



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Date: Wednesday 26 July 2023

Start: 6.30 pm

Present:

Steering Group Members Present

Councillor Alan Baines (substitute MWPC)

Councillor Richard Wood (substitute MWPC)

Councillor Graham Ellis, Vice Chair (MTC)

Councillor Pat Aves (MTC)

Chris Holden (Melksham Community Area Partnership)

John Hamley (MTUG)

Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)

Linda Roberts (MTC)

Lorraine McRandle (MWPC)

Task Group Members:

Councillor Mark Harris (MPWC)

Councillor Sue Mortimer (MTC)

Planning Consultants:

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)

Via Zoom: One member of public

MTC

Melksham Town Council

MWPC

Melksham Without Parish Council

WC

Wiltshire Council

MTUG

Melksham Transport User Group

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Housekeeping

As Councillor David Pafford was away, Councillor Ellis took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting reminding those present of the fire evacuation procedure for the building. As well as a reminding those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on YouTube, until the minutes were approved.

Councillor Ellis thanked everyone for all their hard work so far in producing the draft plan.

2. To note apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors David Pafford, John Glover and Wiltshire Councillor Mike Sankey who were on holiday.

Councillors Baines and Wood were attending as substitutes for Councillors Pafford and Glover.

Apologies were received from John Hamley, who was delayed due to traffic Congestion, similarly Shirley was also delayed.

Shirley McCarthy arrived at 6.35pm.

3. Declarations of Interests & Register of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Participation

No members of public wished to speak.

5. Closed Session:

Resolved: For item 8 to be held in closed session, with members of the Housing Task Group remaining for this part of the meeting.

John Hamley arrived at 6.37pm.

6. a) To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 7 June 2023

It was noted Paul Lennox's name needed to be amended to Paul Lenaert, Wilts & Berks Canal under item 9.

Resolved: To approve with the above amendment and for the Chair to sign the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 7 June 2023.

b) To agree Confidential Notes to accompany minutes of 3 May & 7 June 2023.

Resolved: To approve and for the Chair to sign the Confidential Notes to accompany the minutes of the meetings held on 3 May and 7 June.

7. Wider Contextual Policy updates: To note current variables influencing the current programme

a) Publication of draft Local Plan by Wiltshire Council for consultation Autumn 23. For approval at Cabinet 11 July and Full Council 18 July. Link to Cabinet Papers:

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=14748>

i) To note report to **Cabinet** 11 July 2023.

ii) To note **Pre Submission Draft** 2020-2038 (Appendix 1)

iii) To note **Schedule of Policies** (Appendix 2)

iv) To note **Planning for Melksham Document:**

https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s216844/Planning_for_Melksham_July2023.pdf

Members noted the documentation relating to the Local Plan, which had been approved at Wiltshire Council's Cabinet on 11 July and Full Council on 18 July for consultation later in the year, with draft notes of both meetings available on Wiltshire Council's website, along with recordings of the meetings.

b) Pending changes to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) – not expected until at least after Govt summer recess

Members of the group noted changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were not expected until at least after the Government Summer recess.

The Member of public present in Zoom was asked to leave the meeting during this item and to wait in the virtual waiting room.

8. Site Allocations:

a) To approve the recommendations on site selections for Melksham and Shaw & Whitley by the Housing Task Group (with feedback from Melksham Town Programme

This item was held in closed session.

It was agreed to invite the member of public back into the meeting, however, it was noted they were no longer in the waiting room.

In line with the Terms of Reference, Members gave approval for the meeting to continue beyond 8.30pm.

9. To approve final shortlists for policy inclusion:

a) Local Green Space designations

The list included 48 sites.

It was noted several sites were not supported by the landowner(s) with clarification being sought if they could still be included.

Two sites had been removed from the list ie dog walking area to the rear of The Spa and the allotments to the rear of Locking Close. However, it was queried if the ownership detail relating to the dog walking area to the rear of the Spa was correct and why the allotments at Locking Close had been removed.

Vaughan explained the Steering Group could decide to withdraw those sites not supported by the landowner before Regulation 14, if it was felt the objections were suitable, or could take them forward and receive formal feedback at Regulation 14 and withdraw at this stage or continue with the

allocation, in order the Examiner can consider the allocation and any objections received and if they were valid reasons for an objection.

Resolved: To approve the list of local green spaces as presented including those where the landowner had objected and to seek further clarification on the allocation of the allotments at Locking Close and land ownership of the dog walking area to the rear of The Spa.

b) Non designated Heritage Assets

The meeting was informed the following had been missed off the list in the draft plan, as they had been added at a later stage:

Avonside Chimney and distinctive roofline.
Parts of former Wilts & Berks Canal & Railway line (541 Outmarsh)

It was noted at a previous Housing Task Group it had been suggested the parapet of the former Wilts & Berks Canal Bridge on Forest Road should be listed as a Heritage Asset.

Spindles, Top Lane, Whitley, had been removed from the list, as there had been a misunderstanding about its heritage, with the Bowerhill Turbine removed by the Heritage Task Group.

RESOLVED: To approve the list of Heritage Assets as presented, including Avonside Chimney & distinctive roof line and former Wilts & Berks Canal & Railway line (541 Outmarsh) and to include the former Wilts & Berks Canal Bridge on Forest Road.

10. Plan Drafting:

i) To consider if Melksham Neighbourhood Plan #2 to reference and conform to adopted Wiltshire Council Core Strategy or to emerging Local Plan.

Vaughan explained the neighbourhood plan had to be in conformity with the adopted Local Plan, which at present was the Core Strategy. However, it was out of date and as the Neighbourhood Plan would be going to 2038 and the Steering Group wanted the Neighbourhood Plan to sit alongside the Local Plan, sought a steer how the group wished to proceed, particularly as the advice from the Spatial Planning Officer was to conform to the Local Plan. It was noted if going to Examination before the Local Plan had been examined, the Core Strategy would still be the adopted development plan.

Vaughan explained that currently, the draft text referenced the Local Plan but may have to be ready to adjust the text and Basic Condition Statement to accompany the plan, noting it was difficult moving along the plan against the draft Local Plan being issued late in the process.

The Parish Clerk explained in order to make an informed decision and be sure the Plan in conformity with the emerging Local Plan was something that would

get through an Examination that a health check could be undertaken via technical support, which had just opened up for applications via Locality.

RESOLVED: To work towards conforming to the emerging Local Plan.

ii) To note application for further Site Assessment Technical Support for 2023/24 (Healthcheck by Planning Inspector)

RESOLVED: To apply for a health check via Locality.

iii) To approve draft plan (subject to typesetting, accessibility, map updates)

Shirley stated she had a few comments on the wording, which she would forward on to the Parish Clerk.

It was noted there was still an opportunity to refine some of the text and incorporate wording from Shirley, given there would be another meeting to approve the plan.

RESOLVED: To approve the draft plan, excluding the site allocations and final green spaces and heritage asset allocations; noting that some tweaking to text, maps etc was still required.

11. Evidence documents:

The Group noted the final version of the following reports, noting the Strategic Environmental Assessment SEA could not be completed, as site selection was still being undertaken.

- AECOM's Site Assessment
- AECOM's Town Centre Master Plan
- AECOM's Design Guide

Vaughan agreed to talk to AECOM to ask if they could undertake the SEA based on what was discussed earlier in the meeting regarding site selection.

It was noted the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) could be done alongside Regulation 14.

The Statement of Community Involvement was still work in progress.

12. Programme: To note current progress against Programme and agree timescale for Regulation 14 consultation (pending authorisation of the draft plan by the Qualifying Bodies, Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council in August) and the finalisation of the SEA by AECOM

Given the update regarding site selection, it was:

RESOLVED: To undertake the Regulation 14 consultation in the Autumn.

13. Promotion of Regulation 14 consultation:

a) To agree “message/principles” of new draft Plan for promotional materials

As it had been agreed to undertake Regulation 14 consultation in the Autumn, it was felt a decision could not be made on this item, as the message/principles may change as dependent on sites chosen.

b) To agree how to promote

Whilst it was noted there would be a delay in consultation on the plan, it would be useful to provide an update on progress of the plan at various upcoming events.

The Parish Clerk suggested it might be useful to hold a meeting prior to approval of the plan by the Qualifying Bodies (Melksham Town Council & Melksham Without Parish Council), with Members of both councils and Wiltshire Councillors in order to promote the highlights of the NHP#2.

RESOLVED: To provide updates on progress of the plan at various upcoming events and to arrange a meeting in early September of both town, parish councillors and Wiltshire Councillors.

14. Finance:

a) To note approved future budget approval by Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Councils

The Clerk informed the meeting Place had previously provided a quote in March 2022, in order to get the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan through to the Regulation 14 consultation, submission to Wiltshire Council, examination and adoption. However, additional work had been undertaken and other work would also be required to get the plan to the adopted stage, with a revised quote of £9,075 provided, with some of it previously approved under the original quote, therefore an additional £5,912.50 funding was required, to be split between both the Parish Council and the Town Council.

Breakdown of spending as at 31 March 2023 on NHP#2:

£29,024.60 (Total)
-£10,000.00 in grant funding
£19,066.33 (being split between both the Parish Council (30%) and Town Council (70%))

For financial year 2023/24 and into 2024/25:

Estimated to be: £16,632.60 (split £11,642.82 MTC and £4,989.78 MWPC)

These costs included the following to get to adoption stage:

Place invoice 6058	£3,957.60
+ Revised quote from Place	£9,075.00
+ Melksham News adverts for Reg 14 + Referendum (estimate)	£2,000.00
+ Leaflet drop & Reg 14 launch events (15,000 leaflets and delivery) (estimate)	£1,600.00

Both councils had approved the additional budget to enable the Steering Group to approve the additional costs, as well as the revised quote from Place.

RESOLVED: To approve the additional costs in order to get the plan through to Regulation 14 and adoption and the additional costs associated with the revised quote from Place of £ £9,075).

b) To approve quotation for additional work by Place and any invoices

Resolved: To approve the following invoices for payment:

Place Studio: £9,075 (inc VAT) Invoice Ref 6065 25/07/23
Wix £96 (for website hosting of new and old websites)

15. To agree date and venue of **Next Meeting of Steering Group**

Wednesday, 6 September at 6.30pm.

Meeting finished at 9.30pm

Signed.....
Chair, 6 September 2023