



Minutes of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 2 June 2020 at 5.45pm for 6pm start

Steering Group Members Present:

Cllr Clare Cape (CC)	Ross Henning (RH)
Cllr Nick Murry (NM - Chairman)	Jack Konynenburg (JK) (part)
Cllr John Scragg (JS)	Steve Perry (SP)
Cllr Sandie Webb (SW)	Dunstan Westbury (DW)

Officers Present:

Andrea Pellegram, Neighbourhood Planning Consultant (AP)
Mark Smith, Chief Executive (MS)
Andy Conroy, Planning Officer (AC)
Ann Chard, Administrative Officer - Planning (Notes)
Heather Rae, Democratic Services Manager (HR)
Michael Weeks, Democratic & Civic Officer (MW)

Prior to the meeting, the Chairman checked that everyone was able to participate.

102.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ruth Lloyd.
103.	<u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u> No declaration of interest was received.
104.	<u>PROTOCOL FOR PILOT VIRTUAL MEETINGS OF THE NPSG</u> HR ran through the Protocol for this virtual meeting and asked that everyone provide feedback to AC after the meeting.
105.	<u>MINUTES</u> The draft Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 March 2020 were approved as a correct record. The Chairman noted that a presentation from Andrew Tubb, Cirencester Town Council on Cirencester Market Place improvements and an item on evidence base and use of GIS were planned for the meeting on 7 April, which did not take place due to COVID. GIS will be discussed at another meeting.

106. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Virtual meetings - the NP SG would be piloting 4 meetings. Feedback to AC from those present would be appreciated.
- It was noted that the requirements relating to Wiltshire Council's 5 year housing land supply had not been met, resulting in speculative planning applications for development on non-allocated sites in Malmesbury and Lyneham. It was reported that Wiltshire Council had no option other than to approve these applications, despite the land being outside the respective Neighbourhood Plans (NPs), due to this county level shortfall. Cllr Whitehead had recently stated that Wiltshire Council (WC) was approximately 800 houses short of meeting its 5yr housing land supply, implying that unallocated land around Chippenham (as anywhere else in Wiltshire) could also be subject to speculative housing applications from developers (subject to meeting other planning requirements).

Under the current circumstances it will be harder to refuse housing developments on the edge of larger settlements. Wiltshire Council was reported to be working on a more up to date housing land supply figure but this has been delayed by the COVID situation. There could therefore be unplanned development in parts of Wiltshire until the 5yr supply was re-established. The implication of this for local plan making seems to be that if housebuilders fail to deliver, then the Local Plan and neighbourhood plans lose their ability to shape and guide development in their area.

107. **FEEDBACK FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNERS**

Members were updated on the following discussions with Wiltshire Council Planners since March:

- Wiltshire Council Green Infrastructure Survey - the NP Green Infrastructure Topic Group (TG) had submitted a response to the survey on behalf of the Town Council. The TG needs to keep in touch with Vicky Burvill at WC regarding aligning GIS.
- Changes to Local Plan Review Timetable -The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was revised in March 2020 to allow for further consultation with the wider community on growth proposals (Summer/ Autumn 2020) and because of greater emphasis on climate change. It is uncertain how much this has been further delayed due to COVID. The Local Plan was due to be adopted in the third quarter of 2021 but this has been extended to the first quarter of 2023. The 2020 Local Development Scheme is due for formal consultation in 2020, draft plan by 2021, examination in 2022 and adoption in 2023. It is likely the NP will be ready before this document is adopted.
- Statement of Common Ground for Local Plan - The Chair noted that following a discussion with the Wiltshire Council strategic planners late last year, we were still waiting to hear from them on further engagement. Meanwhile, the Town Council had met with WC and AC had worked with WC officers on a first draft but there were a few outstanding points. AC requested in March that WC agree to extend its deadline to give the Town Council time for the draft

to go to PET Committee then full Council for endorsement but had not heard back from WC since March 2020.

Actions:

- Green Infrastructure TG to keep in touch with Vicky Burvill at WC regarding aligning GIS.

108. **TOPIC GROUP UPDATES**

TG Chairmen updated Members on any developments that have occurred since March SG Meeting in relation to their Topic Group, as follows:

Community Infrastructure TG

AP reported that 3 surveys had come back and she was pleased to see a reasonable response. She has written a draft policy for community infrastructure (AC has seen this) together with draft policies for Housing. AP had taken dates from the group so that a Zoom meeting could be arranged to discuss.

Green Infrastructure TG

CC reported that not much progress had been made due to COVID.

Town Centre TG

JK reported on the following:

- Bridge Centre/Bath Road Car Park - a draft masterplan had now been completed. The next stage is to meet with WC representatives - date to be reconvened.
- Advertising and Shop Front Design Guide - this was almost done and the report just needed tweaking.
- Public Realm Improvements - this topic runs through other schemes.
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update - nearing completion. The Conservation Area includes 18 areas so it is a very large document and JK had done most of the work himself. Eleven areas had been completed so far and a couple of weeks more was needed. Buildings/areas had changed significantly since the old version was produced by NWDC in 2006/7 and attitudes had also changed since then, so it had to be brought up to date with current thinking. The key thing to address is who does the document belong to?
- River Green Masterplan - a useful meeting had taken place with the owners of Emery Gate and Chippenham 2020 but nothing had been progressed since lock down began. This item also crosses through the Green Infrastructure TG.
- This TG as a whole has not consulted the public yet so would like to hold an exhibition or public meeting. COVID makes this difficult to arrange. Things may change such as the social scene which may affect the quantity of cafes, restaurants needed. SW added that she and MS had met with the owners of Borough Parade and Emery Gate and suggested a meeting to discuss how things may change in light of the recent situation.

NM requested that any proposals being developed for the Town Centre be shared with the Steering Group at their earliest stage, given their potentially significant implications and importance to the NP. AP advised the TG to type up results and include lots of photos in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Shop Fronts Design Guide. The documents would be an appendices to the NP and in the case of the latter would have equal weight to the version produced by North Wiltshire District Council (NWDC). She confirmed that the NP would own the Conservation

Area document and JK would be the author. She suggested a paragraph at the beginning acknowledging that NWDC information had been used to produce the document. With regards to public consultation, Government has now allowed this to be done electronically so this would have to be considered further. JK added that he was concerned about promising things that may not be possible to deliver and NM advised being up front about this. AP suggested a section at the start of the NP acknowledging COVID and climate change and how these have affected the NP.

JS reported he has been working on the heritage side of the Built Environment and following information received from Mike Stone, he has to identify listed buildings in the Town. Needs to see what JK has produced to avoid duplication. JK added that the Conservation Area document lists all listed buildings and also buildings which it recommends be designated as listed. AP suggested that all non-designated heritage assets be listed in a separate policy. RH added that it might be good to designate such buildings as the Grammar School in Cocklebury Road.

Housing TG

SP raised a question regarding evidence of WC's 5yr housing land supply and NM explained that the reasoning provided by WC had been that a small number of large sites had not come forward as anticipated, effectively putting the 5yr supply in arrears. He suggested watching the publicly available recording of WC's recent Strategic Planning Committee meeting to obtain a better understanding of what seemed to be a complex matter.

RH said that no TG meetings had been held but that information had been collated and AP had produced a good paper on housing design. AP added that the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment had been finalised but was quite a technical document. The three housing design public workshops had been held in February and good responses received. A design code had been drafted and refined for all new development (AC had seen this). This will affect other policies so will have to overlay policies. At the end will put the background paper, design code document and 2 other policies together to make the NP. AP will circulate to TG and set up a meeting to discuss.

Actions:

AP to circulate draft housing policies and documents to TG.

Transport TG

JS referred to a briefing note from WC regarding better deals for bus services but said that the outlook for buses was worrying with Cirencester losing its coach company which supplied school transport. Results of the community survey had shown that only 3% of residents come into Town by bus. He emphasised the importance of the NP asking all new housing estates to take account of public transport infrastructure. Salisbury was leading the way with regard electric buses having introduced 3 already. It appears that a large proportion of residents either walk or cycle into Town which reinforces the need for better connectivity. He hoped that the 2m social distance measure currently in place could eventually be reduced to 1m to help buses run viably. Some double decker buses were in use but people were reluctant to use the upstairs. He referred to the recent guidance issued by the Government on utilising road space for pedestrians and cyclists.

DW added that Bristol was already reallocating road space and that money could be made available for local authorities for improvements to walking and cycling. AP added that Government funding for reallocation of roads was a good opportunity for the NP to work with the Highways Authority. NM confirmed that the Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group had submitted a response, which has been

shared with the Town Council, which he offered to share with the Transport TG. DW reported that due to COVID not much had been done since the last meeting but asked when the TG would meet again. AC agreed to assist in setting up a Zoom meeting for the TG.

Actions:

NM to share response from the Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group with Transport TG.

Economy TG

AC reported that no meetings had taken place but he had emailed the TG regarding the possibility of a meeting taking place next week. There had been a poor response to the business survey, with a mixture of businesses responding but that there were no clear directions from the results. He would liaise with AP on what information could be taken from the survey. SP added that office space should be taken into account due to more home working since lock down and start up units for short periods. AP confirmed that it was possible to have policies which encouraged this way of working. She added that Salisbury was not carrying out a business survey. Another electronic survey could be carried out in a few months regarding incubator units, home working, etc. AC mentioned the need to push forward policies on these despite the survey results. He referred to the Showell Farm application which only made provision for about 5 small units. DW asked if direct contact with businesses which had not responded to the surveys would be a good idea. AC said that originally the TG had planned to chase responses from businesses via telephone/ meetings but because of COVID this had not been followed up. CC added that because of COVID, there is a need to be flexible and future proof everything.

Sustainability & Climate Change TG

NM reported that 3 policies were being considered:

- 1) Net zero carbon development - although, as principle authorities generally manage the 'allowable solutions' (offset fund) aspect of this, the TG would need to talk to WC about how this could be aligned with them/ their policies;
- 2) Renewable energy - this was an area in which the NP could make a significant difference in enabling investment in renewables. This could include identifying suitable areas for specific types of renewable energy, such as areas away from development suitable for wind turbines, with suitable wind speed. AP suggested a 'call for sites' could be carried out relating to this. A report from the Renewable Energy Workshop held in February had identified where and how renewable energy could be generated in our NP area, though it had been a surprise to participants that the types/ locations identified would be likely to meet about only 20% of the town's total energy requirement, which was apparently normal for an urban area. NM had also had a virtual meeting with Dan Stone from the Centre for Sustainable Energy and it was suggested that viability needed to be tested so that it could be demonstrated that our proposed carbon neutral development policy would be viable in our NP area (as part of the evidence base). Funding could potentially be secured to help with this; and
- 3) Listed buildings and Conservation Area policy that made it less restrictive for properties to insulate (incl. double glazing) and generate renewable energy. NM also mentioned that measures such as requiring developers to include an energy strategy for large scale developments would be supportive of zero carbon development. A TG meeting is due to take place before the next NP SG meeting. CC asked a question about further appraisal work (e.g. what 100% renewable energy for Chippenham would look like). NM said this could be included in further work undertaken by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, if funding was available.

(JK gave his apologies and left the meeting at 7.12pm).

<p>109.</p>	<p><u>SURVEY RESULTS</u></p> <p>NM reported that John Coles Park had scored highly in the Community Infrastructure survey. (There was a short break due to loss of connection). Wildlife, biodiversity, play and pedestrian/ cycle routes also featured highly in the survey responses. NM ran through the summary and pointed out that the results were generally aligned with our Pre-Vision survey (though more detailed), which was encouraging. AP added that this evidence from the community proves a need and stats should be woven into policies (alongside other evidence).</p> <p>Community Infrastructure - enough information was obtained and was consistent with the engagement survey. This had enabled AP to write a policy.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure - CC was pleased with the results. There was support for biodiversity, etc. She asked whether the volume of responses was proportionate for the size of town and AP said it was reasonable. JS thought there was a good democratic spread. SW was disappointed that many referred to ‘The Neeld Hall’ and not to ‘The Neeld’ and that the response was not as good as was expected. It was noted that the demographic showed a variation in age groups, social class, etc. possibly due to the survey being on-line rather than having stalls and SW suggested this be taken into account when looking at the results.</p> <p>RH pointed out that not all of the Community survey was filled in and perhaps had been better represented by some groups rather than others. Information would be useful to the Housing TG. The survey contained a ‘wish list’ but it was a shame that the response rate had not been better in parts (possibly too many questions?). It was mentioned that there had been considerable input on the need for cycle network improvements. NM was struck by the consistency of the results with the Pre-Vision survey (which used different methods of data collection (i.e. included face-to-face) and potentially a different demographic profile.</p> <p>Transport - DW said there were no surprises with the results but that the distance commuted to work was lower than expected. Many answered “detached” to the question “what kind of home best suits your needs?” which would be difficult to accommodate. JS was surprised by the number of people walking into Town and would like to see a shift towards public transport. AC added that access to green spaces, gardens and communal spaces being much more important following COVID be explored. AP said that her draft design policy asks for parks and balconies in new housing development and suggested looking at this again. DW was surprised how little mention there was of educational provision and AP reminded him that the NP cannot influence this. CC mentioned that lockdown could have skewed the results with regard to numbers walking. RH suggested that while walking is popular, advantage should be taken to improve paths and cycle ways. RH queried whether a further survey could be undertaken to enable gaps to be filled but NM stressed that policies now need to be produced but that TGs could still engage with groups/ undertake further evidence gathering, as required, without the need for another community wide survey on all topics.</p>
	<p><u>PROJECT TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS</u></p> <p>AC ran through the project timeline, as agreed at the last meeting, and explained that 2 months had been lost due to COVID. The Framework for Next Steps flowchart as presented was agreed. The survey results would now be made public. He added that the target date of 30 June for the submission of TG draft proformas could be extended if justified in specific instances.</p>

	<p>NM proposed that the August meeting should not be skipped as in previous years, partly to make up for lost meetings as a result of the COVID situation. There were no objections and it was agreed that the August meeting would go ahead.</p> <p>NM reminded the TG Chairmen/Vice Chairmen of the need to step up output in order to complete the TG Phase.</p> <p>Actions: TG Chairmen to host virtual meetings of their TG's during early-mid June so that proformas/draft policies can be sent to AC before 30 June to collate for next SG Meeting.</p>
111.	<p><u>ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back on actions from TG Meetings • Scrutinise TG draft proformas and policies • Use of GIS
112.	<p><u>DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>7 July 2020, 6pm, Remote meeting.</p>
	<p>The meeting finished at 7.45 pm</p> <p>SG members were reminded to send feedback on this meeting to AC.</p>