

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Notes from a meeting of
the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
held on 7 June 2011

PRESENT:

Cllr. Lesley Durbin	Much Wenlock Town Council
Howard Horsley	Town & Parish Plan
Faith Smith	Town & Parish Plan
Jeff Davis	Town & Parish Plan
Cllr. Milner Whiteman	Shropshire Council
Andy Mortimer	Shropshire Council
Cllr. Robert Stuart	Much Wenlock Town Council
Hayley Deighton	Shropshire Council
Kerry Rogers	Shropshire Council
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council Community Action
Cllr. Mike Grace	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. David Turner	Much Wenlock Town Council
Adam Barnett	DCLG
Cllr. Anna Dugdale	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Matthew Green	Much Wenlock Town Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Clayton	Town Clerk – Much Wenlock Town Council
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BACKGROUND

Town and Parish Plan development

The Town and Parish Plan was created to support the case at the BLP inquiry. The 'Plan' was community led along with one or two town councillors nominated by the Town Council to support its development. Clarity of the message to the community was vital and the credibility of the Plan was based on input from as many people as possible using a bottom-up approach. The questionnaire was driven by comments from the local community and a detailed survey was undertaken with all households being consulted, including schools and businesses. The questionnaires were hand delivered and collected by volunteers, who even assisted consultees to complete the questionnaire.

The content of the survey was based on themes identified through meetings. Analysis of the results was time consuming and required significant effort. The survey evidence base was supplemented by census data and the Plan was given distinctive branding. From an approximate budget of £5,000 the publication cost of the final Plan was approximately £2,000. The development of the Plan took between 15 to 18 months to complete.

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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Development

Processes used in the development of the Town and Parish Plan can be used to guide the development of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), although new challenges will need to be included, such as climate change and flooding. The NP will need adequate promotion to communicate what it is and who wants it. The SCI does not make its purpose clear.

The Town and Parish Plan was inspirational. The advantage of the NP is that it will have formal bite within the planning system. It will build on the Town and Parish Plan, review it and translate local aspirations into a clear language and purpose as planning policy/proposals. However, it will need to have depth, with an evidence base.

In order to survive challenges from others the NP must be robust and conform to planning policy. It will need to be technically sound on evaluation of proposals and alternatives for site allocations, and the process for the NP's development must be inclusive and transparent so that it will be formerly recognised as part of the Development Plan.

The development process will identify key priorities and issues and define a focus. Input to the NP needs to be proportionate to the desired outcome with Shropshire Council's policies being taken into consideration.

Duplicate processes and consultation should be avoided.

Advice and guidance

There are four support providers, the Prince's Foundation, Locality, The Royal Town Planning Institute, and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), who will share £3.2 m to provide assistance to local groups developing Neighbourhood Plans. However, their remit is still under discussion.

Consultation

New technology will make the consultation process easier. Surveys can be conducted and information received and shared using on-line facilities.

Information gathering

Information already gathered, such as the environmental assessment carried out as part of the Core Strategy, can be used to develop the NP. Indeed, the NP will need to be in conformity with the Core Strategy, and Adam Barnett (DCLG) will investigate the technical requirement of this process and how it will be interpreted.

Timetable

It is hoped that the NP will be developed within 18 months following a timetable with milestones.

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Concerns

Care should be taken to avoid conflict between Shropshire Council's work on SAMDev and the development of the NP which may confuse the local community, since they are both being undertaken at the same time. However, the NP will be the appropriate vehicle with which to progress development proposals in Much Wenlock.

DCLG officer, Adam Barnett, confirmed that DCLG did not think that there would be any conflict of interest issues for town councillors working on the NP with respect to considering future planning applications.

Task and finish groups

Two tasks and finish groups have been established as follows:

GROUP	MEMBERS	REMIT
Community engagement	Cllr. David Turner Kerry Rogers Cllr. Lesley Durbin Faith Smith <i>(Invitation to Cllr. Mike Grace and Town Clerk to attend)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● design an active strategy and show how it might work● identify who needs to be involved● map out key milestones for the next 18 months● identify the nature of the support that might be expected from Shropshire Council
Technical planning matters	Cllr. Matthew Green Howard Horsley Cllr. Robert Stuart Cllr. Milner Whiteman Jake Berriman and/or team <i>(Invitation to Cllr. Mike Grace and Town Clerk to attend)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● interpret the Core Strategy and its implications for Much Wenlock● ensure clarity over relationship with SAMDev● identify areas of tension and key issues the NP needs to address from a strategic perspective● identify the nature of the support that might be expected from Shropshire Council

Both groups to set out and circulate options/proposals for discussion at the next meeting on 23 June 2011.

DCLG link officer

Adam Barnett says that Much Wenlock is considered to be well advanced in its preparations, especially given the baseline of the Town and Parish Plan.

A second DCLG officer, Mark Plummer will be working with Adam Barnett on the NP to help facilitate the process and learn from the work to be done. Either officer will join future discussions, every other time.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on Thursday 23 June 2011 commencing 5 p.m. at the Guildhall.