



## *Our plan – Our future*

### **Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan**

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

14th January 2013, 5.00pm to 7.00pm, Guildhall

#### **PRESENT**

#### **REPRESENTING**

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

Tim Coleshaw	Community
Bob May	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
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council
Faith Smith	Technical Writer

#### **Minute Taker**

Robert Toft

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

Mike Grace welcomed those present to the meeting.

### **2. Apologies**

Rachel Walmsley	Community
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Council

### **3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest, Dispensation or Bias**

There were no declarations of interest, dispensation or bias.

#### 4. Minutes of the Last Two Meetings

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 7th January:

In list of those present at the meeting, move Rachel Walmsley from "Members of the Steering Group" to "In Attendance";

Item 7 (4th Para, under "To Consider and Agree Necessary Actions for Delivering the Plan, including Appointment of Assessors", Line 1) Replace "was better to have an assessor not" with "would be better to have an assessor who was not".

Subject to these points, the minutes of the meeting of 7th January were **approved**.

#### 5. Developing the Scope and Content of the Plan

To consider the responses from the community and stakeholders to the draft proposals published before and on 12th January 2013

Mike Grace thanked those who had transcribed comments from the public events and, in particular, Faith Smith who had assembled and classified them. He noted that some further comments had been added to the website and that comments had been received from Mark Sackett (RPS) on behalf of Persimmon and an indication from Louise Roberts (Halls) that a client was interested in proposing further land for consideration.

Faith Smith noted that there had been many supportive comments spread across the policies although there had also been many individual negative comments.

##### *Draft Policies*

Mike Grace asked for discussion of those comments which might be reflected in policies.

Faith Smith noted that the issue of retail premises returning to housing was not currently included. Milner Whiteman thought that this was not covered by current Shropshire Council policy. It was **agreed** that the retail core of the town needed to be protected and that policy should reflect this in the High Street and other central areas.

Faith Smith noted that it had been queried whether central employment sites should be ring-fenced and asked whether draft policy 2.2 had sufficient flexibility. Lesley Durbin and Bob May thought there was adequate flexibility already. Charles Teaney queried whether there was enough protection against heavy industrial use. It was **agreed** that the second sentence of draft policy 2.5 should not be limited to quarrying.

Faith Smith asked whether traffic calming could be included in the Plan. Mike Grace thought that this was possible but noted that it was more appropriate to the Place Plan and that its implementation could not be secured.

It was **agreed** to remove the limitation in draft policy 4.1 related to the inappropriateness of the car parking standard for some types and sizes of housing.

Mike Grace asked whether there was a need to add to policies for community facilities to support the need to maintain or improve existing facilities such as health centres. It was agreed that the rationale for Objective 5 policies should reflect and expand on this need.

Faith Smith asked about the position of the Much Wenlock Design Statement. Mike Grace thought that, since it had been adopted by the former Bridgnorth District Council, it did not need explicit incorporation in the Plan.

Faith Smith noted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) made specific reference to green spaces and asked whether the policies should be adjusted to take this into account and whether specific areas should be named. Robert Stuart expressed concern that areas not named might thus not be seen as protected. Mike Grace and Faith Smith thought that it was important to name key spaces such as the Gaskell Field and Windmill Hill and it was **agreed** that they should be explicitly included.

**ACTION: Tim Coleshaw to ask Revd Stephen Lowe about inclusion of the (Holy Trinity) Church Green.**

Faith Smith said that a comment had noted that policies 8.1 and 2.5 on use of former quarry land were not in accord. Tim Coleshaw thought that industrial use of specified quarries, notably Lilleshall, Stretton Westwood and Farley, should be restricted, although part of Lea Quarry could be suitable for this purpose. Mike Grace thought that it would be necessary to differentiate between quarries to identify those which might be suitable for light industrial use and it was **agreed** to amend the policies to reflect this. He added that it should be recognised that the community had differing views on the uses of some quarry land.

Faith Smith noted that reference to photovoltaics had been omitted from the Objective 9 policies and **agreed** to re-insert this.

Mike Grace asked Gill Jones to raise the issue of appointment of the assessor for the Plan with Jake Berriman.

(Gill Jones left the meeting)

### *Proposed Housing Scenarios*

Faith Smith noted that over 90% of the comments received had been favourable to Scenario 1 and that there had been more positive comments for this than for policies or sites. She noted that generally negative comments had been received on Scenario 2, particularly on

issues on size and proportion, although one comment had estimated that only a 6% increase in housing stock was proposed.

Lesley Durbin thought that scale was the major issue and that 25 houses on site C (land east of Bridgnorth Road) might be acceptable. Bob May thought that those favouring Scenario 1 might have difficulty in identifying sites other than Bridgnorth Road.

Charles Teaney noted that 40 houses had been identified as a possible maximum by several respondents and thought that the community might accept this but not the 85-90 proposed by Persimmon and Wenlock Estates.

(Mary Jacobs arrived at the meeting)

Mike Grace noted that the Persimmon response just received was no different to that made previously. He wondered whether it would be possible to ask for development of not more than 40 houses on site C. David Turner thought that Persimmon might not be interested in smaller developments and Wenlock Estates might thus need to deal with a different builder. Milner Whiteman asked whether green space and drainage issues would be addressed with a smaller number of houses.

Bob May thought that the comments had shown some flexibility but that the development approach proposed by Shropshire Housing Group had been favoured, although alternative sites had not been suggested. He expressed concern that Scenario 1 might necessitate the development of unsatisfactory sites.

Robert Stuart thought that Wenlock Estates had invested in an agreement with Persimmon and were likely to be committed to their proposals. Mike Grace said that he had hoped that Wenlock Estates would modify their approach to site C given the previous rejection by Bridgnorth District Council but they had not.

Mike Grace noted that the main need was to show that an amount of housing development would come through. Elements of both scenarios could be included in the Plan, possibly with a smaller scale development of site C. Lesley Durbin noted that a smaller development would still need to meet other Plan policies.

Bob May felt that site C had to be accepted as the best site for development and queried whether the development boundary might be changed to designate a smaller site, although in this case the proposed roundabout might be an issue.

Mike Grace noted that implementation of both scenarios could lead to building of 300 houses, which would entail a substantial increase to the town's population and thought that it was important to reflect the majority wish that the town should not grow by too much.

Charles Teaney noted that opinion might change over the period of the Plan and that more housing might be supported if the economy grew. He added that the need for single-level development should also be reflected.

### *Proposed Development Sites*

Mike Grace noted that there was considerable opposition to development of site D (land south of Stretton Road). Respondents had noted that existing industrial sites in Stretton Road had not been well used.

Faith Smith noted that there had been a lot of opposition to site G (land north of Stretton Road) particularly with regard to flooding concerns, although it was not proposed to allocate this for development. Mike Grace noted that the site was not inside the development boundary and could be treated as an exception site if development was proposed.

It was agreed that there was no need to change the current development boundary.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- i) Faith Smith to prepare a further draft of the Plan reflecting the discussions at this meeting;**
- ii) Tim Coleshaw to update the map to include protected green spaces.**

#### To Agree Further Content of the Plan, Subject to Further Public Comment by 15th January

Mike Grace noted the need to develop the statement for the Town Council and to agree on housing policies. He asked whether a further approach should be made to Mark Sackett. Mary Jacobs asked what the "tipping point" in terms of number of houses might be. Robert Stuart wondered whether it was appropriate to engage in negotiations.

(Liz Thomas left the meeting)

Bob May thought it was necessary to wait until a response had been received from Wenlock Estates and to demonstrate that policies were based on the community's wishes and that any compromise would command support. Lesley Durbin noted that any development would need to conform with the requirements for green space. David Turner thought that a discussion would be valuable since this could inform the response by Wenlock Estates.

Charles Teaney thought that the Plan should not allocate land as such since the policies would effectively determine this. Bob May thought that it was necessary to specify sites and whether the development boundary needed to be changed.

Lesley Durbin noted that the number of houses on site C should not be greater than 40 since more than 100 houses would then be developed.

Mike Grace summarised the discussion, noting that it was agreed that Scenario 1 was preferred but with possible limited development of site C, with considerably less than 85-90 houses. Robert Stuart asked whether housing policies should first be agreed. It was agreed that there was not sufficient time to do this.

**ACTION: Mike Grace to speak to Mark Sackett (RPS) on 15th January.**

Tim Coleshaw noted that all sites proposed for development would be shown on the maps (with the inclusion of site C to be determined) and that there would be a map of the whole parish and a larger scale map of the town.

Mike Grace asked that comments on the statement of public consultation be sent to Mary Jacobs.

Faith Smith asked for comments on the rationale for each policy.

**6. Media and Communications**

David Turner asked for comments on the contents of the next article in the Wenlock Herald. It was agreed that this should include an account of the public meetings on 12th January, a note of the Town Council meeting on 31st January and the future timetable for the Plan.

David Turner asked whether comments made on 12th January should be published on the website. It was **agreed** that comments should be published but with any defamatory comments redacted.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Steering Group was **agreed** to be on 21st January 2013, starting at 4.30pm in the Guildhall, at which the dates of further meetings would be agreed.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_