



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

**Crown Chambers, 1st Floor, 7a Market Place,
Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6ES**

Date: Wednesday 24th February 2016

Start: 6pm

Present:

Cllr. Richard Wood (Chairman) (MWPC)
Teresa Strange (Clerk, MWPC)
Cllr. Rolf Brindle (MWPC) (Transport lead)
Nick Westbrook (Health lead)
Steve Gray (Clerk, Melksham Town Council)
Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe (MTC)
David Way (Wiltshire Council)
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)
Cllr. David Pollitt (Melksham Area Board)
Shirley McCarthy (Environment)
Cllr. Paul Carter (MWPC)
Mark Ashkowski (Housing)
Colin Goodhind (MCAP)
Cllr Pat Aves (Melksham Area Board)
Cllr. Alan Baines (MWPC)

Notes: Phil McMullen, MCAP

And six members of the public

Agenda

1. Welcome & apologies

2. Declaration of Interests

3. Public Participation

4. Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 Agree January 27th Minutes

[Link to draft January 27th Minutes](#)

5. Matters Arising

6. Finance Report

6.1 Grant funding and technical support that is available to the Neighbourhood Plan steering group through Locality (see email below)

6.2 Payments for Approval

6.21 To consider the January 2016 invoice from MCAP reference 16/P/001
sum: £319.00

[MCAP timesheet for January 2016](#)

6.3 Current Budget

7. Update on Wiltshire Council's Strategic Committee meeting being held on Weds 10th February - they are making a decision on the Planning Application for the 450 houses Land East of Spa Road (There are 2 tandem applications [14/10461/OUT](#) and [14/06938/OUT](#)). The decision outcome as well as Wiltshire Council's reasoning are both worth noting as well as the sums that would be provided for education and a proposed school extension.

8. Public Participation Sub-Group

8.1 Public Participation Group report

[Copy of report](#)

9. Reports from Task Groups

9.1 Housing (lead: Mark Ashkowski)

[Housing presentation](#)

9.2 Health and Wellbeing (lead: Nick Westbrook)

[Copy of report](#)

9.3 Transport (lead: Rolf Brindle)

9.4 Business (lead: Bruce Sanders)

[Copy of report](#)

9.5 Education (lead: Richard Wood)

10. Environmental section

(carried forward to next meeting)

11. Website

12. Any Other Business

13. **Date of Next Meeting:** scheduled for Wednesday 30th March 2016

1. Welcome and apologies

Phil reported that apologies had been received from Cllr John Glover and Bruce Sanders. Cllr Paul Carter stood in place of Cllr Glover.

Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly members of the public, and made some announcements regarding the facilities at MWPC offices.

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 has a standing interest in education as a Governor of Aloeric School. Paul Carter and Richard Wood live in Berryfields and said they do not have pecuniary interests in the canal according to the ethical guidance officer whose advice was sought.

3. Public Participation

There were various members of the public present at the meeting. Richard explained that members of the public were able to contribute to this section of the meeting, and reiterated that the Neighbourhood Plan was all about planning land usage.

Robert Marsh said he was concerned about any plans to build houses to the east of Semington Road. He understood that this had previously been turned down for “sound legal and technical reasons” and was assuming that those reasons still stood.

There were no other comments made by members of the public at the meeting.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

44.1 Agree January 27th Minutes

[Link to draft January 27th Minutes](#)

Nick Westbrook proposed that the Minutes of January meeting were accepted. Rolf Brindle seconded. All were in favour. The minutes were signed off by Richard Wood.

5. Matters Arising

Teresa said that Melksham Without Parish Council had provided an official view on the canal. They have concerns about the size and the detail of latest proposals they have seen, but are broadly in favour of the Melksham Link.

6. Finance report

6.1 Grant Funding

From: Chisholm-Batten, Nick [<mailto:nick.chisholm-batten@aecom.com>] **Sent:** 10 November 2015 11:03 **To:** Way, David **Cc:** White, Alex **Subject:** Technical Support packages

Hi David,

It was good speaking with you then.

As discussed, here is the information relating to the Technical Support I referred to:

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/? a=funding>

In a nutshell, Technical Support Packages are support packages which Neighbourhood Groups can gain in addition to the standard £8k grant funding most are eligible for. They enable Neighbourhood Groups to apply for various packages, including:

- * Housing Needs Assessment
- * Heritage and Character Assessment
- * Site Options and Assessment
- * Strategic Environmental Assessment
- * Environmental Impact Assessment
- * Habitats Regulations Assessment
- * Urban Design and Masterplanning
- * Viability of Proposals
- * Evidence base and policy review
- * Facilitation support
- * Establishing a Neighbourhood Forum
- * Plan health check prior to examination.

A Neighbourhood Group is eligible if any of the below applies:

- * The Neighbourhood Area covers a large population (population over 25k)
- * There are complex administrative arrangements (such as three or more parishes)
- * The Neighbourhood Area covers deprived areas
- * The Neighbourhood Group is preparing an NDO
- * It is a business-led Neighbourhood Plan
- * **It can be demonstrated that the Neighbourhood Plan will be 'High Growth'**

Delivered by AECOM in partnership with Locality, the technical packages will be directly funded by DCLG through the programme. So in effect, the packages would be 'free' to the Neighbourhood Group.

Another element to note is that once a group has been awarded one package, they are able (and encouraged) to apply for additional packages. Which they would be very likely to receive, as they have already met the criteria. So Calne would be likely to gain a Housing Needs Assessment package if they were to apply.

A key criteria which some might meet though is to demonstrate they are 'High Growth'. In this context if it can be shown that a Neighbourhood Group has a clear aim to deliver more than is stated in the Core Strategy, then they would be considered 'High Growth'. They would then be able to access these packages, which would in effect be delivered as free packages. I believe Ashton Keynes and Langley Burrell have also been successful in applying for Technical Packages on this basis.

I hope the above makes sense and is helpful.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Best regards,

Nick

Nick Chisholm-Batten Principal Consultant, Policy and Appraisal D +44-01752-676721 M +44-07824-413331 nick.chisholm-batten@aecom.com **AECOM** Mayflower House 178 Armada Way Plymouth PL1 1LD, UK T +44-01752-676700 aecom.com **Built to deliver a better world** [LinkedIn](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

Teresa said that MWPC had looked at the Chippenham rejection and one of the reasons given stressed the need to get the Sustainability Appraisal right. David said that this funding referred to above would be additional funding on top of the £8,000. Mark Ashkowski said it was clear that there needs to be expert advice given on some of the sites. It was agreed that an application should be made.

6.2 Payments for Approval

6.21 To consider the January 2016 invoice from MCAP reference 16/P/001
sum: £319.00

[MCAP timesheet for January 2016](#)

Paul Carter proposed and Andy Hinchcliffe seconded and all were in favour. This was signed off by Richard.

6.3 Current Budget

Steve stated that the current total is £5065.75

7. Update on Wiltshire Council's Strategic Committee meeting being held on Weds 10th February - they are making a decision on the Planning Application for the 450 houses Land East of Spa Road (There are 2 tandem applications [14/10461/OUT](#) and [14/06938/OUT](#)). The decision outcome as well as Wiltshire Council's reasoning are both worth noting as well as the sums that would be provided for education and a proposed school extension.

Teresa said that the planning committee for MWPC looked in detail at this on Monday. Wiltshire Council are unable to prove their 5 year land supply therefore there is presumption in favour unless there are mitigating circumstances.

There is £2m allocated for primary school places which may be used to extend the new Forest and Sandridge School. In terms of the NHS sum, there is capacity at two of the 3 GP surgeries so the money is to be used for car parking extension at the back of the Spa medical Surgery. There is some question over this however.

Nick wanted to ask, from a health perspective, if capacity at the two surgeries is based on Wiltshire Council's population projection – however we are already 5 years ahead of the target, and any new houses will take us beyond the 2026 projection. The CCG appeared taken aback at the extent of population growth in the Melksham area.

Rolf wondered if there was some way that we could at least guess how much development is going to be moved onto us because of the lack of land supply, or whether it's going to

be taken up by other towns. Teresa confirmed that she had established that the 450 houses go some way towards mitigating the five year land supply. David Way said if they are deliverable in the next five years then they will count towards the five year land supply.

8. Public Participation Sub-Group.

8.1 Public Participation Group report

[Nick Westbrook provided a written report:](#)

Nick encouraged further open house events, around the area, and recommended that we adopt an overall strategic vision.

Richard agree we should set a date for a series of workshops, perhaps in the summer. Authority was given for this to go ahead. All were in favour.

9. Task Groups

9.1 Housing (lead: Mark Ashkowski)

[Housing presentation](#)

Mark Ashkowski said he wanted to outline the work the Housing group had been doing to identify sites which MAY be used in the coming years for housing.

They have looked at 65 sites, which had been considered as possibly suitable for development. Their job was to decide which were the most appropriate. Numerous sites which were in flood zones were excluded. There were 47 sites remaining. Mark stressed that it' s a sorting aid at this stage, and no in-person site visits or expert opinion had been sought.

Mark went on to present an overview of the "long list" . He stressed that this isn' t strategic. He then presented the short lists – East of Melksham, land in Bowerhill, land in Beanacre. The canal could potentially add 800 houses to the area, however there is still significant uncertainty over that. The risk is that we could over supply, so me may wish to issue a proviso that the housing need is not met by the canal.

The various pro's and con's of the preferred sites were put forward by Mark.

Mark summarised by reiterating that the housing group believe Option 1, land to the east of Melksham is the best for meeting Melksham's future growth requirements.

Nick asked whether there was an indication of how many houses would go on some of the sites, which he confirmed. Where possible that has been reflected, but there is some guesswork involved.

David Way said Wiltshire Council are also assessing SHLAA sites for their Housing Allocation Plan. There are a number of live applications which require decisions. Our intention is to continue to plan a Housing Site Allocations Plan for Melksham based on the core strategy, pending the Neighbourhood Plan. That information cannot be shared at present as it's confidential. David said that he considered that the work that Mark's been doing is excellent. He agreed that we can't rely on the canal – no figures have been seen yet. It could be this year or three or four years' time, so the Core Strategy is the document that figures need to be based on.

Mark responded that the assessment of sites that we're undertaking is a filtering exercise to focus the mind, narrowing down the 60 and then 47 SHLAA sites into something more manageable. We could determine a strategy now which could be used for the long term – ten or 20 years time. David agreed; the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every five years or so in future, so having the bulk of site assessments done now for future reviews can only be a good thing.

Richard said we need to come to a decision whether or not to support the Housing Group's proposal that we support the east of Melksham.

Paul Carter agreed that he personally felt the East of Melksham option carries the most weight.

Nick Westbrook agreed that it's important that we have an overall strategy. There are some sites that we need to stress they are not suitable for housing land and could more usefully be used as employment land, for leisure, for health facilities. He stressed that the A350 is a national strategic route and a bridge over the Avon would be built if it was needed. In principal he approved the adoption of the East of Melksham proposal.

Rolf agreed on having a wider vision. At present all we have is a plan for houses and a road. There needs to be public open space provision as well. He considered that the problem with setting this as strategy is that the canal proposal will come forward and that the eastern bypass will already be our preferred option.

Mark: Whatever happens, a view has to be taken on where we are going to have our housing, and that also permits how we are going to put our other requirements such as industrial and health care.

Teresa reminded the steering group that MPWC had already taken a strategic view in favour of east of Melksham. Looking at the latest report regarding Chippenham, the criticism against the eastern relief road in Chippenham was that there was no strategy for the housing (amongst other things), and that the sustainability appraisal should consider reasonable alternatives (flood plains are not a reasonable alternative). David Way reiterated that it's important to get the plan in place ASAP. At least a draft plan which we have consulted with the community over. ACOMM can do the sustainability appraisal for us. We are clearly a high-growth plan area.

Steve Gray said that he wished the thanks of the steering group to be formally recorded to mark and his group for the excellent work that they'd undertaken.

David Way said it was up to the steering group to decide how they want the town to grow. If they can get a plan adopted for the next 20 years then WE will be deciding how the town grows and it won't just be down to developers to decide. The 611 houses stated in the core strategy is an indicative figure.

David mentioned that he's had a new SHLAA application in for the south of Snarlton Farm, again East of Melksham.

The people of Melksham need to be given options to choose a favoured one from.

David said there could be a preferred option offered. The SA needs to mention a whole range of sites – alternative sites as well. Combine that with our own site considerations and then that can be presented as an option to the public. We may need to put some proposals to the public, via informal consultations, before the SA is begun.

Richard said that the first thing to do is a sustainability assessment of all possible sites. We need to sort out the funding and press ahead with that. The two clerks were tasked with pursuing this.

Rolf remarked that the 6ha. of industrial land had already been identified, east of Hampton Park. The 450 houses east of Melksham has already been passed, and any week now another will be passed, which will together total the 611 houses in the Core Strategy.

9.2 Health and Wellbeing (lead: Nick Westbrook)

Nick Westbrook provided a written update:

[Report to Steering Group](#)

Nick reiterated that there had been a very useful meeting with the CCG in February. They are very keen on evidence and building the business case. He observed that we have to establish land use sites potentially for an ambulance station if the buses stop running.

9.3 Transport (lead: Rolf Brindle)

Rolf said it' s been very useful getting a steer from the committee that it' s the eastern by-pass that' s being looked at as the main option for development. Rolf noted that there is an intention to extend the existing Melksham railway station platform to the north.

9.3 Business (lead: Bruce Sanders)

[Copy of written report](#)

Phil said that businesses had now started to feed information back to him based on the survey he sent out. An action was placed on Phil to contact David Way with a request for help in getting hold of details of business rate addresses in Melksham.

9.5 Education (lead: Richard Wood)

Richard said he needed to contact Claire Medland in light of the recent proposals

involving a potential new School. This would presumably not be enough for a two-form entry, which appeared to break Wiltshire Council' s current rules.

10. Environmental Report

Approval of the draft Sustainability Scoping Report was carried forward to the next meeting.

Shirley said the Centre for the Sustainable Industry has looked at our sustainability appraisal and has made some comments, which would be fed back to Phil. Permission was received to invite a speaker from the organisation to the next meeting.

Phil reminded the meeting of what David Way had said in August what the Next Steps were to be:

An action was placed on Phil to revise the draft, taking into the account the comments, include an appendix showing those; the report should then be issued. No need to send it to them again. As these policies come together we will produce the S.E.A. report. The S.E.A. is the audit trail of how we got there – the story of the Neighbourhood Plan.

David noted that Calne have consultants who are doing site assessments and producing the S.E.A. report.

The Scoping report is the first part of that. When we come to consult on our draft

11. Website

Nick has found someone to assist Phil in how to get papers uploaded to the website.

12. Any Other Business

13. Date of Next Meeting

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 30th March at 6pm

Signed:

Chairman of MNPSG

Date:

Links to supporting documentation and relevant sites of interest

[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](#)

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