

HONEYBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Steering Group Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 2nd June 2026

Time: 6:45pm

Venue: Honeybourne Village Hall (hybrid meeting)

Present:

Cllr Heath Jobes (Chair – Steering Group and Parish Council), Cllr J Mellor, Mr M Clark, Mr S Nimmo
Mrs W Pickler arrived at 7.00pm.

In attendance:

Mr Nick Pellegram (Andrea Pellegram Ltd – Planning Consultant) (Virtual)

Mrs Linda Stanton (Clerk) (Virtual)

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs M Bent, Cllr S Sidwell, Cllr S Walsh, Mr T Askew

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs M Bent, Cllr S Sidwell, Cllr S Walsh and Mr T Askew.

Apologies were accepted by the Steering Group.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes (28th April 2026)

Resolved: The minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 28th April 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising – Outstanding Actions

The Steering Group noted the status of outstanding actions from the meeting of 28th April 2026:

- I. Employment Sites (Policy H14) — The Planning Consultant advised that he had not yet had the opportunity to review Policy H14 in detail. This will be reviewed and considered when the draft policies are prepared. Steering Group members will have the opportunity to comment and provide local knowledge input at that stage.
- II. Train Station Parking Survey — Mr T Askew was not present at the meeting. The Planning Consultant suggested that additional surveys should be carried out at different times of day and on different days of the week in order to build a more comprehensive evidence base to support any policies relating to the station area. The Steering Group agreed this approach.
- III. Housing Needs Assessment — The Planning Consultant provided an update. This matter was discussed in detail under agenda item 8 and is minuted there accordingly.
- IV. Mill Mound — The Planning Consultant confirmed that he has received all the relevant information. This will be reviewed when the draft policies are prepared and a decision made at that stage on the appropriate designation.

- V. Locally Native Species and Hedgerows — The Planning Consultant confirmed that he had received all the relevant information on locally native species and hedgerows. This will be reviewed and incorporated into the draft policies at the appropriate stage.

ACTIONS:

Mr T Askew to carry out additional Train Station Parking surveys at different times of day and on different days of the week and report back to a future meeting.

5. Full Council Decision – 12 May 2026

The Steering Group noted Full Council's resolution at its meeting of 12 May 2026 to proceed with housing site allocations as part of the Honeybourne Neighbourhood Plan Review 2026 and to authorise the Planning Consultant to proceed with a formal Call for Sites process.

6. Wychavon District Council Update — SEA/HRA Screening and Housing Requirement

The Planning Consultant provided background context on the national planning policy position. He explained that whilst the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) was adopted on 25 March 2026, Wychavon District Council together with Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council resolved at those same council meetings to immediately begin preparing a new replacement Local Plan under the Government's new 30-month system. The reason for this is that the Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 as part of its commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes during this Parliament, introducing significantly higher mandatory housing targets. The SWDPR was examined under the September 2023 NPPF transitional arrangements and does not address the new higher requirements introduced by the December 2024 NPPF.

Housing Requirement

The Planning Consultant explained that the formal housing requirement for Honeybourne under the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) remains zero. The SWDPR was adopted on 25 March 2026. Any housing allocated through the HNPR above that minimum will help boost housing supply and ensure the plan is positively prepared, affording it greater weight against speculative planning applications under Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Planning Consultant advised that rather than fixing a specific number of homes at this stage, it is more appropriate to proceed with the Call for Sites first and consider what sites come forward before determining the scale of any allocation. The Steering Group agreed with this advice.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The Planning Consultant explained the SEA and HRA process to Steering Group members. SEA is a legal requirement for Neighbourhood Plans that propose housing site allocations. The process involves three stages and the table below sets out what each stage involves, who is responsible and the cost to the Parish Council:

Stage	What it involves	Who is responsible	Cost to Parish Council
Stage A — Screening	A yes/no determination of whether a full SEA is required. The three statutory consultees (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) have five weeks to respond.	Wychavon District Council will undertake the screening opinion and consult the statutory bodies.	No cost to the Parish Council.
Stage B — Scoping	If screened in, identifies which environmental issues are relevant and need to be assessed.	The Planning Consultant will prepare the SEA Scoping Report (2-3 days) within the approved fee proposal.	Within the Planning Consultant's approved fee proposal.

Stage C — Environmental Report	Full assessment of the environmental effects of the plan and its alternatives.	The Planning Consultant will prepare the full Environmental Report (5 days) within the approved fee proposal. If statutory consultees require additional technical inputs beyond the fee proposal scope, any additional costs would be brought back to Full Council for approval.	Within the Planning Consultant's approved fee proposal. Any additional technical inputs to be approved by Full Council.
---------------------------------------	--	---	---

The Planning Consultant also explained what the three statutory consultees look at when they screen:

Statutory Consultee	What they look at
Historic England	Listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and archaeological sites. In Honeybourne's case the conservation area is likely to be a key consideration.
Environment Agency	Flood risk, water quality and groundwater. Given Honeybourne's location, flood risk in relation to any proposed sites will be an important consideration.
Natural England	Protected species, priority habitats and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Honeybourne does not have any designated European protected wildlife sites within the neighbourhood area, but Natural England will still need to confirm this through the screening process.

SEA/HRA Screening Timing

The Planning Consultant updated the Steering Group on correspondence with Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team regarding the timing of the SEA/HRA screening process. Wychavon's initial position is that the screening requires a final draft of the Regulation 14 version of the plan before it can commence. The Planning Consultant noted that the Government's own toolkit 'Screening Neighbourhood Plans for Strategic Environmental Assessment' (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, April 2026) advises that screening should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity and that a full draft plan is not required — the Call for Sites results and site assessments can provide sufficient information for a screening determination. Wychavon acknowledged the rationale for early screening and confirmed that their template is in alignment with that guidance.

The Planning Consultant proposed two options for progressing the SEA/HRA process alongside plan development:

Option 1 — Wychavon carries out early screening using the Call for Sites methodology and pool of sites, in accordance with the MHCLG toolkit guidance.

Option 2 — If Wychavon is not in a position to undertake early screening, the Planning Consultant to prepare a joint early screening and scoping report, with Wychavon reviewing and providing input.

The Steering Group agreed the approach proposed by the Planning Consultant. Option 1 is the preferred route — the Planning Consultant will seek to progress early screening with Wychavon using the Call for Sites methodology and pool of sites. Option 2 — the Planning Consultant preparing a joint early screening and scoping report with Wychavon reviewing and providing input — is the fallback position should Wychavon not be in a position to undertake early screening. The Planning Consultant will continue to liaise with Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team to agree the most appropriate approach.

ACTIONS:

Planning Consultant to continue liaison with Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team to agree the approach to SEA/HRA screening timing and sequencing, including the possibility of early screening alongside plan development.

7. Revised Programme and Timeline

The Planning Consultant presented the revised programme and timeline for the HNPR, updated to reflect Full Council's decision of 12 May 2026 to proceed with housing site allocations and a formal Call for Sites

process. The revised programme runs through to Autumn 2027 for the referendum, with the plan expected to be made in Spring 2028.

The key milestones in the programme are set out in the table below:

Month	Key Activity
June 2026	Full Council to approve Call for Sites Methodology and revised programme (9 June 2026).
July 2026	Steering Group meeting 16 July 2026 to consider and approve the draft Call for Sites document. Once approved the document will be published on the Parish Council website.
August 2026	NP Vision and Objectives. Call for Sites consultation opens.
September 2026	Assess Call for Sites results. Consider community consultation on preferred site options.
October 2026	First draft Neighbourhood Plan for Steering Group discussion.
November 2026	Review community consultation results and agree proposed housing site allocations.
December 2026	Contingency month — held in reserve to accommodate any slippage in the programme.
January 2027	Finalise Neighbourhood Plan and SEA for Full Council approval.
February 2027	Preparation for Regulation 14 consultation.
Spring 2027	Regulation 14 — six-week public consultation on the draft plan, run by the Parish Council.
Summer 2027	Regulation 15 submission to Wychavon. Regulation 16 consultation by Wychavon.
Autumn 2027	Examination. Referendum — organised and funded by Wychavon District Council.
Spring 2028	Plan made (adopted).

The Steering Group discussed the programme in detail and agreed that it provides a realistic and achievable framework for the next stages of the review. Members noted that a contingency month of December 2026 has been built in to accommodate any slippage.

Resolved: That the Steering Group approves the revised Neighbourhood Plan Review Programme and Timeline and recommends it to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 9 June 2026.

8. Call for Sites — Next Steps

Call for Sites Methodology

The Planning Consultant outlined the proposed seven-stage Call for Sites methodology, developed in accordance with the Government's published guidance 'Introduction to identifying, assessing and selecting sites' (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, GOV.UK). Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team has confirmed that the proposed approach is in alignment with that guidance.

The key stages of the methodology are as follows:

Stage	Action	Detail
1	Prepare Call for Sites Document	The Planning Consultant prepares a document setting out submission requirements, assessment criteria and expectations for potential development sites. The draft document will be presented to the Steering Group at its meeting of 16 July 2026.
2	Approve Site Selection Methodology with Wychavon	The site selection methodology is agreed informally with Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team before the consultation opens.
3	Call for Sites Consultation	The Call for Sites is published. Landowners and developers are invited to submit sites by a specified closing date. The consultation will be hosted online by the Parish Council.

4	Assessment of Submitted Sites	All submitted sites are assessed by the Planning Consultant against the approved methodology to identify sites that are potentially suitable and deliverable.
5	Steering Group Review and Preferred Options	The Steering Group reviews the assessed sites and identifies preferred site options, taking into account planning criteria, community views and the scale of development considered appropriate.
6	Community Engagement on Preferred Sites	Further community engagement is undertaken on preferred site options before any final allocations are confirmed. Residents will have a meaningful opportunity to comment on specific site proposals before anything is finalised.
7	Supporting Evidence and Plan Drafting	Supporting evidence is prepared to justify site selection. Planning policies are finalised and the full draft plan submitted to Wychavon for SEA/HRA screening ahead of Regulation 14 consultation.

Steering Group members raised questions about their role in the site selection process. The Planning Consultant confirmed that the Steering Group will have a meaningful role in reviewing and identifying preferred site options at Stage 5, and that community engagement on preferred sites will take place at Stage 6 before any final allocations are confirmed. Members will also have the opportunity to comment on and provide local knowledge input into the draft policies when they are prepared.

Call for Sites Timetable

The Planning Consultant confirmed the following timetable for the Call for Sites process:

- The Planning Consultant will prepare a draft CFS framework and send it to Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team for comment no later than 23 June 2026.
- The draft CFS document will be presented to the Steering Group at its meeting on 16 July 2026 for consideration and approval.
- Once approved by the Steering Group the CFS document will be published on the Parish Council website.
- The Call for Sites consultation is intended to commence in late July 2026 and run for approximately eight weeks.

Housing Needs Assessment

The Steering Group considered the question of a Housing Needs Assessment. The Planning Consultant proposed that rather than commissioning a separate Housing Needs Survey, a short Housing Needs Assessment be prepared drawing on existing data sources including Census data, population structure, household composition, house prices, local incomes and affordability, together with the findings of the community survey conducted in March 2026. The Steering Group agreed this approach.

The Planning Consultant explained that Census data is nationally collected official Government data and is recognised by planning inspectors as robust and objective evidence at examination — providing a stronger evidential base than a localised residents survey which may be open to challenge. The Housing Needs Assessment will be carried out by the Planning Consultant as part of the review programme.

Resolved: That the Steering Group approves the Call for Sites Methodology as presented and recommends it to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 9 June 2026; and that the Planning Consultant proceed with the preparation of the draft Call for Sites document for presentation to the Steering Group at its meeting on 16 July 2026; and that the Housing Needs Assessment be prepared by the Planning Consultant drawing on Census data and other existing data sources as set out above.

ACTIONS:

Planning Consultant to prepare draft CFS framework and send to Wychavon's Neighbourhood Team for comment by 23 June 2026.

Planning Consultant to present draft Call for Sites document to Steering Group for consideration and approval at the meeting on 16 July 2026.

Planning Consultant to prepare Housing Needs Assessment drawing on Census data and existing data sources.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next NDP Review Steering Group meeting will be held on Thursday 16 July 2026 at 6:45pm at Honeybourne Village Hall.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair)

Members of the Steering Group:

Cllrs H Jobes (Chair), J Mellor, S Walsh, S Sidwell, Mr T Askew, Mr M Clark, Mrs M Bent, Mrs W Pickler, Mr S Nimmo

DRAFT