



# Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting  
Crown Chambers, 1st Floor, 7a Market Place,  
Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Date: **Wednesday 25th January 2017**  
Start: **6pm**

## Present:

Cllr. Richard Wood (Chairman) (MWPC)  
Teresa Strange (MWPC)  
Cllr. Rolf Brindle (MWPC)  
Nick Westbrook (Health lead)  
Cllr. David Pollitt (Area Board)  
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)  
Cllr. John Glover (MWPC) (*part of meeting*)  
Steve Gray (Clerk, MTC)

Plus three members of the public

Notes: Phil McMullen, MCAP

## 1. Welcome and apologies

Richard welcomed those present to the meeting.

Phil reported that Apologies had been received from: David Way (Wiltshire Council), Colin Goodhind (MCAP), Shirley McCarthy (Environment Lead), Cllr. Andy Hinchciffe (MTC). It was noted that no Town Councillor was present this evening, substitute or otherwise.

## 2. Declaration of Interests

There is a standing declaration of interest in MCAP from Colin Goodhind, Nick Westbrook Shirley McCarthy and Phil McMullen. Nick Westbrook also has a standing interest in a company named Envolve Technology Ltd. Teresa Strange, as a trustee of Young Melksham, has an interest in any discussions regarding the Canberra.

Lorraine and Teresa explained that they had attended a Neighbourhood Plan training event earlier that day along with Jo and Marianne from MWPC. They observed that under declarations of interest, we ought to all declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and adopt a code of conduct, preferably the Wiltshire Council recommended code. This refers to anything financial such as a homeowner, tenant or leaseholder, for the whole of the designated area. **An action was placed on Phil to ensure it became an agenda item next meeting.**

[Link to: Example Copy of MPWC Code of Conduct](#)

## 3. Public Participation

Richard asked members of the public if they'd like to speak, which nobody present wished to.

#### 4. Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 Agree January 11<sup>th</sup> Minutes

[Link to copy of draft minutes](#)

Cllr. Brindle observed that Cllrs. should all be noted as such in the Minutes.

Cllr. Rolf Brindle proposed and Cllr. David Pollitt seconded and all were in favour that the minutes showed a true record of the meeting.

#### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising this evening.

#### 6. Finance Report

6.1 Payments for Approval

6.11 To consider the December 2016 invoice from MCAP reference 16/P/012 sum:  
£130.50

[MCAP timesheet for December](#)

Cllr. John Glover proposed that these were adopted as a true record. Cllr. Rolf Brindle seconded, all were in favour.

6.2 Current Budget

Steve Gray reported that the current budget is £9025.00

#### 7. AECOM's Draft Points of the Compass Appraisal

Teresa had spoken to Brian Colby, a member of the Health and Wellbeing task group who was experienced with spreadsheets, who had kindly added compass quadrants to the scoring spreadsheet. An exercise could be undertaken by sorting the spreadsheet to show where the lowest scoring sites occur.

Each of the task groups could map against the SHLAA sites to see if there were any conflicts with different groups allocating the same site for a different use.

The spreadsheet can be sent around to members of the steering group as required; it's not in the public domain.

Cllr. Richard Wood remarked that the AECOM report hadn't favoured or ruled out development in any particular area.

Nick Westbrook observed that it wasn't clear how the Quadrants had been decided.

Cllr. Rolf Brindle asked that councillors be given more time to consider the report [the report had been circulated with the agenda on Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup>]



An action was placed on Phil to add the AECOM report onto the Agenda and invite the author, Nick Chisholm-Batten, to give a presentation at the next meeting in order that the Steering group could review this document and make a decision.

## 8. Technical support update

It was agreed at the previous meeting that as Locality funding has to be used within 6 months or by the end of the financial year, we needed to apply in February in order that we are ready to go on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

We are therefore looking to appoint a consultant effective 1<sup>st</sup> April. Teresa Strange explained that an informal meeting had been held by representatives of the Steering Group with a consultant who had experience of Neighbourhood Planning in this area, Anthony Northcote, the Managing Director of Neighbourhood-Plan.co.uk, and his colleague Rachel Bust on 19<sup>th</sup> January.

From that meeting, a list of things that we need to address before appointing a consultant on 1<sup>st</sup> April had been drawn out as follows:

### 8.1 Designated Green Space(s)

There is a piece of work needed to be undertaken in order to designate green spaces. Some spaces are obviously designated as playing fields and play areas, but some incidental parts should just be designated as green spaces. For example, the area opposite Tesco Express in Bowerhill could be identified as such. It was important not to be too specific about restrictions on those spaces.

### 8.2 Choice of Examiner appointed by Wiltshire Council

Teresa explained that the choice of public examiner appointed by Wiltshire Council can be influenced. We could ensure not to have an examiner who had only done cities in the northern powerhouse for example, or at the other end of the scale examiners who had only dealt with very small villages in the past. We needed to be looking for an Examiner who had experience of a town with a large rural hinterland and high housing growth.

Nick Westbrook said that in his opinion we should immediately initiate a meeting with Wiltshire Council to influence this. We need to be quite clear about the fact that we need an examiner who recognises the connectivity of all the things we are talking about.

### 8.3. Drawing out specific issues (some for all; some for sub-groups)

Teresa explained that it was very important that the task group reports must be clearly evidence based. We need to be very clear that we can prove that what we are recommending is evidence based. All of the sources of information must be robustly evidenced and not based on public opinion.

### 8.4 Themes

The report needs to have a clear vision, then themes (might be more than just the 5 task group themes) and then a topics, with an objective for each topic and then a couple of sub topics (but not more than that). Anthony Northcote suggested looking at how the Calne Neighbourhood Plan was set out. There are a lot of objectives (70) in the draft Plan at present. All that information is vital, but some should be in the actual Plan (the statutory





planning document that goes to the Examiner), and the remainder should be in a separate Community Aspirations document.

Nick Westbrook questioned whether we have capacity across the task groups to carry that work out. He is concerned that the task groups may not have the capacity, particularly in the timescale (between now and 1<sup>st</sup> April), especially given that some of the people involved may be tied up with elections in March through to May.

### 8.5 Headlines

Teresa stated that it had been impressed on her that there has to be a reason for people to come out and vote "yes" for the Neighbourhood Plan at a referendum. There will have to be a campaign to promote it. Teresa suggested that headlines in Melksham might be the Melksham Link, an Eastern Bypass, Health Facilities, Town Regeneration, Employment, and the fact that we want more of developers' money [the Community Infrastructure Levy, or CIL] staying within Melksham as a result of the Plan existing. Other than preventing a free-for-all in planning terms, what is going to make the people come and vote yes and not no?

Is every area covered? Have we done things for one particular interest group in an area of Melksham and not done anything for other areas, for example? Have we inadvertently alienated a pocket of our community? Or a particular demographic?

### 8.6 Community Infrastructure Levy

Teresa stated that there should be a strategy for spending CIL money. It might be better that the Town and Parish councils establish a joint working group or separate groups to establish CIL priorities and then feed that to the Neighbourhood Plan. There is already some common ground between Town and Parish, and Teresa suggested that the three (Town, Parish and Neighbourhood Plan Steering group) might beneficially to work together.

### 8.7 Identify potential sources of photos for the draft Neighbourhood Plan

Teresa observed that we will need a selection of high quality photographs of the local area to complement the Neighbourhood Plan. She suggested we spoke to members of the public who regularly contributed to the "Historic Melksham" Facebook page. Phil agreed that Jonathan Joyce in particular took a lot of excellent local photographs. It was agreed that we should identify the specific areas we want covered to ensure we have a good selection. Teresa observed that Wiltshire Council will also produce the maps and plans that we ask for.

**It was agreed that the officers (Teresa and Lorraine) would get together and agree a way forward for the points raised above.**

## 9. Public Consultation(s) update

Teresa reported that there had been a public engagement event on 24<sup>th</sup> January at Berryfield Village Hall. Around 30 people had attended. This had only finished at 8.30 on the previous evening and the outcomes had yet to be collated.

The East of Melksham event is planned for 9<sup>th</sup> February at the Rugby Club between 6 to 8pm. It was agreed that the promotion to date, on notice boards and on social media and in the newspapers and newsletters, was effective.



Nick Westbrook proposed that we authorised appropriate spending on advertising. Seconded by Cllr. John Glover. All were in favour.

## 11. Any Other Business

11.1 Members of the steering group had participated in a regional Neighbourhood Planning event in Bath. Teresa and Lorraine had attended, and Nick Westbrook had been there for a part of the meeting.

Lorraine said that there had been some useful points raised. They had learned that grant support may not be available in future; there are Neighbourhood Champions available ("critical friends") who we can approach; there need to be strong, evidence based policies that MUST be really robust; that policy writing comes towards the end of the process; Locality and My Community have forums which people can access to ask questions [there is a link to the My Community forum at the end of these minutes]; it takes 21 people minimum to create a Neighbourhood Plan; we may need dispensations at some point; when it comes to the referendum there is a specific figure, a sum of money, that you must not go over for the campaign; we were advised not to promote the NP in any way during Purdah [15<sup>th</sup> March to 8<sup>th</sup> May].

Teresa said there are four key things needed, firstly a map of the area; secondly the plan, policies and proposals; thirdly a good consultation statement - you have to be able to prove that you have made every effort to ask people what they think, and show how it has influenced the plan. The fourth thing is the condition statements, the SEA etc.

We might need to identify and protect any historic elements such as the war memorial and the RAF gate and the Spa etc. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

We need to be very clear about managing consultants against clear tasks and agreed fees. We need to undertake a piece of work regarding appointing the consultants.

Teresa took heart from the fact that there is no problem that someone, somewhere has not already dealt with. Although both Lorraine and Teresa had been listing tasks still to be undertaken, they were reassured during the day that lots of plans were still in the "middle phase" with lots of information/evidence and were struggling through how best to organise it. So, despite them highlighting lots of things still to be done, or improved, there was lots of positives about what had already been done; it's just that tonight they were highlighting the items still outstanding.

### 11.2

Cllr. David Pollitt said that he had been approached by multi-faith groups requesting cemetery spaces and wondered if there was anything allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan, which is about land allocation. Steve Gray said that that multi-faith groups had also approached the Town Council. The Town Council had agreed that burial space is at present managed by Wiltshire Council and is in any case secular.

### 11.3

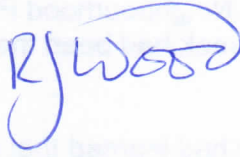
Cllr. Rolf Brindle observed that there is little about ecology and the environment in the Plan. Nick Westbrook said there is intentionally not a separate section, but there is a lot of information in the Sustainability Scoping report and there will be sustainability appraisals done on the policies.

The meeting closed at 20:10



12. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017

**Signed:**



**Chairman of MNPSG**

**Date:** 22/2/2017

**Links to supporting documentation and relevant sites of interest**

[LEP paper January 2016](#)

[Melksham Bowerhill SHLAA map Aug 15](#)

[Shaw SHLAA map Aug 15](#)

[Whitley SHLAA map Aug 15](#)

[Final Sustainability Scoping Report](#)

[Briefing Note 258 - WILTSHIRE HOUSING LAND SUPPLY STATEMENT 2015](#)

<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/resources/documents>

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

[Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum](#)

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/help-centre/forums/>

**Common Abbreviations: MNPSG = Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group; MCAP = Melksham Community Area Partnership; CAP = Community Area Partnership; AB = Area Board; SCOB = Shadow Community [campus] Operations Board; SG = Steering Group; TC = Town Council; MTC = Melksham Town Council; MWPC = Melksham Without Parish Council; PC = Parish Council; WC = Wiltshire Council; JSA = Joint Strategic Assessment; JSNA = Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; MIN = Melksham Independent News; DPD = Development Plan Document**