To avoid dilution of the message or contradiction, the following will be the main messages that we will attempt to relay in our communications:

- The Neighbourhood Plan reflects community opinion
- The Neighbourhood Plan is a framework for the development of our area
- We want to hear your opinion
- We need the participation and support of the community and partners

The messages we send out should be:

- Short and to the point
- Not conflicting
- In plain English
- Focussing on involvement

**TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES**

We shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. These include:

Consultation events
Direct mail
Council newspaper/magazine
Email lists
Events
Exhibition
Leaflets & flyers
Local radio
Minutes of meetings
Networking
Newsletter
Parish Council newsletters
Posters
Press releases
Social media
Stakeholders' and partners' outlets

Website

The messages will be relayed using different methods for different groups. A communications matrix has been developed as an integral part of our communications strategy.

## **RESOURCES**

We shall make best use of the resources we have and strive to increase resources commensurate with the task. Our current resources, those that we have access to and can be applied to the task, are:

<b>List of Available Local Resources:</b>
Group members
Local councillors
Parish Council notice board
Community notice boards
Community networks
Parish newsletters
Local newspaper
Website
Facebook

## **TIMESCALES**

Preparing a neighbourhood plan is a sequential process based upon an agreed project plan. The project plan identifies the following key communication points and the dates in which they should be carried out:

<b>Key Communication Point:</b>	<b>Target Date(s)</b>
Launching the NP	Aug – Sep 2014
Seeking information	Oct 2014
Establishing a shared Vision	Feb 2015
Sharing the draft plan	May – Jun 2015
Seeking approval (through referendum)	to be determined by EDDC

**EVALUATION AND AMENDMENT**

After the first 6 months the NP Group will carry out a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with both 'internal' and 'external' audiences. We shall consider in particular, who has not responded or reacted to our communications? We shall discuss the evidence/results carefully and use them to amend and improve the Strategy going forward.

**Neighbourhood Planning - Communications Strategy Matrix**

**How We Will Communicate:**

Parish councillors in NP area	Meeting mins/reports and presentations
Other elected members (DC & MP)	Direct e/mail/reports and presentations
Parish Council	Meeting mins/reports and presentations
NP sub (thematic or task) groups	Meeting mins/reports and presentations
All residents in NP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/letter
Young people in NP area	Consultation events – targeted
Community & voluntary groups active in NP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Elderly persons in NP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters
Persons with disabilities and special needs	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters
Schools and colleges serving NP area	Consultation events - targeted
All businesses/employers in NP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Retailers in NP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Service providers	Letter/ email /meeting
Statutory undertakers	Letter/ email /meeting
Major landowners	Letter/ email /meeting

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Developers with interest in NP area	Letter/ email /meeting
District Council	Letter/ email /meeting
Neighbouring parish/town councils	Letter/ email