

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Minutes Friday 29th November 2019 10:00am – 12.30pm

Anne Downer Room, The Corner House

Present:

Peter Kenrick (PK)

Tony Merry (TM)

Juliet West (JW)

Catherine Goyder (CG)

Reg James (RG)

Rod Evans (RE)

Apologies:

Janet Burroughs (JB)

Chris Sharpe (CS)

Graham Terry (GT)

1. Welcome, conflicts of interest , minutes of previous meeting

No additional conflicts of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting 1st November 2019 were approved.

2. Matters arising

All covered in agenda

3. Action log

Nothing to report

4. Consultation Review

PK referred to an update sent to town councilors and steering group ahead of the recent November town council meeting. All responses had also been made available to town councilors and their comments will be welcomed.

There had been a total of 105 responses from residents, landowners, local organisations and statutory consultees. The tone of most responses was generally supportive of the aims of the plan even where specific objections were made. The team was also pleased to note the level of detail and constructive comment included in many responses.

Review of responses by the subgroups (agreed at the last meeting) is continuing and comments are welcomed from town councillors and other members of the team.

Discussion at the meeting focused on the following significant areas of comment:

4.1 Housing

OCC and WODC responses both suggested that some proposed housing policies may not be compliant with the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. In particular, both authorities indicated that proposed policies were too restrictive with regard to development within the built-up area. RE and RJ had given careful consideration to this matter and had shared a discussion paper with members of the team.

After discussion, it was agreed that:

- Plan revisions in this area will be necessary to avoid the risk of policies being ruled out of the plan during examination;
- Proposed revisions **MUST** still address and respect the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan (these aims are not disputed);
- Consideration should be given to including a more precise definition of the “built-up area” (defined by a map);
- Further consideration is needed regarding possible future need for market housing during the later years of the NP beyond the scope of the housing needs survey but this must still respect the plan’s aims;
- RE & RJ to propose revisions for discussion by the steering group and town council; **Action: RE & RJ.**
- Advice on proposed revisions to be sought from WODC. (See agenda item 5).

4.2 Local Green Spaces

Strong objections to designation of some proposed sites have been received from landowners, disputing the plan’s assertion that the sites meet the designation criteria as specified in the NPPF. There is a risk that such cases may be removed from the plan at the examination stage.

After discussion of these cases, it was agreed that:

- LGS sites considered to be at risk of removal to be reconsidered carefully with due consideration given to representations from landowners and others;
- For each such site:
 - Clarify the principal objectives of designation;
 - Assess how these objectives may be achieved by other means, either through existing protections (e.g. NPPF, WO Local Plan, AONB or Conservation Area protections) or by other Neighbourhood Plan policies (e.g. NE6 – protecting green corridors);

- Where alternative protections are identified and are considered to be adequate, consider recommending removal of individual LGS sites from the draft NP;
- Where LGS designation is still considered to be necessary to meet the Plan's aims and objectives, carry out additional assessment work to provide additional/stronger evidence that the site meets the designation criteria.

4.3 Environmental Issues

The Town Council is seeking revisions to the draft Plan in recognition of its recent declaration of a climate emergency (see minutes of NPSG meeting 1st November 2019 – agenda item 4). Input will be received from the newly established Town Council Environmental Working Group of which PK is a member. CG is also concentrating on environmental issues in her review of consultation responses. **Actions: PK & CG.**

It was recognized that a number of useful and detailed responses to the consultation addressing environmental issues had been received.

5. Next Steps

The main priority is to complete the assessment of all consultation responses. Aim to have recommendations for draft plan revisions available for presentation to the town council early in the new year (January/February).

A meeting is to be sought with WODC. **Action: PK**

Matters for discussion with WODC to include:

- Exploration of the WODC consultation response with particular reference to housing matters;
- Handling of Climate Emergency and Biodiversity issues in view of recent Climate Emergency declarations by the town council and WODC;
- Advice on LGS issues.

6. Consultation Statement

Work ongoing.

7. AOB

None.

8. Date of next meeting: 13th November 2019 at 10am.