



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

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

Date: **Wednesday 26th April 2017**

Start: **6pm**

Present:

Cllr. Richard Wood (MWPC) (Chairman)
Teresa Strange (MWPC)
Cllr. Rolf Brindle (MWPC)
Nick Westbrook (Health lead)
Lorraine McRandle (MTC)
Clare Harris (Deputy Clerk, MTC)
Cllr. David Pollitt (Area Board)
Colin Goodhind (MCAP)
Cllr. Alan Baines (MWPC)
substitute for Cllr John Glover (MWPC)
Shirley McCarthy (Environmental lead)
Clare Harris (Deputy Clerk, MTC)
Cllr. Richard Wiltshire (MTC)
Notes: Phil McMullen, MCAP

Plus one member of the public

1. Welcome and apologies

Cllr. Richard Wood welcomed those present to the meeting, particularly Clare Harris the new Town Council Deputy Clerk.

Phil reported that apologies had been received from Steve Gray (Clerk, MTC), Cllr John Glover (MWPC), David Way (Wiltshire Council).

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 Update on completion of new Register of Interests forms

Teresa Strange confirmed that the majority of forms had been completed and handed in.

The Chair agreed that officers did not need to complete a Declaration of Interest form.

Nick Westbrook confirmed that he is no longer a director of a company named Envolve Technology Ltd.

There is a standing declaration of interest in MCAP from Colin Goodhind, Nick Westbrook Shirley McCarthy and Phil McMullen. Teresa Strange, as a trustee of Young Melksham, has an interest in any discussions regarding the Canberra.

3. Public Participation

There was one member of the public in attendance, who wished to observe and note any mention of Brunswick Park. It was pointed out that Brunswick Park is not a SHLAA site. There is still an exercise to be undertaken to map the public open spaces.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 Agree March 29th Minutes

Link: [copy of revised draft minutes](#)

Nick Westbrook asked for clarification regarding para. 3.2 where it was asked that the Code of Conduct document needed to be amended. It was agreed that the wording mentioned documents and therefore did not need changing.

Lorraine McRandle noted that on that page 5 the minutes should refer to Rivermead School rather than Riverbed School.

Given those amendments, Nick Westbrook proposed and Cllr. Rolf Brindle seconded that the Minutes were adopted as a true record. All were in favour.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than those already listed in the Agenda

6. Finance Report

6.1 Payments for Approval

6.11 To consider the March 2017 invoice from MCAP reference 17/P/003 sum: £348.00

link: [MCAP timesheet for March](#)

Cllr. Rolf Brindle proposed, Richard Wood seconded from the chair and all were in favour.

6.2 Current Budget – amount spent. Information not to hand this evening.

7. Wiltshire Council Housing Strategy

a) SG to consider Wiltshire Council Housing Strategy 2017-2022 - link: <http://bit.ly/2px5UKf>

b) SG to consider [Wiltshire Council Draft Housing Allocation Policy](#) – [additional information in email dated 21/2](#)

c) SG to consider email re. [closure of online consultation of Draft Housing Allocation Policy dated 21/4/17](#)

d) SG to approve motion from Nick Westbrook to highlight those elements of the key housing facts that might impact on production the Neighbourhood Plan

Reference a), Lorraine McRandle said that several points of interest had stood out when studying the document, including an expected 66% increase in the older population and an increase in the number of affordable homes needed. Over 1,000 units of extra care housing would be required in the period cover of the report. It was agreed that it might be helpful to attend consultation events being staged in November as stakeholders.

Nick Westbrook highlighted the fact that Melksham is above the Wiltshire average in respect of long-term unemployment. We need to be using figures such as that as evidence in our discussions regarding community benefit.

Reference b), Teresa Strange explained that this demonstrated the eligibility for social housing. Those people who are unemployed and in need are not already necessarily in social housing.

Reference c), Teresa Strange observed that Wiltshire Council had closed the consultation "earlier than expected due to confusion caused to members of the public in relation to the proposed changes to the local connection criteria."

Reference d) Nick Westbrook said the point he was making was stressing the importance of extrapolating the key points which might impact on the Neighbourhood Plan. Richard Wood seconded the proposal and all were in favour.

8. Wilts and Berks Canal update

- a) SG to consider [eMail from Jock Mckenzie](#)
- b) SG to consider response [eMail from Wiltshire Council](#)

Teresa Strange explained that Jock Mckenzie's email referenced above had been received before an update had been requested. There was an additional note from the Environment Agency on Wiltshire Council's website related to the Planning application 12/01080/FUL explaining that they were not prepared to consider applications on a piecemeal basis any longer. Nick Westbrook said it was logical that they asked for a comprehensive and integrated report into the canal joining the river. His concern was where the canal goes once it has passed through the river.

Clare Harris explained that in Calne they had a section on non-land-use planning issues and community aspirations at the back of their Neighbourhood Plan.

Colin Goodhind said that he felt it was important that we addressed the canal as an aspiration. This had been voted on and supported at the previous meeting.

9. Sites to be assessed by AECOM

- a) SG to consider [email from David Way \(Wiltshire Council\)](#) reference revised list of Sites to be assessed by AECOM
- b) SG To consider revised list of "Sites to be assessed by AECOM" following revisions made at last Steering Group meeting, and in light of information received from the Wiltshire Council Housing Strategy & Allocations Policy; correspondence received on the Melksham Link Project, and contact made with (some) SHLAA site owners.

Reference a), Teresa Strange explained that Officers had met following the last meeting as the list of sites was there with the proviso of community benefit only, due to the housing numbers being met already, and yet the two main community benefits in the Plan were agreed as to not being deliverable before 2026. It had been agreed that although the Plan supported the Eastern bypass and Melksham Link canal project, the projects were not progressed enough to look to allocate sites for enabling development at this stage. Following on from the consideration of the above housing policies (which both the Town and Parish Councils have recently considered) the community benefit could for example be housing that provided for the elderly population or adaptive housing or affordable housing. David Way's response to this was included as an email attachment. "You might have already seen this Written Ministerial Statement of 12/12/16 <http://bit.ly/2pqf3ay>

"It is very relevant. It confirms that where there is a MADE neighbourhood plan that allocates sites for housing, relevant policies for housing supply should not be out-of-date where the LPA can demonstrate a 3-year housing supply. So it will be important that you allocate at least one housing site in your Plan. It would be sensible if some exception sites were allocated."

David Way suggested that a Housing Needs survey could be undertaken by AECOM, Teresa explained that AECOM had previously said that Wiltshire Council would not sign this off as they were undertaking their own, but as this was David's suggestion, and presumably it would be his sign off, that it may well be a good idea to request technical support/funding for AECOM to undertake a Housing Needs Survey. The meeting agreed to this proposal.

Shirley McCarthy wondered if the community benefit included the co-owned and eco-friendly (maybe carbon neutral) housing. Having energy efficient housing would make it more economical for those in affordable and social housing to run and maintain.

The meeting was in favour of this approach.

Nick Westbrook said that in terms of "silver villages", there are a number of developers, including locally based ones, who specialise in this type of development. Secondly in the Housing Strategy he has noticed that the 30% requirement for affordable housing has increased to 40%. Thirdly the policies should look at community benefits in the immediate vicinity, for example the sewerage issue in Beanacre. We know the CCG are looking at proposals for how we are going to meet the community's future needs. Nick would like to propose a discussion with the CCG.

Reference B), Teresa explained that the list had been tidied up and amended in the light of evidence that had come to light. AECOM are waiting for the list of sites from us.

Cllr. Rolf Brindle raised the point that we may need an assessment of what facilities are provided within the various areas, for instance do the communities have broadband or mains gas or mains sewerage.

Cllr. Alan Baines said that the Parish Council had recently encouraged a developer of a site to include bungalows, and to ensure the existing adjacent bungalows were respected, proposals which the developers have considered.

Colin Goodhind asked whether we feel we have enough people involved to deal with everything that we are discussing. Lorraine McRandle explained that there are already a few additional people outside of the Steering Group. The Housing Group for example will meet again at a later date on an as required basis. Clare Harris said that she is happy to help out with the housing group as she has some experience.

Teresa noted that as of the next meeting, following the elections, there will need to be a discussion about the make-up of the group.

An action was placed on Phil McMullen to ensure that this is a specific agenda item in May's meeting.

At this point, Cllr. Richard Wood had to leave the meeting and Nick Westbrook stood in as Chairman.

Teresa Strange explained that we are not allocating sites for enabling development for the canal and the eastern by-pass as we recognise they are not going to happen within the initial timeframe of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. by 2026).

Clare Harris stressed that in her experience discussions have to be held with landowners early on to establish for what purpose they wanted their land to be used.

Teresa Strange said that AECOM are the professionals in site assessment and will produce a proforma for each site. We can be confident in the results that they come up with and present them to the public.

Clare Harris went on to explain that once site assessments are done, the list of sites could potentially get smaller again. The less you go out to the public with the better. You need to make it clear what community benefits are possible, so long as you have had discussions with the landowner in advance. You can't promise something you can't deliver.

Shirley McCarthy asked that the meeting revisited the subject of retrofitting, i.e. making existing housing less energy hungry. At an earlier meeting doubt had been expressed over whether this could be incorporated into Neighbourhood Plans. Shirley said that she had undertaken research since then, including checking with David Way of Wiltshire Council, who had confirmed "Neighbourhood Plans can include policies supporting retrofitting of existing buildings and the NPPF para. 95 states that, 'to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings'. This can also apply to Neighbourhood Planning groups". There is a policy in the Core Strategy (Core Policy 41) which can be referred to: <http://bit.ly/2oz22fw>

Teresa Strange remarked that there is a piece of work missing, which is establishing what the community benefit is of each site to be assessed. She recommended that the housing group has a look at what Clare Harris has done in Calne and learn from her experience. Cllr. Alan Baines agreed with this and added that potentially some of the sites which had been previously excluded could possibly be brought forward, since where for example flooding was a possibility, it might only affect a small part of the site.

It was therefore proposed that the Housing Group meets and revisits the sites in relationship to the potential community benefit. All were in agreement. *PMN: Housing group to meet on May 12th*

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](#)

Teresa Strange highlighted two potentially useful policy wordings, including the section on ensuring homes were sustainable and the paragraph on supported housing to enable older people to live at home for longer.

The proposal that we adopt the wording used was agreed by all.

11. Draft Neighbourhood Plan

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

Nick Westbrook observed that this needs a certain amount of re-writing and needs to be revisited. Lorraine McRandle suggested that we revisit it after the AECOM report, which Clare Harris agreed with based on her experience in Calne.

12. Feedback on slide pack

from South West NDP event [link to slidepack](#)

It was suggested that this item be deferred to a later meeting.

Teresa Strange explained that most of the people at the event were in the middle stage of their Neighbourhood Plan, much as we are. Although it's frustrating and we feel as if we're getting nowhere, everyone else is in the same position. Clare Harris remarked that Melksham's task is a lot bigger than Calne's, and we are doing really well to have got as far as we have already.

13. Technical Support update

Teresa Strange said that we yet to get our AECOM report; we then go out to the public, we receive feedback, we update our policies; it's too early as yet to request technical support. It was agreed that it would be sensible if officers could try and put a timeline in place and present their findings to a future meeting.

14. Public Consultation(s) update

Further consultations would take place at an appropriate time once the timeline is established.

15. CIL spending

15.1 [Link to CIL spending suggestions](#)

The Steering Group were asked to consider Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council's suggestions for CIL spending (Parish/Town Council contribution) for the Neighbourhood Plan. Teresa Strange stressed that they weren't in any particular order. Nick Westbrook said that he felt it was a very good list. Lorraine McRandle observed that it's not a large amount of money that was being discussed here. The CIL spending priorities suggested by

the Town and parish Councils were formally agreed for incorporation into the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

16. **Boundary Changes**

16.1 Steering group to consider Amendment to Designated Area required further to boundary changes (1st April 2017) under Community Governance Review.

Teresa Strange said that she had spoken with David Way and Wiltshire Council planning officers. The piece of land that was common to Broughton Gifford and Melksham Without had been excluded from the Designated Area (for no known reason). There could potentially be a consultation needed on the redesignation of our area in order to include it.

17. **Any Other Business**

Nick Westbrook asked whether we might put out a call for people to get involved in the Neighbourhood Plan group. Colin agreed, saying we need to target people to join the group. There are people who feel very passionately about the town. David Pollitt said it's very difficult finding people who are balanced and impartial about whole of the area.

18. **Date of Next Meeting:** May 31st 2017

Teresa gave her apologies for the May meeting. The first item on the agenda will be to elect a Chairman and to note the representatives from the Town and Parish councils.

Signed:

Chairman of MNPSG

Date:

Links to supporting documentation and relevant sites of interest

[Wiltshire Council Housing Strategy 2017-2022](#)

<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