



Our plan – Our future

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

21st January 2013, 4.30pm 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

Faith Smith	Technical Writer
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Council

Minute Taker

Robert Toft

1. Chairman's Welcome

Mike Grace welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Mary Jacobs	Community
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest, Dispensation or Bias

There were no declarations of interest, dispensation or bias.

(Tim Coleshaw and Robert Toft arrived at the meeting)

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 14th January:

Item 5 (2nd Para, under "Draft Policies", Line 3) Replace "needed to be preserved" with "need to be protected";

Item 5 (10th Para, under "Draft Policies", Line 2) Replace "Time Coleshaw" with "Tim Coleshaw".

Subject to these points, the minutes of the meeting of 14th January were **approved**.

5. Developing the Scope and Content of the Plan

To Agree Proposed Content of the Draft Plan

Introduction

Mike Grace noted that he had drafted the introduction and thought that it might be a little long. Liz Thomas thought that it was valuable that comments regarding a "sense of place" had been incorporated.

Housing Policies (Objective 1)

Mike Grace noted that the draft policies had been based on previous discussions. Bob May was concerned with the use of the word "limited" in connection to development and its possible interpretation.

Lesley Durbin noted that, whilst the actual numbers on the questionnaire had been set by the Steering Group, the majority of the community had expressed a clear wish to limit housing development.

Milner Whiteman thought that, since only site C (land east of Bridgnorth Road and referred to as RES1 in the draft plan) was the only viable site on which over 25 houses could be built, a development of up to 40 houses was reasonable. He added that he had thought that there would be more than one site with 25 or more houses and noted that addressing drainage issues was a major issue in this area of the town.

Mike Grace noted that two scenarios had been put to the community. He added that the preferred scenario proposed developments of less than 10 houses and asked whether limited development of up to 25 houses on site C should also be included.

David Turner noted that the community had shown a clear preference for small developments but that areas for development were limited. Bob May noted that he had personally favoured overall development of less than 50 houses but thought that site C was

clearly the best site and that this should be allocated and the number of houses then agreed, for which he preferred up to 40. Lesley Durbin said that the residents survey had clearly shown a preference for developments of less than 25 houses. Milner Whiteman noted that up to 40 (rather than 50) had not been included as an option. Robert Stuart thought that site C should be included but with a maximum of 25 houses since the residents' views needed to be respected.

(Jake Berriman arrived at the meeting)

Mike Grace asked Robert Stuart whether flooding around the area of site C would be addressed without development taking place. Robert Stuart noted that only smaller scale alleviation was proposed under IUDMP (Integrated Urban Drainage Management Plan) and that it was hoped that development would address a larger area.

Lesley Durbin noted that policy 1.3 allowed for further allocation of land if local needs were not being met otherwise. Liz Thomas noted that the size of the Hunters Gate development had been restricted by the planning inspector. Charles Teaney noted that plans needed to be revisited after five years and asked whether they could be reviewed earlier than this. Jake Berriman said that Shropshire Council needed to look at the supply of land each year and thought that plans could be reviewed locally at any time.

Jake Berriman thought that the range of affordable housing proposed should be extended and noted that self-build single housing could also be included. He added that Wenlock Estates might not release other land if their preferred site was not included. Bob May said that he would like to see Wenlock Estates negotiating more directly with the community. Lesley Durbin noted that shared equity housing was not popular. Jake Berriman noted that social rented housing was not supported by the Government.

Tim Coleshaw thought that scale was the key issue and that it was better to meet needs though Scenario 1 involving small-scale development with site C held in reserve. Robert Toft thought that the views expressed by residents needed to be respected and that site C could be included but with a maximum of 25 houses, since very few attendees at the public events had suggested a higher maximum, such as 40. David Turner thought that there was very clear merit in reflecting the public's views. Jake Berriman noted that providing limited housing was not in accord with Government policy on housing.

Mike Grace asked whether site C should be explicitly included or kept as a reserve option. Bob May and Lesley Durbin thought that with a maximum number of houses, the site should be included since it reflected the residents survey response. Mike Grace noted that there had been a strong preference at the public events for Scenario 1 with small-scale development. Robert Stuart thought that Scenario 2 (including development of site C) might also have been supported with development limited to 25 houses.

Jake Berriman noted that the limitation to 25 houses within the large area originally proposed might be overturned on appeal and thought that a smaller area should be specified. Robert Stuart queried whether the portion involved needed to be defined.

Mike Grace thought that the small-scale development proposed in Scenario 1 could produce up to 150 houses over the period of the Plan, given the current rate of about 10 per year. Bob May thought that development would not continue at the current rate.

Faith Smith noted that approval of part of the site with limited housing would require insuring that other issues including access and traffic management continued to be addressed. Milner Whiteman thought that access from Bridgnorth Road could be stipulated.

It was **agreed** to retain the inclusion of site C in the Plan, with a restriction to 25 dwellings on a portion of the site.

Faith Smith and Mike Grace noted that a reference to affordable housing at a rate of 20% needed to be included. It was **agreed** that this should be included and also that if a higher target was set by Shropshire Council that this would also be supported.

Maps

Tim Coleshaw said that the paper for the Town Council would include A3 maps showing the parish and town centre with proposed development sites, green spaces and conservation areas. He added that Holy Trinity church green would be included as a green space and that there would be a 170m contour line showing the town "bowl". It was noted by several members that the bowl was irregular and not absolutely defined by the 170m contour.

Objective 2 (Economy and jobs)

Faith Smith noted that some changes had been made to support more effective use of existing land and to clarify the position on change of use. No further substantial changes were requested by the meeting.

Objective 3 (Reducing flood risk)

Robert Stuart proposed strengthening the objective on new developments to specify that new houses should have water usage of less than 80 litres a day.

Jake Berriman noted that policy 3.1 as drafted seemed to preclude development if the IUDMP was not implemented. Mike Grace suggested that an addition could allow flood-neutral development. Robert Stuart noted that this would however not prevent extra water passing through the combined sewers and added that both the town referendum and residents opinions in the survey and public consultation had shown strong opposition to further development until this issue was addressed. He added that the IUDMP was due to be completed in 2013.

(Minute-Taker's Note: It was agreed to consider items relating to the appointment of an assessor and public consultation at this point in order to allow Jake Berriman to leave the meeting early.)

6. Plan Timetable and Process

To Consider and Agree Appointment of Assessor

Mike Grace noted that members had previously expressed concerns about the assessor having the necessary rural knowledge and expertise and being seen to be fully independent.

Jake Berriman noted that Shropshire Council had researched possible alternatives. PINS, RICS and RTPI were likely to be expensive and they had thus looked at neighbouring local authorities, including Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. He noted that the former had declined but that Andrew Ashcroft, chief planner at Herefordshire, had expressed interest at a fee of £475 a day plus expenses.

Mike Grace noted that Andrew Ashcroft offered strengths in terms of a rural planning background and level of responsibility held. David Turner asked whether Mr Ashcroft had undertaken previous jobs of this kind. Jake Berriman noted that very few assessments had taken place and that the process was different from planning inspections.

David Turner thought that having a person with known qualities would be advantageous. Lesley Durbin noted that she had had reservations about appointing a candidate from a neighbouring authority but was now satisfied.

It was **agreed** to approve Shropshire Council's recommendation to select Andrew Ashcroft as assessor of the Plan.

To Review and Confirm the Plan Timetable

Jake Berriman clarified the requirements for public consultation. He noted that a six-week consultation would first need to be organised by the Group and the results of this included in the statement of public consultation. After this Shropshire Council would publicise the Plan, again with a six-week period for comments which would be passed to the assessor. He noted that Shropshire Council would be one of those to be consulted. Charles Teaney noted that he would need to consult further with Jake Berriman regarding the effects on the Plan's timetable.

(Jake Berriman left the meeting)

7. Developing the Scope and Content of the Plan (resumed)

To Agree Proposed Content of the Draft Plan (resumed)

Objective 3 (Reducing flood risk) (resumed)

Lesley Durbin noted that having no new development for an indefinite period was very restrictive. Robert Stuart thought that it was, however, important not to weaken the policies.

It was **agreed** to include a statement that the IUDMP was expected to be implemented in 2013 and that, if it was not, it would be necessary to review the policy precluding new development in the rainfall catchment area of the town.

Objective 4 (Traffic management and accessibility)

Faith Smith proposed amending the rationale for the policies to include a cross-reference to the Much Wenlock Place Plan.

Objective 5 (Community well-being)

It was **agreed** that localism aspects were covered through the Much Wenlock Place Plan.

Objective 6 (Good quality design)

It was **agreed** to separate as separate policies the two sentences in policy 6.2 relating to high quality housing design and the Much Wenlock Design Statement.

Objective 7 (Green and open spaces)

It was **agreed** to make particular reference to the south of Much Wenlock in policy 7.1 related to recreational open space.

It was **agreed** to incorporate policy 7.5 (provision of private gardens) with policy 6.4 (design of developments with more than three dwellings).

Objective 8 (Local landscape and wildlife)

Tim Coleshaw **agreed** to check the location and nature of the Westwood quarry.

Objective 9 (Sustainability and climate change)

It was **agreed** that the reference in the Objective to "better than minimum energy standards" should be changed to "higher energy standards".

Faith Smith **agreed** to make the necessary revisions to the draft Plan by midday on 22nd January.

To Design and Agree Further Actions to Progress the Neighbourhood Plan including Preparing for the Town Council Meeting on 31st January.

Mike Grace noted that the revised plan and maps as agreed would need to be included with the papers to the Town Council which would all need to be ready by 5pm on 22nd January. He invited further comments on the covering paper.

Charles Teaney **agreed** to prepare and send an annex on the Plan timetable.

Tim Coleshaw **agreed** to update the large scale map prior to the Town Council meeting including the slight change to site A (Bradley Farm).

Mike Grace noted that a second paper asked the Town Council to open discussion with two local housing associations (Shropshire Housing Group and Severnside).

Mike Grace invited all present to attend the Town Council meeting on 31st January.

Mike Grace proposed a vote of thanks to Faith Smith for her work on drafting the Plan which was warmly endorsed by all present.

8. Media and Communications

David Turner noted that a copies of the draft Plan and maps were needed for the website and for display in public places such as the library.

(Liz Thomas left the meeting)

Mike Grace noted that it would be necessary to think about consultation following the Town Council meeting on 31st January. Bob May thought that the formal consultation would be potentially valuable.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Steering Group was **agreed** to be on 4th February 2013, starting at 5pm in the Guildhall, at which the dates of further meetings would be agreed.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____