

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Report of a Neighbourhood Plan Work Group Vision, Objectives and Policy Stage Meeting

Held on Tuesday, 20th January, 2015 at 7pm in the Market House

Present: Councillors R Barnes – Chairman
R Hadley, L Harvey, R Yeoman, T Widdows - Co Chairman

Mr G Holiday
Mr I James
Mrs N Shields – VC
Mrs C Tustin

In attendance: Mr P Kinnaird - Built & Natural Environment work group
Mr P Neep - " "
Mr N Morris - " "

Also Present: Mrs M Bradman – Deputy Clerk
Mrs S Tagg – Foxley Tagg Planning
Mr A Jones - Foxley Tagg Planning

Prior to the start of the meeting and in view of having some members in attendance from the Built & Natural Environment and Heritage groups, Nina asked all in attendance to introduce themselves.

Sally Tagg informed members that the objective of the meeting was to address two main issues the first being the distribution of work in preparation for the fast approaching consultation period starting 20th February for 6 weeks and also to agree the objectives and policies.

1 Current Status

Policies

Sally gave a brief update on the status of the objectives and policies and thanked all members for having completed and submitted the work packages.

Sally also mentioned that she had received the first draft of the Design Code which is excellent but will need a little more work.

Sites

At the last Neighbourhood Plan working party (NPWP) meeting it was decided that all sites in the preferred list should be those that go before the community so that the community have an opportunity to comment on those sites. It was also decided that the three sites which are on the other side of the relief road, these are the sites which have predatory developers showing an interest in them, should be added to the list. Sally suggested that to ensure that the NP is sound that it would be preferable to talk about these sites at public consultation events; they will be displayed and clearly

identified as sites which have been considered by the NPWP but would not be supported the Neighbourhood Plan and the reasons why. If a developer challenges the plan at any time in the future there would be evidence that the community had been shown the sites. There were also additional sites, the football ground and the viaduct site and there should also be a call for the public to identify additional alternatives within the settlement boundary. Sally then went on to ask the group what their feelings and views were about the three sites south of the relief road.

Nina questioned the validity of the consultation as she felt that the consultation would be out of context, information had already been gathered during the previous two or three years. Her concern is that the community would be asked the same questions, and that the consultation would be rushed and out of context.

Sally suggested that to ensure the consultations are in context maps could be displayed showing the sites that the community had identified at the previous consultation, what has happened with the information that they provided and how the NPWP have come to their decisions.

There was some discussion around the SHLAA sites and that the NPWP had considered some but not all of the sites. There is a requirement to show that the NPWP have looked at the discounted sites and either agreed with them being discounted or counted them in and a trail of evidence showing the processes would give the town a robust plan. Sally suggested that story boards could be produced to show the evolution and the process which the NPWP have followed during the site selection phase.

Sally asked the question again about how the group felt with regard to the three sites south of the relief road.

Nina referred to the Hereford Guidance Notes and asked why there had not been a consultation at the options stage. Sally explained that when preparing a NP for a town as large as Ledbury it is useful for the community to view the objectives, policies and site options at one consultation. Nina's concern was that the group may be required to re write quite a lot of the objectives and policies as a result of the consultation.

There was a discussion around the vision, objectives and policies. Sally confirmed that this was the first time that a set of objectives and policies had been presented as a whole and that the purpose of tonight was to agree them and that the vision statement, which had been drafted by Nina following iterations from Barbara, Bill and Griff, had been circulated but if members hadn't seen it FT would circulate it again.

Cllr Hadley confirmed that at the previous meeting the group agreed that all sites should be included in the consultation but that the group were also mindful that the viaduct site would be the preferred site. The group is concerned that, with one live planning application and one waiting in the wings for the south of the viaduct site, specifically flagging these up in the Neighbourhood Plan public consultation might be seen as giving those planning applications some tacit legitimacy. The group wouldn't want to do anything that prejudiced in anyway or gave any encouragement or not to Bovis or Gladmans and that the settlement boundary, as it currently stands, is the

bypass and there is no change to that in the core strategy. Therefore in the same way that Ledbury Park wasn't identified (AONB) for a big housing estate the group also said that because of being south of the bypass and beyond the current town boundary, any land beyond that point would not be considered.

It was decided: Nina summarised by confirming that the three sites south of the bypass should not be included in the site assessment but it should be noted that the NPWP have considered them and should describe where they fit during the consultation events (they will not be supported in this current plan period) the other discounted SHLAA sites should be treated in the same way.

2 Policy Options Consultation

Update

Sally gave a brief update of the last meeting held on 15th January. The discussion was based around the consultation events in February and any other consultation the group would wish to undertake and how they should be approached by the group. It became apparent that time frames and issues needed to be tabled, Cllr Yeoman agreed to produce a Gantt Chart of tasks and deadline dates (hard copies circulated). The next step will be to allocate and coordinate tasks. Sally thanked Nina for writing the first press release announcing the start of the consultation period, which will be in the February issue of the Ledbury Focus.

Nina asked Sally what the group would be trying to achieve by holding these events.

Sally explained that the purpose of these events is to show the community how the plan has moved forward since the last consultation. This will be achieved by producing the draft objectives, draft policies and preferred sites and by asking the community for their views. Liz has produced a traffic light system for the consultation so that the community will be able to let the group know what they think of the sites.

Nina asked what we expect to achieve from the events. Sally explained the different ways in which the public view can be captured i.e. questionnaires, graffiti boards, questions beneath various sites and various policies which would capture views on the different aspects.

Ian James questioned the relevance of the consultation and asked why we were not following the same process as Leominster.

Sally explained that each town or parish has their own set of circumstances and Ledbury has a particularly complex set of circumstance and as such one plan's approach does not necessarily fit all.

Sally reiterated the need for the NPWP to get involved with the tasks for the consultation, because it is plan for Ledbury and requires input from Ledbury. FT's role is to guide and advise on the consultation, the concern is that the month will go by and the group will not be prepared. It is not FT's responsibility to run the consultation or to undertake all the preparation for the event but to help the group to achieve a well prepared event.

4 Policy Discussion

Nick Morris asked why the vision statement was not available along with the objectives and policies. Sally explained that the vision had been written previously but was not for discussion at this particular meeting, the meeting was to discuss the draft objectives and policies.

Cllr Hadley explained that Ledbury was an interesting place to live in because the community has differing views and ideas. The NP has to be the centre of the Venn diagram of all those areas of interest; it has to be the statement of the areas upon which the community is agreed because if there are huge schisms in the NP it will fall at referendum. The consultation should map out what this group has come up with so far and find out from those members of the community who bother to get involved where the areas of disagreement lie and where the areas of agreement lie and eventually the NP will focus on the areas of agreement. Sally agreed that the group is trying to achieve a degree of consensus or comments from the community which will be re-evaluated and fed into the draft plan.

Before Cllr Harvey left the meeting she thanked Cllr Yeoman for the Gantt Chart and was pleased to see one had been produced but was concerned that a lot of work has to be carried out over a relatively short time period and that the consultation would be rushed. She asked what was driving this window of time for this particular consultation and why the group couldn't change the consultation date suggesting a six week extension to enable better preparation. Sally explained that the timetable is partially driven by the core strategy and partially driven by the programme originally agreed last summer. She explained that it would also be prudent to get to the draft plan stage, which carries some weight in planning decisions. The risk of delaying the consultation by six weeks would be that those who have put a lot of hard work and effort into the plan would become demotivated and disheartened. Cllr Harvey reiterated her concern that there seems to be a lot of work to be done in a four week period. Sally reassured Cllr Harvey that if the work packages were allocated and agreed that the time frame would be achievable. Ian James agreed with Sally that the work packages are achievable in the timeframe but suggested that three different plan options should be presented at the consultation. Sally asked if Ian could develop this together with a group and circulate to the working party for comment.

Cllr Harvey left the meeting at this point.

Sally asked if the group could go through the Gantt chart and the following was agreed:

Press release was tasked to Nina and Terry.

Cllr Hadley asked if the meeting could proceed to the Policy and Objectives item on the agenda.

The Chairman, Cllr Barnes, asked members to take the Gantt Chart away with them and to decided which tasks they are able to do and report back to the next meeting on 2nd January, 2015.

Objectives and Policies

Foxley Tagg circulated the Objectives and Policies with comments and suggested changes, the group were requested to go through each item individually and agree the changes (or not) or to agree an alternative. The following areas were agreed:

Built Environment

Natural Environment

Heritage

Employment & Economy

Foxley Tagg will circulate the changes.

Still to be agreed at the next meeting:

Housing

Community & Leisure

Transport

Infrastructure

Date of the next meeting Monday, 2nd February, 2015 @ 7pm in the Market House.

Meeting closed 10.22pm