

Minutes of the Meeting of the **SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on
WEDNESDAY 27th OCTOBER 2025 at 2.15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Foster – Chair

Councillor Bonfield
Councillor Sutton
Councillor Tomes (Until 4.15 p.m.)

Mrs J Owens
Mr G Richardson

Also in attendance: Councillor Dorrington (Until 3.35 p.m.)
Miss N Clark – Planning and Community Engagement Manager
Mr N Homer – ONH Planning Consultants
Ms T Powell – Dorset Coast Forum (Via online link)
Mr C Squires – Project Delivery Officer (Via online link – until 4.45pm)

One member of the local press attended the meeting in person, and one member of the public attended remotely.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Vile, Mr A Lamer, Mr L Luke, and Mrs J Sutcliffe.

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 6th August 2025

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan
Sub-Committee held on 6th August 2025 be approved as
true record.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SNP) held on 6th August 2025

There were no matters raised.

5) Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) - informal community engagement and survey – update

Further to Minute No. 8) of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th August 2025, it was reported that the SNP website and online survey had been successfully launched on 4th September. Updates were provided on engagement to date, which included:

- **Informal community engagement surveys** – it was reported that the adults' and ages 7–11 surveys would be closing on 31st October, while the ages 11-18 survey would remain open until 9th November. A brief summary of engagement levels was provided, and it was noted that the feedback collected through these surveys would play a vital role in shaping and informing the draft SNP. Members were asked to share the link to the website and survey widely to encourage as many responses as possible. It was noted that copies of the survey had also been delivered to Swanage Library, the Focus Centre (Welcome Lounge, and Youth Centre), and local schools, and also emailed to the Swanage Town & Community Partnership.
- **Informal community engagement sessions** – it was reported that the four face-to-face community engagement sessions had been well attended, with positive feedback received regarding the proposal for a Neighbourhood Plan. An information stand had also been held at Swanage Market on 24th October. Representatives from DCF and council officers/members had engaged with a total of 146 members of the community across these events. Members of the Steering Group had also visited businesses in the town centre to provide them with information on the SNP, and a copy of the survey.

A discussion was then held regarding the public engagement event hosted in Swanage on 30th September by Dorset Council (DC) as part of its Local Plan Options 2025 and draft Local Transport Plan 2026-2041 consultations. Concerns were raised about DC's proposal to remove settlement boundaries through a 'flexible settlements policy'. Further discussion took place regarding the potential development sites identified by DC, and it was noted that one of these sites included an area designated as Village Green land.

6) ONeill Homer (ONH) Planning Consultants

a) Update

b) Review of Project Plan

Further to Minute No. 6 b) of the of the SNP Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th August 2025, Mr Neil Homer reported that minor amendments would be made to the Project Plan to accommodate the extended timelines for the community engagement surveys. Mr Homer also provided an update on ongoing work relating to the preparation of the draft NP.

It was anticipated that a first draft of the of Pre-submission SNP would be available for review at the next Group meeting, enabling consideration of any potential gaps once feedback from the informal community engagement had been received. It was hoped that the finalised first draft, including any necessary amendments, could then be presented to the Group's December meeting for approval, prior to being submitted to a future Council Meeting for sign-off.

If the Group remained on schedule with the Project Plan, Regulation 14 was expected to take place in January/February 2026, followed by Regulation 16 in March/April 2026. However, depending on completion of the tasks outlined above, the programme might need to extend into April/May 2026 if required.

7) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) Membership - appointment of community member to the Swanage Neighbourhood

Plan Steering Group – to consider process – the Group noted that, following the advert placed on the SNP webpage and included within the community engagement survey, expressions of interest had been received for the vacant community member position on the Steering Group. Members discussed the recruitment process to be followed once the survey period had closed. It was agreed that the Planning and Community Engagement Manager would prepare an application form for the vacancy, to be issued to all individuals who had responded to the advert. Completed application forms would be reviewed by the Group at a future meeting.

It was further noted that, following a recent change in the membership of the Planning and Consultation Committee, a vacancy had arisen for a councillor member on the Steering Group. The appointment to fill this vacancy would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 3rd November.

b) Dorset Council (DC) - Dorset Design Code Public Consultation – update – further to Minute No. 5) a) iii) of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 6th October 2025, the Group received an update on the development of a Dorset-wide Design Code. It was reported that DC had commenced work on the Code, which aimed to ensure that new buildings and public spaces were locally distinctive, high-quality, and sustainable, and demonstrate how policies within the Dorset Local Plan should be applied to new developments. On 20th October, representatives of the Town Council and the Steering Group met with the company appointed by DC to undertake research for the Code. The purpose of the meeting was to provide insight and feedback regarding the design and character of towns and villages across Dorset. A walkabout in Swanage followed the meeting. This engagement would help ensure that the final documents were informed by local knowledge and context.

In light of this work, Mr Homer advised the Group to consider including simple guidance within the draft SNP referring developers to the Dorset Design Code, rather than commissioning separate design guidance, which could potentially incur significant consultancy costs, particularly as free technical assistance previously available from Locality was no longer offered.

Following the above item, the Chair invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow the member of the local press present to address the Steering Group and ask questions relevant to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.

8) Date of next meeting

The date of the next Steering Group meeting had been scheduled for Monday 17th November 2025.

Councillor Dorrington left the meeting at 3.35 p.m.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda item 9) in

order to protect the integrity of the consultation process.

9) Consideration of AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report (SOAR) and consultation on potential residential development sites

Further to Minute No. 4) of the SNP Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th August 2025, it was reported that the AECOM Site Options and Assessment (SOA) report had been pursued and had now been received. The report was circulated to the Group for review. Mr Homer presented an overview of the findings and outlined the potential development sites assessed within the document. The Group discussed the constraints, opportunities, and suitability of each site, and Mr Homer compiled a corresponding list of amendments. It was agreed that potential development sites should be included in the draft Pre-submission NP for public consultation.

The Group also considered Paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework which provided guidance on the determination of planning applications within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, including the exceptional circumstances test and the requirement for demonstrable community benefits such as genuinely affordable housing for local people. It was agreed that early engagement with developers to discuss emerging proposals would be essential to the NP site selection process, and the Group would therefore seek to arrange these discussions as soon as practicable.

The Town Clerk, Planning and Community Engagement Manager, and Mr Homer would be meeting with the AECOM Planning Consultant online on 3rd November to discuss the report and present the feedback and amendments arising from the SNP meeting. An amended draft of the SOR was expected by the end of November.

Once the draft Pre-submission NP had been prepared, the subsequent stages would include finalising the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Councillor Tomes left the meeting at 4.15 p.m.

As previously reported, DC had been unable to share details of its development site options for Swanage prior to the launch of the Dorset Local Plan Options (DLPO) consultation and the SNP informal community engagement. Consequently, the Steering Group had resolved not to consult on its own potential site options at that time, in order to avoid public confusion. The Steering Group considered it essential to review feedback from the DLPO consultation, and it was noted that an email had been sent to DC to request an update on when this feedback would be available.

The Meeting was closed at 4.55 p.m.