

Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee held on Thursday 16th November 2017 at 7.15pm at The Corn Exchange, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL

Present: Melvin Reynolds – Chairman
Councillor Chris Bartrum, Jeanette Draper, Councillor Nigel Gibbs, Vic Lockley, Ian Murray, Helen Saunders, Jon Stern, Councillor Caroline Utting

In attendance: Amanda Smith – Assistant Town Clerk

NP17/11 039 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chairman, Melvin Reynolds, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Keith Meakin.

NP17/11 040 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

NP17/11 041 Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2017 were circulated, read and approved with one alternation to section 034/paragraph 2 - Jeanette Draper clarified that she had undertaken a shop use and design survey.

NP17/11 042 Matters arising from minutes of meeting held on 21st September 2017

Melvin thanked Jeanette for all her hard work in undertaking the shop use and design survey that he had forwarded onto Place Studio.

Melvin reported that there was no longer an active local MS Society and so he would refer to the suggestions made on mobility/accessibility in the “r Town” work. **ACTION – MR.**

Melvin is still collating photographs of views in and out of the town. **ACTION – MR.**

Local Green Spaces

Melvin confirmed that Place Studio would not be recommending the following four sites for inclusion: Eastfield Road, Fernbank Road, Greytrees and Merrivale Lane. The reasons for this were due to them having no public access and little or no historical or ecological value.

In spite of the Herefordshire Council objection Place Studio recommended, and it was agreed by all at the meeting, that the area between Archenfield Road and Roman Way should be included as a local green space as there is no other accessible green space at that end of Roman Way.

In spite of the Herefordshire Council objection and the recent lack of maintenance, it was also agreed that Redwood Close be included as a green space due to it being close to Walford and the parish boundary. Hawthorne Lane remains with access issues to be resolved.

Meetings with owners of potential sites

Melvin confirmed that Meadex on Tanyard Lane own their factory land.

Herefordshire Council own a small piece of Broadmeadow land (H&H coaches), the remainder largely owned by Yorkley Timber.

As part of the meeting with a director of Yorkley Timber, a discussion had also taken place about the land at the Chase Hotel and two possible proposals – initially (as presented at the last meeting) this had been for development of a health spa and holiday homes (on the left hand side of the land) and the other being the development of approximately five houses (on the right hand side of the land). Given that a Herefordshire Council officer had opposed development of the land, this meeting expressed no new views about the proposals.

Chair's note to minute: The owner's revised proposal for about 15 homes at the Chase Hotel is now available and early feedback would be welcome.

Melvin had, as requested, sent Ian Goddard the draft Plan document with the facility for him to make comments.

NP17/11 043 Review of current draft of Plan – including:

a) Place Studio current status and budget

Melvin reported that Place Studio was continuing to work on the draft Plan by attending meetings with landowners and Herefordshire Council. All the work they had been done to date had been invoiced and revised estimates had been produced for future work up until the Referendum. Ross Town Council was able to include this figure/including a contingency in the Neighbourhood Planning budget.

b) Going to Regulation 14

Melvin reported that Place Studio recommended that the draft Plan is submitted for Regulation 14 by the end of December 2017. The question was should the Sub Committee review the Plan before or after it is submitted (during the 6 – 8 week consultation period) - a public meeting would take place during the consultation period. Melvin expressed the view that the Plan should be driven through in order to submit it by the end of 2017 – this was on the basis that the text of the Plan had been seen and almost all that was needed (noting items 043c – 045 might affect this) was for Place Studio to do the graphics and insert updated policies for the final presentation. By doing this, the Plan would be available for consultation from the Spring 2018 (as Herefordshire Council is known to take time in confirming that Plans are ready to commence consultation). It was therefore agreed by all at the meeting that the Plan should go ahead and be submitted for Regulation 14 and that members of the Sub Committee can review it at the same time/during the consultation period.

c) Outcomes of meeting with Herefordshire Council on 5th October

Melvin reported that Herefordshire Council had not been willing to make a decision on allocating the Tanyard Lane laundry and sawmill sites - the environmental assessment of the sites has not taken place and Herefordshire Council was not prepared to explain the reason for this. Herefordshire Council appeared to be nervous about putting an access across the road, at Tanyard Lane, when part of it has landowner(s) unknown.

d) Allocation v use criteria based policies

Melvin raised the question of either obtaining site allocations or using criteria based policies in the draft Plan. He had drafted some policies that he would circulate to the Sub Committee. **ACTION – MR.**

Melvin reported that Leominster Neighbourhood Plan had used criteria based policies for housing in their Neighbourhood Plan, stating that if housing is put on land then a list of criteria must be fulfilled. He explained that this was less rigorous than allocating sites, and did not fulfil the 5-year supply criteria, but was another way of handling things where issues cannot be resolved in order to progress the draft Plan.

Likewise a criteria based policy had been used by Ewyas Harold in their Neighbourhood Plan for the siting of a school – and this was something that could be done in respect of any replacement for Ashfield Park School premises. It is relatively easier to be prescriptive with the criteria for the site of a school – e.g. specifying levels of traffic, high quality sustainable buildings, suitable remediation measures to remove a flood zone, school facilities open to the town, etc.

Melvin suggested using the words “Shall have”, “Should have” and “Should be considered” to provide a cascade of strength of the requirements for any Criteria Based Policies.

Melvin suggested that as Herefordshire Council was unable to provide assistance on some site allocations that this could be the approach to take in the draft Plan. The meeting discussed this at some length and concluded that although it results in a weaker Plan we probably have very little option. The approach of using Criteria Based Policies where unavoidable was therefore agreed.

The merit of considering Criteria Based Policies to address the uncertainty around, e.g. the Children’s Centre, Primary Care Provisions and Elderly/Sheltered Housing was discussed and it was agreed it should be discussed with Place Studio.

Melvin to circulate Leominster (housing) and Ewyas Harold (school) Neighbourhood Plan sections. **ACTION – MR.**

e) Site discussions - additional

Melvin had been advised by the owner of the Broadmeadows Camping site that he might be willing to sell the site. A Herefordshire Council officer had suggested that the Rowing Club might be interested in setting up an alternative camp site on the land that they own. The meeting agreed that this would retain tourist income for the town. Caroline agreed to find out who the contact is at the Rowing Club. **ACTION – CU.**

f) A40 eastwards strategy review

Melvin described the Herefordshire Council landholding as covering the area up to Rudhall Brook, across to the A40 on the western side (minus a few fields owned by Marsh Farm), along the A40 and over into Western-under-Penyard. Melvin to circulate the map and draft text. **ACTION – MR.**

NP17/11 044 Affordable housing proportion

Considering whether the affordable housing percentage level could be lowered across the parish allocation to make it more attractive to developers, Melvin reported that he had reviewed the levels of affordable housing required – this ranged from 35% on Overross/Pigeon House land to 40% in Hildersley. If the housing figure remained at 900 houses then affordable housing at 35% would yield

315 home sites; if 1,150 houses then 315 homes would result in a rate of 27%. He had, however, been advised by Place Studio that because the precise levels are negotiated on the basis of site viability such an incentive was unlikely to be workable.

NP17/11 045 Bridstow & Wilton allocation

Melvin reported that, due to the difficulties Bridstow Parish Council was having in identifying suitable housing sites in Bridstow and Wilton, in order to meet their housing target of 47 houses, Samantha Banks had suggested to Bridstow Parish Council/Neighbourhood Plan Working Group that they should approach Ross Town Council/ Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee to discuss offsetting some of their housing target on the basis that there may be an overprovision of housing in Ross town. In order to place pressure on Herefordshire Council to make a decision on housing site allocations in Ross, Melvin had agreed in principle to offer 15 houses in order to reduce the Bridstow and Wilton housing target to 32 providing that Herefordshire Council could provide the information that would enable site allocations for housing in the town for up to 1,150 houses. Enacting this, should it be achievable, would take the form of an agreement of terms/ Memorandum of Understanding between Ross Town Council and Bridstow Parish Council.

NP17/11 046 Anticipated schedule for the next steps of the Plan

Melvin stated that he thought that the draft Plan could be ready submission to Herefordshire Council by the end of December 2017.

If this is achieved the Plan could go out for Public Consultation under Regulation 14 by the end of March 2018 – and the consultation period could finish by the end of April 2018.

May and June 2018 could then be time to resolve any issues from the public consultation, and then in July 2018 the Plan could be submitted for Regulation 16.

Then in September 2018 the Plan could be submitted for examination and the Referendum would take place in late 2018/early 2019.

A Public Consultation meeting will be arranged when a likely schedule of timings for the consulting on the draft Plan is known. **ACTION – MR.**

Melvin will do a press release for the Ross Gazette when a likely schedule of timings for the consulting on the draft Plan is known. **ACTION – MR.**

NP17/09 047 Any other business

Melvin arranged to work with Ian Murray to update the Ross NP website links.

NP17/09 048 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 15th February 2018.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.