

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

held on Tuesday, 19 March 2013
in the Town Council Offices

Present: Councillors: R Barnes (Chairman)
P Bettington
A Crowe
K Francis
E Harvey
C Ridler

In Attendance: Miss M Cooper
R Hadley
A Harrison
G Holliday (Town Plan Steering Group)
I James (Town Plan Steering Group)
Ms Nina Shields (Vice Chair & Town Plan Steering Group)
W Stump

Also Present: Mrs B Stump (Jnr. Clerical Officer, LTC)
A Warmington (observer)

1. **Apologies for absence:**
Apologies were received from Andrew Burrows and Cllr Terry Widdows.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**
None.

3. **To approve the report of the meeting held on 5 March 2013:**
The notes were approved.

4. **To Discuss and Confirm Terms of Reference of the Working Party:**
The Chairman proposed to formally adopt the draft Terms of Reference he and Cllr Widdows compiled and circulated at the last meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Ridler and agreed, subject to amendment, as some members had not had sufficient time to read and compare them with Herefordshire Council & HALC's recently issued ToRs.

RECOMMENDATION: **That the draft Terms of Reference be adopted, subject to amendment at the next meeting if members felt that elements of the Herefordshire/HALC model should be included.**

4.1 Following the adoption of the ToRs, the Chairman proposed co-opting three new members of the Working Party, which was agreed. They are Rich Hadley, Andrew Harrison and Bill Stump. It was thought that the Working Party should be communicated to the wider community; that it is open to all who wish to become part of the process and feel they can bring their expertise. A list of relevant contacts should be

set up; comprising people the WP can call upon, i.e. schools, clubs & associations: links with people known to be interested and available.

5. To discuss a Project Plan and its Scope:

There was a broad discussion about the scope of the Plan, and some of the key points which emerged are below.

- bringing more old burgage plots into usage;
- transport;
- business development;
- land use;
- sports;
- recreation;
- infrastructure; hospitals, schools;
- Social housing;
- retail and the town centre;
- heritage and tourism provision, historical buildings;
- employment and industry; Identify businesses that we need to look at for the next 20 years;
- communications infrastructure, superfast broadband;
- rail transport, the railway.

It was noted that much work has been done in the original Town Plan and the WP could use some of its themes.

The Chairman said that the Local Development Plan will not define the settlement boundary, nor are there any green belt designations in Herefordshire. These could be addressed within the Neighbourhood Plan.

There was discussion about a target date for issue of the Plan. It is not possible to produce a Plan before the core strategy is ratified by Herefordshire Council, which is estimated to be the spring of 2014. (In the meantime the UDP is still in place.) Bill Stump proposed that the target should be twelve months, stretching to eighteen months if necessary. This was supported by Cllr Harvey and agreed.

RECOMMENDATION: **That the WP aims to produce a Plan (at least ready for independent examination) within 12 months, extending to 18 months, if necessary.**

5.1 There was discussion about the setting of a timetable/timeline against the eight steps identified in page 21 of the CPRE's "*How to shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning*" booklet¹ (noted below):

- "1) Getting started;
- 2) Identifying the issues (key economic, social & environmental);
- 3) Develop a vision & objectives (identify key National Planning Policy Framework & local Plan (Core Strategy) policy objectives);
- 4) Generate options (appraise, using sustainability framework);
- 5) Draft the Neighbourhood Plan (appraise the draft policies using the sustainability framework);
- 6) Consultation & submission (prepare the Sustainability Appraisal report)."

5.2 There was discussion about the key elements of a Neighbourhood Plan (p.13 of the CPRE's booklet referenced above).

¹ It should be noted that the CPRE booklet "*How to Shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning*" should also be read in conjunction with Herefordshire Council's guidance on its website in order to gain a balanced view.

- “Development of housing, affordable housing, bringing vacant or derelict housing back into use;
- Provision for business to set up or expand; transport and access (issues around roads, cycling, walking and access for the disabled);
- Development of schools places of worship, health facilities, leisure and entertainment facilities, community & youth centres;
- Restriction of certain types of development and change of use – e.g. to avoid too much of one use type;
- Design of buildings;
- Protection and creation of open space, nature reserve, allotments, sports fields, play areas, parks & gardens and the planting of trees;
- Protection of important buildings, historic assets (e.g. archaeological remains);
- Promotion of renewable energy projects (e.g. solar & wind).”

5.3 Funding Opportunity

Details of a new two year, £9.5m support programme for communities engaged in neighbourhood planning will be launched on 15 April 2013. Town and Parish councils, and emerging neighbourhood forums preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan in England will be able to apply. The programme will be in two main parts:

- Grant payments – up to £7,000 per neighbourhood area, to contribute to costs incurred by the group preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Direct support – advice and support, tailored to meet the needs of supported neighbourhoods.

The programme will also offer opportunities for those involved in neighbourhood planning to share learning, including through Planning Camp events, workshops and online forums.

Rich Hadley offered to make a start on an application, and Cllr Harvey said that parts of the Town Plan Award for All bid she compiled could be used.

5.4 Communication: It was agreed that one person should be responsible for talking to the media and that all statements should be passed through the Chairman, who also agreed to draft and issue a press release² for inclusion in e.g. *The Ledbury Reporter* (Gary Bills Geddes); *The Hereford Times* (Lydia Johnson); *The Ledbury Portal*; and *Your Square Mile*, to explain the Neighbourhood Plan process and to call upon members of the wider community who felt they would like to join the WP to make contact via the Town Council offices. Nina Shields said that a “Town Plan” article for the *Ledbury Focus* was due, which would also provide an opportunity to mention the Neighbourhood Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Chairman be the spokesperson for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party.

6. Items for the next Agenda:

- Confirm the adopted Terms of Reference;
- Timetable and timeline for the tasks;
- Progress of the Grant Application.

Date of the next two meetings:

Monday 8 April and Tuesday 7 May 2013, both at 19.00 in the Town Council offices.

The meeting ended at 20.40.

² A press release from a Working Party of the Town Council requires the permission of Full Council. This will go before the meeting on 11 April, 2013.