



## *Our plan – Our future*

### **Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan**

#### **Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

23rd July 2012, 5.00pm to 7.00pm, Guildhall

#### **PRESENT**

#### **REPRESENTING**

#### **Members of the Steering Group**

Simon Ross	Community
Charles Teaney	Community
Liz Thomas	Community
Cllr. Lesley Durbin	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Mike Grace (Chair)	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Robert Stuart	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. David Turner	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Milner Whiteman	Much Wenlock Town Council

#### **In Attendance**

Mary Jacobs	Community
Mark Plummer	DCLG

#### **Minute Taker**

Robert Toft

#### **1. Chairman's Welcome**

Mike Grace welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### **2. Apologies**

Tim Coleshaw	Community
Bob May	Community
Rachel Walmsley	Community
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Council
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 9th July:

Item 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> Para under "Residents' Survey", Line 6): Replace "if a steer was given, the work might be cut down" with " if more tick-box options had been provided, analysis might have proved quicker but the Steering Group had been reluctant to provide too much of a steer to respondents.";

Item 5 (3<sup>rd</sup> Para under "Residents' Survey", Line 1): Insert "with Sara Botham's departure" after "CCS had lost a key resource";

Item 5 (3<sup>rd</sup> Para under "Residents' Survey", Line 2): Replace "this nature" with "this scale";

Item 5 (3<sup>rd</sup> Para under "Residents' Survey", Line 3): Insert "of" before "Gill Porter's";

Item 5 (3<sup>rd</sup> Para under "Residents' Survey", Line 3): Replace "knowledge of the" with "knowledge of a";

Item 6 (3<sup>rd</sup> Para under "Agree Format and Arrangements for Objective-Setting Meeting on 12th July and Agree Further Action", Line 2): Replace "conformed" with "confirmed";

Item 7 (1<sup>st</sup> Para, Line 2): Insert "of RPS" after "Mark Sackett" .

Subject to these points, the minutes were **approved**.

#### **Matters Arising from the Last Meeting**

Item 7 (Stakeholder Engagement): Mike Grace said that he had emailed Mark Sackett of RPS but had not yet had a reply.

#### **5. Managing and Recording Evidence and Correspondence**

Robert Toft introduced a paper which set out principles and procedures for managing and recording evidence and correspondence on the Neighbourhood Plan including indexing and the handling of confidential documents. He noted that this represented his initial thoughts and asked for comments.

Charles Teaney asked what would happen to confidential information. David Turner thought that this depended on what was wished by the participants. Mike Grace thought that it would be surprising if much needed to be kept confidential since the Plan did not

involve entering into negotiations. He thought that the principle of openness should be the starting point. Milner Whiteman agreed that evidence should be open.

(Simon Ross arrived at the meeting)

Robert Stuart asked whether members of the public should be named. David Turner noted that comments made at public meeting had previously been rendered anonymous. Mike Grace thought that this should be respected but that comments from invitees to meetings should include their name.

Robert Toft thought it important that where evidence had been given "in confidence", this wish should be respected.

It was **agreed** that evidence and correspondence should be public wherever possible but that the expressed wishes of those involved should be respected.

Robert Stuart and David Turner thought that the proposed theme structure might need to change to one based on objectives. Lesley Durbin thought that the theme structure should be retained since the objectives stemmed from the themes. Robert Stuart thought that both themes and objectives needed to be referenced. Robert Toft agreed to think further on this when revising the paper.

Mike Grace noted the need to check data protection issues with the Town Clerk and to include them in the paper.

**ACTION: Robert Toft to revise the paper to take into account the comments made at the meeting.**

## **6. Media and Communications**

David Turner noted that the video of the objective setting meeting made by Lightsource was 1hr 55mins long and he needed to edit this for the website. He proposed not including individual objectives since the primary purpose of the video was to demonstrate public involvement. **Agreed** that David should specify edits based on these principles.

Mike Grace suggested that Lightsource should be asked to add captions.

David noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council had agreed additional funding for the Facebook presence.

## 7. Progress on Residents' and Business Surveys

### Residents' Survey Summary Report

Mike Grace noted that some caveats on locations in the report might be needed. Lesley Durbin thought that the amalgamation of housing locations might have been better if CCS (Community Council of Shropshire) had had access to local knowledge.

David Turner and Mike Grace believed that Gill Porter's CCS analysis should be presented as it stood. Mary Jacobs thought this would be understood by readers. Mark Plummer noted that quoting actual comments showed that this was what the public had said rather than an "official" version.

David Turner noted that "quarries" covered a very wide area. Robert Stuart thought that this was acceptable provided it was possible to refer back to the original responses.

Charles Teaney noted that the response pattern was skewed to the higher age groups. It was agreed, however, that considerable effort had been made to encourage all residents to respond. Mark Plummer thought that the response rate was very good.

Robert Toft noted that quoting a response rate using questionnaires returned but with a base of households was not accurate since it was known that several responses had been received from some households. It was agreed that this sentence should be omitted.

It was **agreed** that, subject to the point on response rates, the report could be issued as it was but should be prefaced by some introductory remarks.

Mike Grace noted that the bill from CCS for the survey work had been received and the cost was £950.

**ACTION: Mike Grace to write to Gill Porter of CCS to thank her for the work undertaken and to note that it had been a learning process for both sides.**

### Business Survey

David Turner noted that, although the response rate had been low with 24 returns from 222 questionnaires issued, some valuable comments had been made.

(David Turner left the meeting)

## 8. Developing the Scope and Content of the Plan and the Themes

### Objectives Setting Meeting - 12th July

Mary Jacobs noted that there had been a good level of attendance and participation in debates. Mike Grace thought that the objectives had generally stood up well and noted that a 24th objective had been added on public toilets. Lesley Durbin noted that the draft objectives had been broadly accepted with a few comments.

Robert Stuart thought that it might be wished to add to the objectives in the light of comments but it would also be necessary to rationalise them. Lesley Durbin thought that some objectives could be usefully combined.

Mary Jacobs wondered if all objectives were SMART. Robert Stuart noted that they had all been drawn from survey evidence. Mike Grace agreed but noted that they were not all fully rigorous at present.

Charles Teaney thought that the lack of comment on some objectives indicated approval. It would be necessary to look at those objectives where comments had been made and to clarify their meaning to enable them to become SMART. Simon Ross noted that there was a need to firm up the Sustainable Community objectives. Mary Jacobs thought that all objectives needed to be deliverable and that some might not be included in the Plan.

Mike Grace wondered if any relevant areas had been missed out of the objectives.

In response to a query from Lesley Durbin on objective 20, Mark Plummer confirmed that on-site parking was no longer a statutory requirement for new developments.

Mark Plummer noted that some objectives were currently framed more in terms of policies than objectives.

Simon Ross said that not all discussion points raised at the meeting had been included in the note of the meeting. Mike Grace noted that the notes would be supplemented by the presentation slides and the video and that the note was only a précis of the discussion which would also need to include a list of draft objectives. Mary Jacobs noted that the yes/no/maybe show of hands results for each objective could usefully be included.

**Agreed** that the note of the meeting should be supplemented by a listing of draft objectives and the meeting's vote on them and should then be published.

Mary Jacobs noted the need to consider the interactivity between objectives and when they could be drawn together. Mike Grace agreed that it was necessary to process the objectives and to put them into shape by mid-September.

Mark Plummer thought that the draft objectives could be consolidated within a structure of objectives & policies and put forward for consideration on a "what do you think?" basis.

Mary Jacobs thought that there was still the task of creating a vision. Robert Stuart noted the need to understand the difference between visions, objectives and policies. Mike Grace noted that it was important to think of the audience and thought that the first audience was the community. The vision would be a summary of the objectives. He thought that there might be 10-15 objectives with a reasoned justification for each.

Mike Grace noted that there was a need to look across objectives and see who needed to be engaged in other themes. He thought that objectives would need to become more specific at the options stage but not at present. Lesley Durbin noted that it would be valuable to combine objectives across themes.

Mike Grace thought that it was important to have a version of the combined objectives before the next meeting so that they could be discussed and re-edited. This should include what evidence they were based on and should include consideration of other plans but not be based on these and should use language particular to local needs.

**ACTION: All theme leads to work on combining and re-drafting objectives and to circulate these prior to 6th August.**

#### Design and Agree Activity to Develop the Scope and Content of the Neighbourhood Plan

Mike Grace thought that the revised objectives should be circulated widely. This would not be a formal consultation but would set the stage for a consultation which would take place in September.

Robert Stuart noted the need to involve younger age groups. Mike Grace and Mary Jacobs thought that this needed to be discussed further with Rachel Walmsley.

Mark Plummer noted that the DCLG Minister of State, Greg Clark, wanted neighbourhood plan front-runners to have support and had provided funding for four organisations (CPRE/NALC, Locality, Planning Aid and Prince's Foundation) to help with this. He added that a group within DCLG had been set up to facilitate neighbourhood planning and that some of them would like to visit the Much Wenlock team.

Mary Jacobs noted that skilled facilitators were needed, especially those able to turn objectives/proposals into forms more easily understood by the public including visualisations. Mark Plummer undertook to investigate if this could be supported. Lesley Durbin noted that the plan did however need to belong to the community and that professionals should assist rather than direct.

## 9. Budgets

Mike Grace noted that it would not be necessary to pay the costs of the referendum or assessment but that there were constraints on the uses of the grant funding.

It was noted that a Government statement on referenda was expected on that day.  
(Minute-taker's note: This statement confirmed that Government would bear the cost of referenda on Neighbourhood Plans until 2015).

Agreed to recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council should set aside a substantial sum (£5,000) for public consultation.

(Robert Stuart and Charles Teaney left the meeting)

## 10. Plan Timetable

Mark Plummer noted that, whilst Shropshire Council would appoint the assessor, the Neighbourhood Plan authority had the right of veto. He noted that the assessor could be someone involved in planning from another local authority and the Planning Inspectorate could also be used. He noted the possibility of having the referendum on the same day as local elections in 2013.

Mike Grace agreed to contact the Planning Inspectorate.

Simon Ross thought that a consultation event might be included as part of the planned Roots, Fruits and Shoots festival.

Mark Plummer noted that Shropshire Council should be consulted on whether there was a need to do a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

(Liz Thomas left the meeting).

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

This was **agreed** to be on 6th August, starting at 5.00 p.m. in the Guildhall.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Date \_\_\_\_\_