



STEBBING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

STEERING GROUP

ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN JOHN C. EVANS

TO UDC PPWG

23 MAY 2018

Mr Chairman and Councillors

I am speaking as the Chairman of the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which has been working for the past two years preparing of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for our Parish. We hope to conclude our drafting in the Autumn of 2018.

We wish to make some brief observations concerning the UDC Heritage Evidence Base to the extent that it impacts potentially upon Stebbing and our own emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

We have every wish to cooperate with Officers in the drafting of our Neighbourhood Plan and, just two weeks ago, were able to hold our first (but long delayed) meeting with them to discuss the impact of potential development in the area east of Stebbing Green and Stebbing Village, namely the so called West of Braintree Garden Community, both upon the landscape characteristics and qualities of our Parish, and also to discuss the awaited UDC commissioned Heritage Impact Assessment. However, that Assessment was not available by the time of the meeting (although it had been postponed from March to await it) but it has finally been included in draft form in your papers tonight. As will be appreciated, there has been limited time for us to consider it, let alone discuss it with Officers.

We invited our consultant Mr Simon Neesam of The Landscape Partnership to attend the Officers' meeting in order to discuss his recommendations for the placing and extent of a Green Wedge or buffer between any new development at Andrewsfield/Boxted Wood and Stebbing Green/the main Village, being one of the recommendations included in his report dated March 2017.

I addressed you about that report in June 2017, when I was told that it would be taken into account. At our recent meeting with officers, that remained the stated position. Nothing seen by us however so far indicates that positive consideration has been given to those recommendations concerning a Green Wedge or buffer.

We are also now further concerned about heritage matters. The very lengthy report before you tonight remains in draft form. It has not taken into account the Stebbing Heritage Assessment commissioned by the Steering Group from Grover Lewis dated August 2017.

We requested that the Grover Lewis report be included within the instructions given to Douglas Insall, the authors of the UDC commissioned Heritage report, but it was not. In the

circumstances, we sent it to them directly requesting that they take it into account, which they have not.

The issue which the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group now wishes to raise before you is the absence of active engagement and consultation with us regarding the landscape and heritage evidence and assessments obtained by us for the purposes of our Neighbourhood Plan and their potential interrelationship with the equivalent evidence base and assessments obtained by the Council.

We very much appreciate the pressure and timetable that Officers are working to, but in order to achieve the best results for our Neighbourhood Plan, we respectfully ask that direct engagement and meaningful consultation be afforded to us and our highly regarded consultants in the future, and on an ongoing basis.

For the Residents of Stebbing to come to believe that UDC genuinely has ears open to listen to their opinions regarding their two most important concerns surrounding potential development in the Parish, namely adverse landscape and heritage impact, we as a Steering Group do request feedback from and interaction with Officers on our consultants' reports and advice, which has hitherto not been substantive.

Thank you for allowing us to address you.