

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

2 February 2018, 10am – 1pm, The Corner House

Present:

Peter Kenrick

Juliet West

Reg James

Janet Burroughs

Graham Terry

Rod Evans

Tony Merry

Claire Wilding

Apologies:

Chris Sharpe

Catherine Goyder

1. Welcome, minutes, conflicts of interest

Previous minutes were agreed. No new conflicts were reported.

2. Matters arising

Peter noted that it had been agreed the Housing Needs Assessment could not take account of recent planning applications as they could not verify whether work had commenced. This would be a task for us to do in the NDP. The HNA will look at housing needs at a specific date (March 2016).

3. Co-ordinators report and project plan

Robert Courts MP paid a brief visit to the meeting and encouraged the steering group to contact him if he could be of assistance. **Action: All** to provide bullet points to Peter so that **Peter** can write to Robert Courts.

Peter reported on the financial position. Peter provided a note summarising anticipated costs and income to complete the NDP. We had now reached the maximum limit for claiming grants from Locality. The Town Council had agreed to contribute £4K towards costs of completing the NDP.

Locality require us to provide invoices to show how our recent grant has been spent, the deadline for spending being 9 January 2017. **Actions: Juliet** to request an invoice from Kathryn Davies for the character assessment work, **Peter** to provide Tony with the Arc4 invoice. **Tony** to respond to Locality.

On the character assessment, it was agreed that Claire should co-ordinate comments back to Kathryn Davies. A subgroup consisting of Juliet, Catherine, Graham and Claire should meet to agree any changes or additions we would like made to the report and then to discuss with Kathryn Davies. **Action: Claire** arrange subgroup meeting and co-ordinate comments on draft report.

4. Housing

Housing Needs Assessment The revised Housing Needs Assessment had just been received, but there had not been chance for anyone to read it in detail. The steering group

agreed to approve payment of the invoice, subject to no major issues being found in the final draft. **Action: All** to make any comments back to Claire by Thurs 8 Feb, bearing in mind that requests for changes should be limited to any points we have previously raised that the consultants may not have addressed. **Claire** to respond to Arc4 on 9 Feb.

Housing policies The draft housing policies section circulated by Claire was discussed. Latest developments in the Local Plan were very significant for Charlbury and had changed the policy backdrop to the plan. Juliet noted that we should refer to the Cotswolds AONB Housing and Development Policy, as the position paper referred to was quite old and possibly out of date. Peter noted the importance of the town's position as a rural service centre: protecting and promoting the town centre and enabling key workers to live in the area were important. It was agreed that this section should refer to Local Plan policy OS2, which states that Charlbury is suitable for "modest development" given its rural service centre role. Claire noted that there would also be a town centre vitality section in the final NDP.

Juliet noted the difficulty of addressing "local needs" in an open market situation. Graham raised the possibility of placing local connection restrictions on new housing. There were examples of NDPs which had applied local preference criteria to market housing, although Claire queried how effective such policies would be. Claire noted that in the case of shared equity it should be possible to prioritise those with local connections and/or key workers. Lack of private rented accommodation was raised as an issue, although it was agreed there was little that could be done about this in the NDP. It was noted that Charlbury has a good supply of affordable housing compared to the district as a whole, however right to buy risked depleting this. The question was raised as to whether limits could be placed on right to buy. It was felt that this was probably not possible within the NDP but that this could be a question to put to Robert Courts MP.

It was agreed that shared equity was an area of particular interest, to help the "squeezed middle" who did not qualify for standard affordable housing but could not afford market housing. We would need to explore whether it was possible to limit right to buy for any shared equity housing so that it could be a long-term facility for the town. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a discussion involving Mick Kent and Jeff West in order to bring in more expertise, especially on shared equity housing.

Graham raised the need for a care home and sheltered housing within Charlbury. There was some discussion of how we balance the need to provide for older residents whilst avoiding attracting large numbers of older people into the area in order to maintain a mix of ages in the population.

The possibility of a policy on housing density was also raised, which could allow compact 4 bedroom homes to be built that might be suitable for families, whilst discouraging very large "executive homes".

Actions: Claire to arrange a separate meeting involving Mick Kent, Jeff West and all members of steering group who wish to attend. **All** to provide written comments on the housing policy paper to Claire by Thurs 8 Feb. **Claire** to update the paper taking account of comments made, including examples of local connection and housing density criteria in other NDPs.

Development sites There was considerable discussion over the way forward on development sites. Astrid (WODC) had responded to our request for assistance with assessment of sites, suggesting that we refer to the SHELAA. If we had identified sites not covered by the SHELAA we should carry out our own initial assessment following the same format. We should then consult WODC so that they could identify any major issues with any sites selected. WODC had not offered assistance with the assessment beyond this, and had directed us towards consultants.

The recent developments on the Local Plan were very significant and required us to rethink. The Inspector had asked WODC to remove from the Plan the four allocated sites in the Burford/Charlbury subarea. This raised the question of whether it was appropriate for us to allocate sites within the NDP. Rod raised the prospect of the NDP putting forward potential

appropriate sites subject to completion of further assessments, but not going so far as to allocate.

It was recognised that development sites is the major issue currently delaying the NDP timeline, however, it was agreed that in light of recent developments we needed more time to reflect before deciding the way forward. We should pull together the information we have in the SHELAA and elsewhere and identify the pros and cons of the different courses of action. It was agreed that we should not write to the owners of the fourth site until we are clear on the direction we wish to take, i.e. will we allocate sites or not.

Action: **Claire**, with help from **Peter**, to produce a note drawing together the information we have on the sites already. This should include Jefferson's Piece, but not the fourth site at this stage. It should set out the possible options, the likely size of any developments if we were to allocate development sites, and the pros and cons of different approaches. This would also be discussed at the separate housing meeting.

5. Local Green Spaces

The assessments of the proposed LGS sites were underway with a team of volunteers, and drafts had been completed for around half. We aim to complete these assessments by mid February.

Claire explained that we needed to consult users of the sites (e.g. the cricket club) and also seek support from local groups as part of the evidence supporting the assessments. **Action:** **Claire** to go ahead and write these letters, no need for the rest of the group to agree the content.

6. Character Assessment

This had already been covered in the project plan discussion.

7. AOB

None.

Next meeting: Friday 2 March 2018, 10am.