

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Report of a Neighbourhood Development Plan Work Group Meeting
held on Tuesday, 24 January, 2017 and continued on Wednesday 1st February, 2017.

Present: Councillors: R Barnes, A Crowe, M Eager and E Fieldhouse.
Local Residents: Ms L Turner, Mr B Stump, Mr P Howells,
Ms R Sharpe

1. Apologies were received from Mr R Yeoman.
2. Declarations of interest – none declared.
3. Following the Full Council meeting held on 18th January 2017 to update Councillors on the progress of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), Cllr E Harvey had submitted 67 questions and requested that they be answered at the Full Council meeting on 2nd February 2017. In light of this, the group agreed to abandon the original agenda and concentrate on answering the questions.

Members then worked their way through the list of questions, copies having been circulated.

Having spent a considerable amount of time in answering one person's questions it was agreed that the following recommendation be presented to Full Council for consideration:

Recommendation to Full Council: That any further questions received relating to the NDP should be referred to Full Council to decide how questions should be answered in the future in order to make best use of volunteer time to progress the Plan.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

A further meeting was held on Wednesday 1st February, 2017 where the group reviewed and finalised responses to the questions received. See below.

1. When were the Terms of Reference for the NDP Management Team and Work Groups, proposed on 12th January, brought to full council for approval?

At Full Council meeting held on 28th January 2016 at which Cllr Harvey was present. Ref minute C.11-1.16.2 Recommendation 1.

2. When have any amendments to those Terms of Reference been brought to full council for approval?

There have not been any amendments to the Terms of Reference.

3. Why has the NDP-MT not been adhering to the ToR since May 2016?
For continuity and to avoid further disruption to the group Cllr Crowe continued to chair the MT until her resignation from the position in November 2016. Chair of MT has still to be elected. ToR will be amended.

4. Why are the group meetings not being publicised to councillors and to the public?

Reports are presented to Full Council and the date of the next scheduled meeting is included. The group is always open to new members; Local resident Mr P Howells joined the group on 31st May 2016 and Cllr Jean Simpson joined the group as recent as November 2016. This demonstrates a welcoming and open group.

5. Why are the minutes of meeting not published to the council website in a timely manner and why are they so scant as to make it impossible for the public and for councillors to understand what is going on?

The timely issue was answered by Mr P Howells at Full Council 18.1.17. Minutes after each meeting are approved at the next by the group as you would expect, so in the Group's view they do represent a fair understanding of each meeting and no one has queried them before.

6. How frequently do FTP provide the full council with an update on the progress made on the NDP? Please provide dates of all briefings.
FTP reports to Full Council as and when necessary. Full Council receive reports and notes of meetings regularly.

7. Please provide the evidence that the town council took the decisions to move to each round of consultation – as stated in the guidance documentation from Herefordshire Council.

Full Council released budgeted funds at each round agreeing each round of consultations.

8. Why has the guidance not been followed regarding the setting up of a steering group?

The Hereford Council Guidance notes provide guidance, (which has been followed) there is no stipulation that these guidance notes need to be followed to the letter. As Ledbury in a large Town for a NDP the diversity of the NDP group is broad.

9. What were the gaps in the data that were identified in the gap analysis undertaken by FTP at the outset of the project?

Gap Analysis document is available to be viewed at the TC office by appointment only.

10. How did the questions asked at the consultations undertaken in the summer of 2014 close those identified gaps? Where is the mapping to evidence this closure?

The summer 2014 consultation was an evidence gathering exercise and took place prior to the gap analysis.

11. Why did FTP not notify the council of the cost of their additional work proposed to the Summer 2014 consultations ahead of undertaking the work?

All payments to FTP have been agreed by Full Council.

12. Why was the invoice for the stage paid (September 2014) before the report on the work on the consultation analysis had been received (May 2015)?

All payments made have been agreed by Full Council.

13. Why does the consultation and evidence base report (May 2015) not contain the information listed on its contents page? Why has this report not been corrected, as requested by the NP Group in June/July 2015?

This has been addressed, thank you for bringing this to our attention.

14. Why has the 'options' stage in the process been bypassed?

The production of policy options is Herefordshire guidance but is not a requirement of the NP Regulations. In this case, it was decided by the NDP Group that policy options would not be beneficial to the plan production.

15. How have options to deliver a new primary school, improved sports facilities, bring forward employment sites and higher value jobs, enhance leisure and tourism offers, improve and extend community green space, enhance footpath and cycle networks, capitalise on infrastructure links, grow healthcare facilities, increase car parking facilities, use of Lawnside Road land blocks, use of vacated blue light areas ... been explored and consulted upon?

Refer to LDC 2.4 of the Design Code for 'enhance footpaths and cycle networks'. Other items delivered by Core Strategy.

Also Objectives and Policies within the plan deal with some of the above.

There have been numerous opportunities for the public and stakeholders to raise issues at consultation if they felt they had not been sufficiently dealt with and advocate positive suggestions.

16. What is the rationale for not presenting these options to the public?

Presented at the Summer 2016 consultation.

17. Which neighbouring councils apart from Wellington Heath have been liaised with in developing the plan?

None.

18. Has a landscape impact assessment been undertaken? If not why not?
Herefordshire undertook an *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis: Hereford and the Market Towns* and considered landscape impact as part of their SHLAA. This evidence was used to inform the Call for Sites. No sites have been proposed for allocation of any land use outside the proposed settlement boundary and as a consequence further landscape work is therefore evidently not required.

Impact of policies on landscape dealt with in SEA.

19. How many iterations of the SEA have been undertaken and have they been reported to the council?
The SEA is still being prepared and will go before Full Council in due course.

20. What recommendations of the NDP Group have received endorsement by full council? Please list this evidence.
Please see reports of meetings on the town council website.

21. When were the consultations undertaken with the traveller community and with groups representing residents with English as an additional language? What questions were asked and what were the responses received?
During the July 16 consultation the targeted groups were consulted but chose not to complete a questionnaire.

22. What other hard to reach groups were consulted with and what were the outcomes of those consultations? When were these consultations undertaken and how many people were consulted?
Many groups were consulted; Salters Hill, U3A, Leadon Bank, St Katherine's Surgery, Food Bank, Ledbury Primary School and John Masefield High School, various groups were informed where to find the consultation information and questionnaire online.

23. What data has been gathered on consultation respondents to provide assurance that age, relationship to the town, and repeated engagement with the process is understood?
The questionnaires were purposefully anonymous to encourage responses. It was noted that there was a broad spectrum of residents of varying ages in attendance.

24. What was the date and duration of the vision and objectives consultation?
March/April 2016 for a period of 6 weeks.

25. Who is the project manager for the Neighbourhood Plan and where is the project plan? Please provide a copy.
Lisa Turner is managing the project. The project plan, gannt chart will be available in the office to view, by appointment.

26. How many stage completion reports have been received from FTP and who has reviewed and signed them off as accepted before approval to issue an invoice is given?
4 Stages. Signed off by The Town Mayor, NDP Chairman and Clerk to the Council.
27. Where are these stage payment reports held and are they available to councillors and the public?
Stage payments schedules are held in the Town Council Offices and are available during the public inspection period for external audit.
28. When was the plan last shared with Herefordshire Council's designated support officer for the Ledbury NDP? And with what frequency has this officer met with the NDP group – dates please.
This question was fully addressed at the Full Council meeting 18.1.17.
29. Where is the communication plan for the NDP? Please provide a copy.
The Communication Strategy is available in the office.
30. At what points in the process have ward councillors been involved? What evidence have you gathered of their involvement in the process?
Through reports given to Full Council.
31. Why was a call for sites undertaken when the outcome of the Gladman appeal was not known?
The Call for Sites was undertaken to establish what potential sites were available and that may be suitable for future development, for community, leisure, employment and housing. The call for Sites identified the Pugh's site on Market Street in the town centre of Ledbury for housing (elderly and young people with potential for health care provision), a site which would not have arisen if the call for sites had not been undertaken.
32. Why did the group not use the information already held on the DropBox library for the plan to undertake consultation with landowners regarding employment, sports and tourism land availability?
**1) Dropbox should not be used by Local Government – information is stored outside the EU.
 2) Call for Sites – to identify land for employment, sports and other purposes. Individual Councillors had previously been criticised for speaking to landowners. To avoid further issues and for total transparency a Call for Sites was carried out by FTP as an independent.**
33. Why has the NDP not included the land areas proposed for development by Ledbury Property Solutions in 2014 and again in 2015?
Did not come forward in the Call for Sites.

34. Why has the group not presented the full proposals submitted by Mr Wilce for the development of the land to the east of the Bromyard Road for public consideration?

This site was fully appraised in the Call for Sites and was given the same opportunity and level of scrutiny as all the sites were that were submitted within the timeframe and parameters of the Call for Sites process. Notwithstanding the Call for sites process, it is not within our remit to promote individual sites.

This land was assessed by Herefordshire Council prior to the Core Strategy and was discounted. (HLAA/062/001)

The NP Clerk spoke to Mr Wilce (senior) on 3 occasions as did FTP and members of the NDP Group. We are unclear as to what further response was necessary. Moreover all councillors were circulated with this information and the Group were not tasked to give any additional response.

35. Has the NDP group consulted with the Canal Trust? If not, why not?
Covered by the Core Strategy.

36. Why has the NDP group refused to meet with Bovis to discuss their plans for the development of their Gloucester Road land options? Rationale for this?

It was considered inappropriate by the group. The group could not be seen to show bias and Bovis was offered attendance at the Full Council meeting to receive information.

37. Has the NDP group met with Eastnor Estates to discuss their boundary with the town? If not, why not?

Not relevant.

38. Has the NDP group met with the Allotment Association to discuss their infrastructure needs and to consider the future requirement for land allocation for allotments in the town? If not, why not?

Yes.

39. Why has the land owned by Countrywide at the junction of the Dymock Road & Leadon Way not been included in the site assessment for either housing or employment?

Not brought forward in the Call for Sites.

40. Why has Fairfields Farm been excluded from consideration for employment land as it was in the SHLAA?

Not brought forward in the Call for Sites. Core Strategy has allocated 3 ha on the Viaduct Site and 12 ha on Little Marcle Rd.

41. What land has been identified for employment?

See Core Strategy.

42. Why has the Upper Hall lake and orchard area not been proposed as a protected green space?
Privately owned.
43. Why has Ledbury Park not been proposed as a protected green space?
Privately owned.
44. Why has the wildlife buffer between the Full Pitcher and Gloucester Road roundabouts not been proposed as a protected green space?
Privately owned.
45. Why has the Cricket Ground been included as a protected green space?
This land will retain protection until the new facility is available for use. See CS Pol OS3 SS2, NDP Pol CL1.1 and will be removed prior to publication of draft plan.
46. Why was Lawnside treated as a single area for development?
Evolving plan – Previous group dealt with it as a single area for development as, at the start of the plan process.
Although mentioned in the Core Strategy the £2m redevelopment of the Swimming Pool meant that this should be consulted on. See NDP EE3.1.
47. Why has no land allocation been made for healthcare facilities?
Discussion is still on-going.
48. Why is the station not being proposed for enhancement?
This is still under investigation.
49. Why have landowners adjacent to the station not been consulted regarding parking solutions?
This is still under investigation.
50. Why have land options for sports facilities not been considered.
None came forward through the Call for Sites and it's covered in the NDP.
51. Why has the cycle and footpath network not been mapped for the public and improvements, additions and extensions proposed?
The group will provide a map.
52. Why has a settlement boundary been proposed? What are the risks of leaving the Bovis and Countrywide land out of the defined settlement? **To protect against unlimited development and to prevent over development.**

53. Was the settlement boundary discussed with full council before undertaking a public consultation on the proposal?
It was presented to Full Council contained within the NDP reports of 3rd October and 19th October, presented to Full Council on 3rd November 2016. See C.131 - 11.16 which advised Council that the project was making progress and that the policies had been drafted regarding the settlement boundary and various other items. Councillor Harvey was present at this FC meeting.
54. What impact does the Bromyard Rd access to the viaduct site have on the SHLAA reasons for discounting the land blocks to the east of the Bromyard Road from development.
Not an NP issue.
55. What are the implications of the Henfield High Court ruling on the Ledbury NDP?
The SEA will be robust and consider the impacts of the settlement boundary.
56. What is the rationale for extending the primary and secondary retail area of the town when Herefordshire Planners have recently deliberately contracted the primary and secondary shopping areas?
Herefordshire Planners have done no such thing. Please read Core Strategy:
Primary shopping areas will be made up of primary and secondary shopping frontages (except in Bromyard and Kington) and will be reviewed in the Hereford Area Plan (including the Old Market Area) or Neighbourhood Development Plans/Development Plan Documents. Until their review, the primary and secondary frontages as shown in the Place Shaping policies are carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007 for development management purposes.
57. Why has some portion of the Lawnside area not been included in the proposed extension of the retail area of the town centre?
The consultation shows that it was not conclusive and the group agreed.
58. Why has a safe footway link between the Homend and Lawnside Road area not been included in the proposed?
There are already numerous ways to walk between these areas.
59. Have landlords/property owners in the Worcester Rd, New St & Southend been consulted about proposals for their properties to be used for food and takeaway retail?
No.

60. Why has property within the proposed town centre area been 'blighted' with starter and older persons' housing rather than positively defining the criteria for such housing wherever it is sited?

This is what the community wants. NDP Pol HO3.1 &2.

61. Why have no allocations been made for sporting, leisure, health and employment land?

None came forward in the Call for Sites.

62. Have the owners of the woods been consulted on their proposed designation as community assets?

Dog Hill Wood – yes. Ref to NDP Pol NE4

63. How is NE3 & 3.1 deliverable?

The policy is a guide to development management officers at the Planning Authority.

64. How is NE5 & 5.1 deliverable?

We anticipate people will come forward with proposals.

65. How many people responded to the design code question?

99 residents responded.

66. How many people visited the town council offices to view the hardcopy of the design code?

10 people.

66. Why was the design code not made available on the NDP website?

A question was put to residents asking whether or not a Design Code was desirable. The Design code was in draft stage at the time. The response was positive. Following which the Code was added to the website.

With regard to concerns over a perceived lack of public participation, it was noted that from the outset, the level of public engagement had been low. The original working party would recall that despite a good level of publicity around 180 residents participated in the evidence gathering consultation held in 2014.

The publicity given to consultation in 2016 was wide ranging, and compares very favourably with that of other towns monitored by the group, as does the public response. (One historic town similar in size to Ledbury had around 50 responses to questionnaires.) Strong public engagement has only been experienced in small parishes.

Ledbury's publicity and participation meets guidance requirements in full. The group requested that in the event of further questions being raised, instigators should first

- 1) take account of the provisions of the Core Strategy;

- 2) be aware of the difference between the terms of reference of the NDP and the Town Plan;
- 3) not raise questions which have already been addressed in Council meetings, or in information provided to the Council by Working parties;
- 4) take account of the Objectives already in the draft plan. In this way the Council expects to avoid unreasonable demands on its time and on that of the volunteers working on the plan.