

HONEYBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Steering Group Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 16th July 2026

Time: 6:45pm

Venue: Remote meeting (Honeybourne Village Hall unavailable)

The meeting was held remotely by video conference. The meeting began via Zoom; at 7:15pm the meeting was paused as the Zoom session reached its time limit, and reconvened via Microsoft Teams at 7:30pm. All business conducted before and after the changeover is recorded below.

Present:

Cllr Heath Jobes (Chair – Steering Group and Parish Council), Cllr J Mellor, Cllr S Walsh, Mrs M Bent, Mrs W Pickler, Mr M Clark, Mr I Mellor, Mr T Askew, Mr S Nimmo

In attendance:

Mr Nick Pellegram (Andrea Pellegram Ltd – Planning Consultant)

Mrs Linda Stanton (Clerk)

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr S Sidwell

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S Sidwell. Apologies were accepted by the Steering Group.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members to declare any interest in land within the Call for Sites pool, and to withdraw from the relevant discussion and any decision where a declarable interest arose.

The following declarations were made:

- Cllr J Mellor and Mr I Mellor declared a personal interest, residing on the Fair Acres estate with their home bordering Site 8.
- Mr M Clark declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Site 12, his partner being the owner of the site.
- Cllr S Walsh declared a personal interest, being uncertain at the time whether any land within the pool belonged to her family. She has since confirmed to the Clerk that she holds no interest in any site within the pool.
- The Chair noted that, the meeting being held remotely, members with a declared interest would be moved to a waiting room during item 6 and would not participate in that item. As no site-specific discussion took place under item 6, this did not arise.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes (2nd June 2026)

Resolved: The minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 2nd June 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Call for Sites Selection Methodology (ED1)

Mr Pellegram presented the Call for Sites Selection Methodology (ED1), updated to reflect Wychavon District Council's comments.

Mr Clark asked for paragraph 2.2 to be explained in plain English. Mr Pellegram shared his screen and explained the position with reference to NPPF paragraphs 11(d) and 14. He explained that paragraph 11(d) sets out a “tilted balance” in favour of granting planning permission where a council's policies are out of date, but that paragraph 14 shields an up-to-date neighbourhood plan from that tilted balance, provided it is less than five years old and contains policies and allocations meeting its own housing requirement.

He clarified that the former indicative housing requirement of 34 dwellings (“Annex E”) had formed part of the separate South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) process, not the NPPF itself, and had been withdrawn by Wychavon District Council prior to the SWDPR's adoption, following concerns raised by the Inspectors at examination. Honeybourne's current housing requirement under the adopted SWDPR is therefore zero, meaning any allocation the Neighbourhood Plan makes would meet the paragraph 14 test.

Mr Pellegram added that this zero figure reflects the position under the SWDPR as currently adopted, and should not be taken as a permanent position. Wychavon, Malvern Hills and Worcester City are now preparing a new Local Plan under the Government's new 30-month system. He explained that this new Local Plan will be required to address a greater housing requirement under the Government's new Standard Method (December 2024), which the SWDPR did not address due to transitional arrangements, and could therefore produce a higher housing requirement for Honeybourne in due course. He noted that this new Local Plan is at a very early stage and is not yet able to say anything about future housing numbers for Honeybourne. He advised that carrying out the Council's own evidence-led Call for Sites now allows the Neighbourhood Plan to be ready to respond on its own terms, rather than reacting under pressure once a higher requirement is confirmed, and that a plan with its own up-to-date, evidence-led site allocations is also better placed to resist speculative planning applications in the meantime.

Mr Clark raised a concern regarding paragraph 2.3 of ED1, questioning whether a 67% response rate in favour of site allocations from the March/April 2026 community survey was sufficient to justify proceeding. Cllr Jobes noted that this response level was similar to that received when the original Neighbourhood Plan was prepared. Mr Pellegram confirmed that the Call for Sites process would proceed on the basis of the evidence already gathered through the survey.

Mr Pellegram went on to explain the five stages of the assessment process set out in ED1:

- Stage 1 – Initial sift: sites ruled out by clear-cut constraints (e.g. predominantly high flood risk, isolated countryside location, designated Local Green Space, or existing planning permission).
- Stage 2 – Detailed site assessment: remaining sites assessed against environmental, physical, access, landscape, heritage and planning policy criteria.
- Stage 3 – Comparative assessment: a planning-led judgement on the most suitable sites, presented to the Steering Group to identify preferred options.
- Stage 4 – Community consultation on the preferred options.
- Stage 5 – Review of consultation findings and final site selection, with reasons for selecting and rejecting sites documented.

Mr Nimmo asked whether the Steering Group could undertake the Stage 1 sift itself, rather than this being carried out by the Planning Consultant. Mr Pellegram responded that the sift would be carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in ED1, explaining that as Planning Consultant it was his role to apply the assessment criteria, drawing on his professional expertise.

No further comments were received.

Resolved: The Call for Sites Selection Methodology (ED1) was approved.

6. Pool of Sites Likely to Pass Stage 1 of the Methodology

Mr Pellegram confirmed that he would write to notify all landowners identified through Land Registry searches. It was noted that it would be for each landowner to respond, and that Mr Pellegram would

assess any site put forward against the ED1 criteria. Once this assessment is complete, Mr Pellegram will report his findings back to the Steering Group, who will then consider the assessed sites and decide which, if any, to take forward as preferred options.

It was noted that identifying the pool using Land Registry data, an objective and publicly available source, ensures that every qualifying landowner in the parish is treated equally and no one is excluded from the opportunity to submit their site.

7. Draft Landowner Notification Letter

Resolved: The draft landowner notification letter was approved.

8. Draft Website Text

Resolved: The draft website text was approved.

9. Call for Sites – Consultation Start Date

Resolved: The Call for Sites consultation will commence on 22 July 2026.

10. Call for Sites – Consultation Close Date

Resolved: The Call for Sites consultation will close at 23:59 on 18 September 2026, allowing time for Mr Pellegram to analyse the results.

Mrs Pickler asked whether a lower number of homes could be allocated. Mr Pellegram confirmed that no target number had been set, and that the outcome of the Call for Sites would inform this.

Mr Pellegram confirmed he would prepare the SEA screening opinion, in accordance with ED1 paragraph 3.3 and using the pool of sites, for submission to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England

11. New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Mr Pellegram confirmed that no update to the NPPF had been published, despite this having been anticipated around 16 July 2026. He would circulate further information once available, with a full review to follow at a future meeting.

12. New Local Plan (South Worcestershire Local Plan) – Timetable Update

Mr Pellegram ran through the published timetable for the new South Worcestershire Local Plan (Notice of Intent, June 2026), which will cover the plan period 2029–2049 and is being prepared jointly by Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council.

Stage	Date
Notice of intention to commence	30 June 2026 (actual)
Scoping consultation opens	18 September 2026
Scoping consultation closes	30 October 2026
Gateway 1 – self-assessment	31 October 2026
Plan content and evidence consultation opens	21 June 2027
Plan content and evidence consultation closes	2 August 2027
Gateway 2 – advice sought	11 October 2027

Gateway 2 – advice published	12 November 2027
Proposed plan consultation (Regulation 19) opens	12 June 2028
Proposed plan consultation closes	7 August 2028
Gateway 3 – advice sought	4 September 2028
Gateway 3 – advice published	29 September 2028
Submitted for examination	2 October 2028
Examination recommendations published	2 April 2029
Plan adopted	30 April 2029

It was noted that concrete housing allocations are likely once the proposed plan consultation (Regulation 19) opens, though it is possible that Wychavon may be able to provide an indicative housing requirement around late 2027

13. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the Steering Group would next meet on:

- 25 August 2026, to discuss the Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan review; and
- 6 October 2026, to consider the sites received through the Call for Sites.
- Meeting time: 6:45 pm at the Village Hall
- Clerk and planning consultant attend virtually.

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.

ACTIONS:

- Clerk to ensure all agreed content (confirmed dates, submission email address and the final ED1 document) is live on the Parish Council website ahead of the Call for Sites launch on 22 July 2026.
- Mr Pellegram to prepare and send the landowner notification letters to all parties identified through the Land Registry search.
- Mr Pellegram to prepare the SEA screening opinion for submission to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

Clerk's Note: The Stage 1 pool of sites was circulated to the Steering Group in redacted form only, with landowner names, addresses and title numbers removed in line with data protection requirements.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair)

Members of the Steering Group:

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