

Minutes of the Meeting of the **SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on  
**MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2025** at 2.15 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor Foster – Chair

Councillor Bonfield  
Councillor Vile

Mr A Larner  
Mrs J Sutcliffe

**Also in attendance:** Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk  
Miss N Clark – Planning and Community Engagement Manager  
Mrs E Evans – Democratic Services Officer  
Ms T Powell – Dorset Coast Forum – via online link  
Mr C Squires – Project Delivery Officer

One member of the public attended the meeting remotely.

**Public Participation Time**

There were no matters raised.

**1) Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Tones, Mr L Luke, Mrs J Owens, and Mr G Richardson.

**2) Declarations of Interest**

Sub-committee Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations (Councillor Members in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct).

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

**3) To approve as a correct record Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) Steering Group held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025**

It was agreed that these were a true record.

**4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SNP) held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025**

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

**5) Dorset Local Plan – forthcoming consultation**

It was reported that Dorset Council (DC) would be undertaking an eight-week consultation on the draft Dorset Local Plan (DLP), commencing on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and running until 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025. It was noted that a public drop-in session was expected to be held in Swanage during September. DC had confirmed that the draft DLP would not contain a dedicated chapter for Swanage (as the previous draft Plan had in 2021), and that the consultation would not include detailed policies. Further to the consultation in 2021, and in light of changes in national policy, DC would be consulting on site opportunities

for addressing housing, employment, and traveller needs. It was further confirmed that no additional information would be released by DC prior to the consultation material going live on 18<sup>th</sup> August.

It was noted that the Chairman, Planning and Community Engagement Manager, and the Town Clerk, would be attending a DLP briefing event hosted by DC on 14th July, at which they would seek further clarification regarding the content of DC's consultation.

It was reported that advice had been sought from ONeill Homer (ONH) Planning Consultants, who felt that it would be prudent for the informal community engagement on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) to proceed and maintain its proposed timeline. It was noted that ONH had offered support to the SNP Steering Group in engaging with DC to encourage open dialogue regarding the elements of the DLP that may have implications for Swanage and the SNP.

A discussion ensued regarding the advantages and disadvantages of continuing with the engagement on the SNP. Members expressed the view that the SNP engagement had already been delayed on a few occasions, due to extenuating circumstances. Group Members therefore agreed that the engagement should proceed without further delay, and that it would be imperative to work together with DC to ensure that the two consultations could run effectively alongside each other.

Consideration was then given to the draft consultation survey and webpage, following which it was agreed that a workshop would be held with Councillors Bonfield, Foster, Tomes, and Vile, Ms T Powell, the Town Clerk, and the Planning and Community Engagement Manager, to undertake a review of the questions and content, prior to a final review by all members of the Steering Group at its August meeting. The workshop would be held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025. However, all Group Members would be asked for their feedback and any recommendations regarding the survey/webpage ahead of the workshop, which would be used to inform the meeting.

It was anticipated that the community engagement material would be launched shortly after the August meeting.

## **6) ONeill Homer (ONH) Planning Consultants**

### **a) Update**

It was reported that the maps to accompany the SNP survey and webpage were being updated by ONH in preparation for the upcoming community engagement. These would be available for review at the next meeting in August.

### **b) Review of Project Plan**

As discussed under Minute No. 5) above, it was noted that the project timeline would remain unchanged.

In light of there being no new funding or technical assistance from Locality beyond March 2026, it was reported that ONH would be providing further information regarding Design Coding options for the SNP, and this would be included for consideration at a future meeting of the Steering Group.

## **7) Informal community engagement – to confirm proposals**

Further to discussions held under Minute No. 5) above, and Minute No. 9) of the SNP Steering Group Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025, the Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) representative provided an update on the materials for the proposed engagement. It was reported that the content under the housing section had not been fully completed as the sites assessment report had not yet been received from AECOM, which would help to inform this section. A chaser would be sent to AECOM accordingly.

It was also noted that the topics of ‘Townscape’ and ‘Character’ required further discussion and clarification in order to support public understanding of these terms and definitions.

It was reported that the dates and venues for the public engagement events would now be booked, and it was anticipated that workshops with local businesses would be held in September. Details of these would be brought to the next meeting.

It was stated that, particularly in light of the DLP consultation coinciding with the SNP engagement, the SNP message needed to clearly emphasise the weight of this consultation in the ‘interests of Swanage’ – in that the SNP focused specifically on Swanage and reflected our local priorities, whereas the DLP was being developed by DC and applied across the whole county.

**8) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

**a) Harrow House – revised planning application**

It was reported that any update received from DC regarding the outline planning application would be shared with members of the SNP.

During the discussion regarding this proposed development, it was noted that an update had been received from DC’s Education Services, which had reported a downward trend in pupil numbers in schools in Swanage. The projected figures indicated that, by 2029, only a small number of 4-year-olds would be seeking a school place across all three local primary schools. In addition, it was reported that the local secondary schools were currently undersubscribed.

Members recognised that the high cost of housing appeared to be a contributing factor to this decline, as families were relocating out of the area.

**9) Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at 4.00 p.m.

The Meeting was closed at 3.00 p.m.

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