

## LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### Report of a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party Meeting

Held on Monday, 2nd February, 2015 at 7pm in the Town Council Offices

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**Present:** Councillors R Barnes – Chairman  
T Widdows - Co Chairman  
R Hadley, L Harvey, C Ridler, R Yeoman,  
  
Mr N Doran  
Mr I James  
Mr K Francis  
Mrs N Shields – VC

**In attendance:** Mrs M Bradman – Deputy Clerk  
Mrs S Tagg – Foxley Tagg Planning  
Ms M Cooper  
Cllr A R Bradford  
Mr N Morris  
Mrs B Stump

#### 1. Chairman's Statement

Nina Shields opened the meeting and invited the Chairman, Councillor Barnes to deliver his statement, which was the first agenda item.

Councillor Barnes apologised to the group for the date and venue change and went on to say that he had received several unhelpful comments about the progress of the NPWP. Councillor Barnes explained that the group were issued with a schedule of progress to bring the NP forward to produce a 'draft plan' by April 2015 which was agreed by the NPWP as a reasonable expectation at the time. Work groups had been set up to produce the objectives and policies and the schedule had been extended slightly to allow for the works to be completed. The consultation period was advertised in the January issue of the Ledbury Focus and is due to take place in three weeks time. The Chairman asked for commitment from the group to move forward together as per the schedule. He went on to say that the objectives and policies have been shaped by the results of the last public consultation and so therefore the public should be consulted with, to enable the draft plan to be put together from the results of the next consultation. The Chairman then asked for a show of hands from the group to carry on with the schedule and work towards producing the plan as soon as possible.

Nina Shields reflected that the group had not got around to appointing a project manager and that this should be reviewed by the working party. She felt sure that all in attendance would like the plan to succeed but acknowledged that there are differing views on how this could be achieved.

Mr James felt that the public should be shown three options of what a Neighbourhood Plan should look like and that there was no need to have a public consultation based on the policies.

Nina Shields asked if anyone had any comments on the timetable/schedule. Cllr Yeoman described how the NPWP had been harangued in the press in August 2014 for the lack of progress, following which, a plan was agreed at the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. He felt that the NPWP should now push forward with the agreed timetable for completing the plan. Cllr Yeoman stated that he was prepared to commit to the work

required to fulfil the consultation dates and hoped that others in the group would be too. He went on to say that that it's the responsibility of the working party to manage the project and if that can't be done then that is the failing of the entire working party. The Chairman, Vice Chair and facilitator all need to be supported but unfortunately members have been diverted with their own agendas and appreciated the fact that members were busy people. Extra expenditure had been incurred due to the lack of delivery of the group. The group need to focus on the goal and deliver the plan for Ledbury and push on with the consultation.

Cllr Hadley clarified that the referendum is scheduled for the Autumn of 2015 and stated that the Core Strategy examination would impose a lot of time and stress on some people who have to make the necessary submissions. He explained that until the Core Strategy has been adopted no NP in Herefordshire would have any standing whatsoever. The terms of the core strategy has to be accepted and he could not understand why the NPWP would want to go ahead with the planned consultation to achieve a draft plan by April when in the meantime the core strategy and election will need to take place. He said that during March, anything relating to local authority publicity will be closed down and no communications should come out of this Council during March. The NP Clerk interjected by informing the group that the purdah date starts 30th March. Cllr Hadley informed the group that Herefordshire Council would be closing down their NP and Core Strategy consultations in the middle of March and didn't want to enter into a discussion about the 'purdah' period but stressed that in general there were two big events coming up; the Core Strategy and the elections. Cllr Hadley would be more comfortable with completing the policies and having specific proposals to put before the public and stressed that three weeks to prepare for the consultation would not be enough time. He proposed that the consultation is delayed until after the election and to push ahead with a new Council in May and June to have the draft plan ready for referendum by September 2015.

Councillor Harvey informed members that she had already submitted her apologies for February and would not be able to participate in the preparation of the consultation and would not be available on either of the consultation dates due to preparations required for her to participate in the Core Strategy examination. Cllr Harvey also expressed her concerns with the timeframe of the consultation events

Nina Shields asked when Sam Banks, Neighbourhood Planning support officer, would be available to attend a NPWP meeting to ensure that the group are on track. The NP Clerk informed members that Sam would inform the group of some available dates.

Mr Francis felt that the group would be best placed to move forward with the NP and that any changes should be made (if any) when the Core Strategy is agreed.

Sally Tagg informed members that the Core Strategy is not likely to come to fruition until the end of 2015. There are two ways of preparing for a Neighbourhood Plan the first is to plan ahead of the Core Strategy so that mechanisms are in place and can be adjusted accordingly, (not everything will affect Ledbury), and the second is not to have a Neighbourhood Plan prepared to the extent that the Town Council is trying to achieve currently. Sally explained that when she was appointed as consultant to the NPWP her understanding was that the group wanted a plan to run parallel to the Core Strategy process and advised that it would be prudent to run parallel and to take Mr Francis' approach.

Councillor Harvey informed members that it may be possible to take a view, during the Core Strategy examination, of what the outcome may be and agreed that the group should not wait until the Core Strategy is agreed before continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan..

Nina Shields suggested that there should be more work produced in between meetings by members which should be presented back to the working party meetings to be

discussed. The group is not currently working very effectively. Mr James suggested that an 'options' consultation takes place at the end of March.

It was suggested that the meeting move to item 4 to agree the remaining policies and to discuss how to proceed with the consultation event once the policies had been reviewed.

- 2. Apologies** were received from Griff Holliday and Christine Tustin. Members were informed that due to work commitments Mr A Harrison had resigned from the working party.

- 3. Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

- 4. Foxley Tagg - Objective and Policies**

Members reviewed the Housing policies item by item. Mr James was asked to make any alterations to the document and return it to Foxley Tagg for comment. Nina Shields informed the meeting that the Design Code was being drawn up by Paul Neep from Architype and once completed would be need to be reviewed by the working party.

On completing the review of the Housing document and because of the lateness of the hour members deferred the following items: Community & Leisure, Transport and Infrastructure, to a future meeting.

With regard to the February 20th consultation period members agreed to continue as planned but with a pared down version; consulting on the vision, housing objectives, policies and site options or whichever area the group feel comfortable presenting.

- 5. The following meeting dates were agreed:**

Tuesday 10th February, 7pm in the Town Council Offices to discuss the consultation event.

Tuesday 17th February, 7pm in the Town Council Offices to review the following policies: Community & Leisure, Transport and Infrastructure and Project Management planning.

Meeting Closed 9.53pm.