



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

1 Swift Way, Bowerhill, Melksham

Date: Wednesday, 1 May 2019

Start: 6pm

Present

Steering Group Members

i. Councillors

Cllr. John Glover (MWPC)
Cllr. Tony Watts (MTC)
Cllr Pat Aves (WC) (non voting)
Cllr. Phil Alford (WC)
Cllr Richard Wood (MWPC) - Chairman
Cllr Adrienne Westbrook (MTC)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)
Jo Eccleston (MWPC)
Linda Roberts (MTC)
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)
Jeff Mills (MTC)

ii. Community Representatives

Mr Rolph Brindle (Transport)
Mr Mike Sankey (Community)
Mrs Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

1. **Welcome & apologies:**

Apologies had been received from Colin Goodhind and Colin Harrison, Cllr Adrienne Westbrook was attending as substitute for Cllr Richard Wiltshire.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

There is a standing declaration of interest from Teresa Strange as a Trustee for Young Melksham.

3. **Public Participation (1 member of public present)**

The member of public did not wish to speak.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting:**

a) **Agree minutes of meeting held 27 March 2019:**

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2019 were formally approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.

b) Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

5. Finance Report

a) Current Budget: The current expenditure to date was confirmed as £25,414.86; £15,389.86 funded jointly by Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Council, with £3,550 being spent from current round of grant funding of £6,450.

The meeting was reminded that any funds left over would have to be returned.

Adrienne queried why all the grant funding had not been spent. Teresa explained grant funding had been requested to get the NP to a certain stage, however, as this had not happened within the year, it was a condition that any left over grant funding had to be returned.

b) Grant Funding Update

Teresa explained that the group would be able to apply for grant funding in May (no definitive date), along with technical support.

6. Website Update

Teresa explained she had spoken to Colin Harrison regarding updates on the website who explained his previous quote still stood.

7. Draft Policy Document

a) Guide to Policy Writing

A link had been provided to the latest edition of Writing Policies toolkit for the groups information which members of the group noted.

b) To consider supportive text for the Town Centre Section

Cllr Watts explain that Melksham Town Council had employed Nexus to undertake work on the Town Centre aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan, which had been forwarded to members earlier in the day, it was also explained the Town Council would also start on a Masterplan of the town shortly.

He explained the existing Town Centre sections 3.2 and 3.3 could remain as they are, with the following additional wording:

Proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment uses within edge of centre locations (defined as being roughly 500m from the Commercial Area Boundary on the Proposals Map) should be considered on the basis of their relationship to the existing town centre and the potential to expand the town centre. The Town Council will prepare a masterplan for the town

centre, including areas for potential expansion that will inform the potential development opportunities for the town centre.

Proposals for the change of use of existing employment land within edge of centre locations to retail, commercial and other main town centre uses falling within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, D1, and D2 of the Use Classes Order will be supported where the proposed development will generate the same number, or more permanent jobs than could be expected from the existing, or any potential employment use, subject to the relevant retail impact and sequential assessments.

A map defining the Town Centre was also circulated for reference.

In additional amendments had been made to the brownfield policies previously agreed:

a) Business Parks

The redevelopment of brownfield sites within the business park areas (shown as the Principal Employment Areas on the Proposals Map) for employment uses falling within Classes B1, B2, and B8 of the Use Classes Order will be supported where the proposed development will generate the same number, or more permanent jobs than could be expected from the existing, or any potential employment use. Proposals for small and new businesses on brownfield sites are particularly encouraged to enable the growth of a range of new employment opportunities.

b) Town Centre

The redevelopment of brownfield sites within the town centre areas (shown as the Commercial Area Boundary on the Proposals Map) involving change of use to retail, commercial and other main town centre uses falling within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, D1, and D2 of the Use Classes Order will be supported where the proposed development will generate the same number, or more permanent jobs than could be expected from the existing, or any potential employment use, subject to road safety, parking and environmental considerations.

c) Other locations

The redevelopment of brownfield sites outside of the above areas depicted for a) and b) above will be supported provided the proposals accords with the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Proposals for live/work premises within the settlement framework boundary will be supported provided the work element of the properties falls within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order.

Following lengthy discussion, it was:

AGREED: To support the inclusion of the above and to seek clarification from consultant on class uses regarding residential above retail units.

Tony explained the Canal policy had also been revised slightly in order to ensure any development did in fact support the canal project:

Wilts and Berks Canal

Proposals that support a Wilts and Berks Canal Restoration Project, particularly the new extension from the river Avon to a new junction with the Kennet & Avon Canal at Semington will be supported. Proposals that improve the river frontage, offer informal outdoor recreation opportunities and visitor facilities, open up access to the canal to for walking, cycling and boating are particularly encouraged, as are proposals for the creation of riparian wildlife habitats. Developments along the Melksham Canal Link (as defined on the Proposals Map) will be required to demonstrate how they contribute to the progression of the Wilts and Berks Canal Restoration Project.

Public rights of way along the route of the canal and river should be protected and improved to enable public access for all.

Following discussion,

AGREED: To include the above revised text.

c) To consider next steps following feedback from Lemon Gazelle on supporting text

Following a request for costings to LG on progressing the NP following recent modifications, Lemon Gazelle had expressed concern that the plan seemed to be failing to progress and indeed was going backward with endless reiterations and they questioned whether the group really wanted advice and support, or indeed the plan completed.

This had been copied into David Way, Spatial Planning, Wiltshire Council who had raised concerns over the delays in the plan and not getting to the stage that it could be submitted for its Regulation 14 consultation, especially as Wiltshire Council were currently reviewing the Local Plan.

Therefore, Teresa had sought advice on timings from David on how quickly the NP had to be submitted to WC for consultation and it was suggested the NP should be submitted by 1 July.

Submission to Reg 14 by 1 July made the dates very tight and past the adoption date recommended by his colleagues working on the Local Plan Review, therefore a view from the Steering Group was required on the way forward with the options being:

- a) The plan is finished quickly and a review started almost immediately to reflect the housing numbers (and other policies) in the LP as it would gain significant weight when it went out to consultation next year.
- b) The NP is delayed and restarted again to conform to the Local Plan and goes up to 2036.

Councillor Westbrook asked if there was a CIL policy within the plan and how this would be allocated between the 2 councils.

It was noted that both councils in 2017 had agreed some higher level generic areas for spending rather than specific projects and had agreed the following ideas for potential Local CIL

spending:

- Highway improvements
- Recreational improvements
- Health & Wellbeing facility improvements
- Public Transport improvements
- Provision of youth facilities
- Pedestrian and cycleway improvements

Linda explained that the document could just be a policy document at this stage to get it through the tight deadline with more work undertaken at a later stage.

The views of the group were varied but the consensus was to seek alternative consultants to get the plan to Reg 14 by 1 July, therefore it was:

RESOLVED: To seek alternative providers, with the proviso there is no delay to meet the 1 July deadline.

To seek a decision from both Council's as soon as possible on funding an alternative provider to get the NP to Reg 14 stage by 1 July.

For both Clerks to prepare a brief of work to be undertaken to forward to potential consultants to get the NP to Reg 14 and to seek reference.

8. Next meeting date:

Wednesday, 15 May 2019 at 1 Swift Way.

Signed:

Chairman of MNPSG

Date: