



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

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

Date: Wednesday 29th March 2017

Start: 6pm

Present:

Cllr. Richard Wood (MWPC) (Chairman)
Teresa Strange (MWPC)
Cllr. Rolf Brindle (MWPC)
Nick Westbrook (Health lead)
Steve Gray (Clerk, MTC)
Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe (MTC)
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)
Cllr. David Pollitt (Area Board)
David Way (Wiltshire Council)
Cllr. Paul Carter (MWPC) substitute for Cllr John Glover

Notes: Phil McMullen, MCAP

1. Appointment of Chairman

Cllr. Richard Wood was available after all so Chaired the meeting.

2. Welcome and apologies

Cllr. Richard Wood welcomed those present to the meeting.

Phil reported that apologies had been received from Cllr John Glover (MWPC), Cllr. Richard Wiltshire (MTC), Shirley McCarthy (Environment), Colin Goodhind (MCAP).

3. 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.

Teresa Strange explained that Melksham Town and MWPC have both adopted Wiltshire Council's code of conduct.

Wiltshire Council's Democratic Services had advised that their Code of Conduct had not changed, but supplementary guidance had been added as an appendix.

3.1 to consider adopting a formal Code of Conduct

3.2 to consider adopting Register of Interests form

Teresa spoke on behalf of the officers present to recommend that these are completed and included on the website. Cllr. David Pollitt agreed that this was a sensible measure.

Nick Westbrook asked that they be renamed the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan documents. Given this amendment, Cllr. Richard Wood formally proposed, and Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe seconded, a vote was taken and all were in favour of both being adopted. It was agreed that the Register of Interests needed to be completed and brought to the next Steering Group meeting.

Cllr. Richard Wood proposed, Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe seconded and all were in favour.

4. Public Participation

There was one member of the public in attendance, who wished only to observe.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

5.1 Agree February 22nd Minutes

Link: [copy of draft minutes](#)

Teresa Strange noted that on page 2, reference the declaration of interests, it referred to the designated area. It should state “for their respective areas” and not for the designated areas as individual Parish and Town Councillor registers only covered their own parish, not both areas.

Cllr. Richard Wood noted that there was a correction needed in the next paragraph with a typo error on “MWPC”

Nick Westbrook queried the minute under matters arising 5. He was referring to having a meeting with Wiltshire Council to discuss the appointment of an examiner, rather than appoint an Examiner at this stage. We agreed under 8.22 to hold such a meeting.

Teresa Strange said that we needed to organise a timeline. David Way agreed. He went on to explain that once the process was two weeks into the six week publicity period Wiltshire Council needed to approach NPIRS who would provide three CVs and we would jointly decide which examiner to appoint.

Teresa Strange mentioned the Points of Compass appraisal and the transport appraisal referred to on page 4. Councillors met on 28th February and have submitted them to Nick Chisholm-Batten from AECOM.

Cllr. Rolf Brindle proposed and Cllr. Richard Wood seconded from the chair and all were in favour that the minutes thus amended showed a true record of the meeting.

7. Finance Report

7.1 Payments for Approval

7.11 To consider the February 2017 invoice from MCAP reference 17/P/002 sum: £319.00

link: [MCAP timesheet for February](#)

7.12 Repay invoice for Melksham Independent News advert sum: £171.00

link: [MIN invoice](#)

Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe proposed, Cllr. Rolf Brindle seconded and all were in favour that both invoices were paid as shown.

7.2 Current Budget – Steve Gray stated that expenditure to date is £9770

8. Consider requesting an update on the W&B Canal

a) Wiltshire Council decision on planning application

b) Update on the sites and enabling development application

Teresa said that the original planning application for the route was dated 2012, and the map of proposed enabling development was now 18 months old. It was definitely worth seeking an update before engaging technical support to assess such sites.

David Way said it was sensible to support the concept of enabling developing sites but it's not worth spending time and money on something which might be some way off, potentially circa. 2026.

Cllr. Rolf Brindle stated that his understanding was that Phase 1 development (the marina) was to be brought forward shortly.

Nick Westbrook proposed that we seek an update on both (a) and (b) so we have some evidence to put in the Neighbourhood Plan. He believes it would also be sensible to give the local members of the Canal Trust the opportunity to tell us what they believe the timescale is. Cllr. Rolf Brindle seconded that proposal. Five were in favour with one abstention.

9. Agree list of sites to be assessed by AECOM

[Sites to be assessed paper](#)

Lorraine McRandle stated that the officers had met and established a list of 15 sites, which had been submitted for consideration.

Nick Chisholm-Batten from AECOM reported via email, "The rationale you have set out all makes sense. It wasn't easy to make clear, but I think you certainly have succeeded in this. On this basis we will be happy to go with the 15 sites selected for our site assessment."

Teresa Strange explained the rationale behind the establishment of the fifteen sites and clusters.

The Group considered the following principles:

Criteria for Assessing Sites: 15/20 sites are the number of sites to be assessed *With the proviso of a statement about the fact that we have already reached our housing numbers, so only looking to allocate sites that are providing some sort of community benefit.*

The Criteria for shortlisting the list of sites to be assessed by AECOM are: *in no particular order*

- Preference of Brownfield Sites over Greenfield Sites (in line with new Planning legislature coming in). List of possible brownfield sites has been considered by reviewing list of

Wiltshire Council owned land, NHS owned land and likely private sites from local knowledge **AGREED**

- Enabling development for the Melksham Link Canal (this is a community benefit) **NOT AGREED** (*see later discussion re: Site 8*)
- Low scoring SHLAA sites. For the definition of low scoring, these have been taken from the list of those with a score under 316 (Housing Task Group Scores) as the lowest score was 216. **AGREED**
- Enabling development for Eastern Bypass **NOT AGREED**, as this is not likely to be deliverable for life of Plan, instead include a policy about protecting the route (a good example of wording is from Roche Neighbourhood Plan which is doing similar thing)
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Criteria for NOT Assessing Sites:

- Brownfield Exception Sites – so should be allocated for a use other than housing
- Brownfield site but not expected to come forward
- Low scoring SHLAA site BUT has already had a planning application decision against that site

Teresa explained that much of the information on the potential brownfield sites owned by Wiltshire Council had been clarified with Wiltshire Council property management officers.

Cllr. Richard Wood asked when we need to do a public consultation regarding the principles. Teresa said we cannot undertake any public consultation during Purdah, and secondly that we need to arrange to visit the sites with Nick Chisholm-Batten from AECOM which would take a while to set up; therefore we would be looking at the end of May for both exercises.

Nick Westbrook said that in relation to the public consultation exercise, the identification of some brownfield sites needed more evidence to establish why decisions had been taken. In terms of the public consultation, we should be holding a major event which is extremely well focussed.

David Way said it is right that 60 sites should be whittled down to 15. Nick Chisholm-Batten from AECOM is doing the assessment report and the SEA and will consider the 15 sites and the process which was used to reduce the number from 60. Now we have the 15 good potential sites now would be a very good time to undertake a public consultation. Calne had likewise reduced to 15 and from that two favoured sites had emerged. We would need to show our working of how we came to that conclusion.

It was noted that the site numbering is in no particular order.

Site 1 was a cluster and was preferred as a “silver village” for older people. Teresa Strange referred the meeting to the new Housing White Paper for clarification (see para. 10)

There was some debate whether a further potential site adjacent should be included, and it was agreed not to. David Way said that it should be ensured that sites would be available. You would exclude sites that are not available or protected (e.g. for recreational use).

There would be a separate exercise to establish the designation of public open space.

Site 2 was another cluster, defined as a brownfield mixed retail and industrial and leisure and open space site with some housing.

Site 3 was to be a brownfield exception site. One part has been sold off to a private developer so it's not all Wiltshire Council owned. Some of it is leased. Cllr. Rolf Brindle was concerned about the use of the word "industrial" in that context. Nick Westbrook proposed and Cllr. Richard Wood agreed that a statement should be included to ensure that public parking should be retained.

Site 4 is a possible brownfield site. It was confirmed that the SHLAA site includes the garage. David Way proposed that the landowner should be consulted to establish whether the garage was still included in the SHLAA site. This was agreed to as an action. The land next door should be excluded as there is no evidence that it's available.

David Way asked whether we were considering doing a "call for sites" exercise. Steve Gray said he was concerned that it seems incongruous to look for more sites when we are simultaneously trying to whittle the number of sites down.

Site 5 should be excluded as it's based on anecdotal evidence.

Site 6 is another cluster. There is anecdotal evidence to support the fact that jointly, the sites could potentially become available at a later date. David Way observed that Wiltshire Council would need to confirm whether the land is likely to become available.

Steve Gray proposed that it's removed from the list on the basis that there's no evidence that it's deliverable. Cllr. Rolf Brindle agreed.

PMN Nick Westbrook suggested that Sites 5 and 6 should INSERT words AFTER (sites should be excluded) ... INSERT from assessment because etc (based on assumptions), likewise site 11 unless (add if NOT etc ...);

Site 7 is a cluster of possible brownfield sites. Nick Westbrook suggested that it was potentially viable in part. Cllr Richard Wood proposed that the school should be removed from the equation.

PMN: Nick Westbrook stated that he thought we had deleted Riverbed School site from site 7.

Site 8 concerns primarily enabling development and neighbouring SHLAA sites for the canal. David Way noted that sites that already have planning permission would not be included. Sites that are away from the settlement boundary were not considered. He would not allocate sites but suggested having a supportive policy for housing development in line with Core Policy 16 – with a strict caveat that we would support sites that are included in the canal masterplan coming forward as part of scheme. The core strategy protects the route of the canal. Proposed by Cllr. David Pollitt, Seconded by Cllr. Paul Carter, one member was against and there were no abstentions. SHLAA 1002 within the Site 8 cluster was passed, with four abstentions.

Site 9 was included because MWPC had suggested when prompted by Spatial Planning that they were logical sites for housing; however the landowner had not been consulted and it was understood that he was reluctant to release them yet.

Site 10 was a further cluster of sites. Nick Westbrook said that he saw some logic in this as it would permit access to further sites.

Site 11 was a low scoring SHLAA site. It's being considered separately. It should not be included as it's not enabling development and was therefore open countryside development.

PMN: See sites 5 and 6. Nick Westbrook that Sites 5 and 6 should INSERT words AFTER (sites should be excluded) ... INSERT from assessment because etc (based on assumptions), likewise site 11 unless (add if NOT etc ...);

Site 12 has previously been looked at. Once again it's a low scoring site. David Way said that the location seemed good but if it didn't have public support then it's not a good idea to put them in the plan. Nick Westbrook said that he understood that in Cornwall they have built houses which are specifically for villagers. Cllr. Rolf Brindle wished to propose that we retain the site as it stands. Nick Westbrook supported the proposal. Three were in favour, one was against and two abstained.

Site 13 was similar to Site 12 in that regard. Cllr. Rolf Brindle proposed that we keep this one in the process as well. Nick Westbrook seconded on the basis that they should be assessed. David Way observed that if you have two sites which score well, the owner of the other site which does not go forward would be justified in asking for evidence of why one site went forward and not the other. The decision whether they go forward to AECOM or not should be based on established criteria which you can justify in deciding which sites to take forward. It is very important to ensure that all sites have been assessed fairly and equally against the same criteria, and that there is a good justification given for sites taken forward.

Aecom can explain the sites assessment process in both the Sites Assessment Report and SEA Report. In the SEA Report, only sites considered 'reasonable alternatives' should be considered and the report will explain the justification for sites not considered 'reasonable'.

Site 14 Nick Westbrook stated that this site had been recommended for health and community use. It was a very high scoring site, primarily, as Cllr. Andy Hinchcliffe noted, because it's close to industrial land and along a major route. David Way observed that Melksham does not have a lot of employment land left so there was a possibility of designating it as such. Nick Westbrook said that it should stay in and be assessed not for housing, but for employment and community health facilities. The field adjacent should be assessed separately.

PMN: Nick Wwestbrook stated that he thought we expanded Site 14 to include SHLAA site 1025 plus the land running between the Bowerhill side of the Remington Bypass and the factories - we were going to check owners (Singer?)

Site 15 Part of the site cluster could potentially be reserved extended health facilities, a health campus site. It should be retained on that basis.

Sites A to AH it was agreed were not to be assessed with the exception of G and Z which were retained.

It was agreed to include retail in site AG.

PMN: Nick Westbrook stated that he believes we agreed that Sites G and Z and AD should be added to the assessment list because no planning decision has yet be made.

Nick went on to say that he became confused about what we decided as a result of the discussion on Sites AG and AH - I remember we identified both sites for employment and retail purposes but am unclear if we took any decision on whether or not they should be assessed.

PMN: Nick Westbrook stated that he believes we deed 'Norrington' from Site T brownfield sites (*sic – understood to mean deleted?*)

10. Steering group to consider:

a) the Government's notes on the impact on Neighbourhood Plans from the New Housing White Paper "fixing our broken housing market"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/notes-on-neighbourhood-planning>

b) MNPSG Officer's notes/highlights for the same [click here to download](#)

This was deferred to the next meeting.

11. Technical Support update

Teresa Strange stated that we are not yet ready to appoint the Consultant.

12. Draft Neighbourhood Plan

12.1 To consider revised document detailing [Objectives, Policies and Site Allocations](#)

This was deferred to the next meeting.

13. Public Consultation(s) update

13.1 To consider making a short presentation on the Neighbourhood Plan progress at the Melksham Without Annual Parish meeting on Thursday 18th May 6.30 for 7pm at Whitley Reading Rooms. Teresa Strange pointed out that we will not know which of the new Town and Parish councillors will be appointed to the Neighbourhood Plan at that stage. It was agreed that Nick Westbrook would make this presentation.

Further consultations would take place in the middle of June.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 Feedback on slide pack from South West NDP event [link to slidepack](#)

Deferred to the next meeting

15. **Date of Next Meeting:** April 26th 2017

Meeting closed 8.55pm

Signed:

Chairman of MNPSG

Date:

Links to supporting documentation and relevant sites of interest

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

[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