

Minutes of the “Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group” Meeting held at 10.30am on 27 July 2023 (Meeting Number 5).

Venue - St Richards House Council Chamber

Persons attending – Councillor GR Brookes – Steering Group Chairman. (Designated Elected Member with responsibility for NDP matters - including Communication, Liaison & the Steering Group).

- Dr David Nicholson – Appointed Consultant
- Councillor George Duffy – Leader of the Town Council and Chairman of DSTC Planning Committee
- Mrs Lyn Blewitt – representing Droitwich Spa Civic Society
- Mr John Armstrong
- Mr Michael Howard
- Mr Paul Jones
- -Katy Prew – Deputy Town Clerk (Community & Amenities)
- Mark Keld – Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence were noted from Andy Ford – Wychavon Planning Department, Mr Mike Meredith (Civic Society) , Mr Alan Humphries, Mr Bill Moy and Miss Gemma Ranford – Wychavon Place Board Officer for Droitwich Spa.

2. To consider the draft Minutes of the last Meeting of the NDP Steering Group (Meeting Number 4) from 14 June 2023. The draft had been circulated with the Agenda papers. The minutes were accepted and noted for publication on the web page with no amendments raised.

3. Communication and Consultation Strategy- To note the Communication and Consultation Strategy draft produced in November 2022 and further discussed at the June 2023 meeting. The Clerk reminded that - To be considered for acceptance for attachment to DSTC Web Site, Section 4.3 requires full completion for the list of Local Stakeholder Groups & Organisations before publication online. In general discussion it was explained and agreed that the list should be as comprehensive as possible to support strong Community engagement as part of the evidence trail for the NDP. It was agreed in June that any further suggestions for Local Groups and Organisations to be included as part of the Communications Strategy should be sent to the Clerk.

As at the July Meeting no further suggestions for consultation groups have been received and the list remains as outlined below and before -

Civic Society, History & Archaeology, CVS, SOBBS, FODSL, the Place Board, Parochial Church Council, RBL, WDC & WCC. Neighbouring Parish Councils, Schools, Youth Council, Police SNT, Fire and Rescue, Youth Groups and Cadets (Fire, Air and Army), Sports Clubs (e.g St Peters Pavilion, King Georges Pavilion, Lido and Leisure Centre connections), Friends of Railway Station, Traders Groups.

The Clerk suggested adding the Local U3A Group which was agreed. In general discussion it was confirmed that this list would now be updated as part of the Communications Strategy (Section 4.3) and attached to the website. Any further suggestions received can be added at a later time.

4. Initial Short Consultation Responses from March 2023 NDP Launch Event-

David updated that the full report was nearly complete following formatting and analysis of all responses received. Special mention was made to Katy for her work and diligence in preparing all of the responses into the prescribed format. David mentioned that the responses have indicated clear themes emerging which will be fully interpreted

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when the finalised full report is presented. This is likely to be at the next Steering Group Meeting. The feedback and themes are to be incorporated within the final draft community and business questionnaires that are currently being prepared for final consideration in August, conducive for Community circulation in early autumn – anticipated September.

5. Draft Community Questionnaire-

An action was raised for the Clerk to acquire a suitable up to date map of the Neighbourhood Area from Andy Ford at Wychavon District Council ready for use to support the forthcoming questionnaires and consultation. It was considered important to define the area of scope accurately for the Community and to consider factors including rural periphery and the boundaries with neighbouring Parishes (including Ombersley & Doverdale, Hindlip Martin Hussingtree & Salwarpe, Saleway, Dodderhill and Wychbold). This is relevant to help clarify and define some of the newer development areas in and bordering the Town – for example Yew Tree Hill, Newland Lane and Copcut Rise areas.

In general discussion the following amendments were agreed for the covering letter and the initial draft Community questionnaire.

- (a) Covering Letter –all residential properties in the Neighbourhood Area, providing details of the Consultation link and signposting of means for paper questionnaire copies. The library building and St Richards House were considered suitable collection points to be referenced for paper format questionnaires. The mailshot will include the Neighbourhood Area Map to be produced by WDC (as above).
- (b) Questionnaire – For the front cover completion instructions to include a reference to all options being undertaken into account.
Within -the Objectives to include reference to infrastructure being provided alongside New Developments.
For Question 4 add the option for “opportunities to see first release or projected films”.
For Question 5 include shared ownership and First Homes as separate options.
For Question 11 convert to “top 5 priorities format”.
For the “Information about You Section” include an additional question about GP and Dentist Registration and High school attendance- options to be added for responses as – in Droitwich Spa / Elsewhere/ No/ and Prefer Not To Say.

6. Draft Business and Commerce Questionnaire-

The presented draft questionnaire was agreed by consensus.

The Clerk updated that there was no active Chamber of Trade Group in the Town able to assist with circulation. An agreement stands from January 2023 from the Wychavon District Council – Droitwich Spa Place Board to help with circulation and to encourage businesses to fill in the questionnaire. Gemma had provided an update with her apologies received for this meeting as follows to support with the Business questionnaire delivery - which was noted by all.

“The business survey looks good to me. My only feedback is can it be completed online? Wychavon uses Smart survey for all consultations and answers are standardised. It would be quicker for you and Katy to process than letters and easier for businesses. They may also be more motivated to fill it out if the printed surveys refer to a link /QR Code so that they can complete it online if they wish. If there is a link available I can share this with Wychavon’s e newsletter to help comm’s wise.

7. Project Costs and Technical Support Update –

(a) Funding

The Clerk updated that on 25th July 2023 it had been announced that

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The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has confirmed that funding has been made available for the full continuation of the Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme run by Locality on behalf of DLUHC for a further year, 2023-2024. Applications for both grants and Technical Support are now open. Please note that grants will need to be spent by the end of March 2024 and you should apply for activity that can be delivered by this date. Previously submitted applications for Technical Support will now also be processed by DLUHC.

An application has now been submitted to Locality for NDP funding for the period 2023/2024 (Grant Application reference as at 2 August 2023- 14589). The application comprises,

£8,700.00 – Professional fees – (split as - Activity Type WP2 - Analysis & Reporting elements £2700, WP3 Site Assessments for housing allocation [50% completed 22/23 period] £2250 , WP4 Preparation of Draft NDP £3150 and WP4 Advice on consultation £600).

In addition £1300.00 has been requested towards printing and distributions costs for the consultation exercises– taking the total value applied for to the maximum allowable threshold of £10K for the period 2023/2024.

Following an acknowledgement of receipt the outcome of the funding request is expected shortly

(b) Technical Support

Taking David’s professional advice - No further Technical Support packages have been applied for at this stage. Previously in 2022 the Housing Needs assessment (HNA) was requested and completed (January 2023), and Design Codes remains in progress. Viability is considered to be a useful additional third area of Technical Support required for the NDP, although judgement is reserved for the time being whilst the current work streams advance.

Next Steering Group Meeting date agreed to be Thursday 24th August 2023 at 10.30am in the same venue – St Richards House Council Chamber. Agenda to follow.

Meeting Closed 11.50am

Mark Keld

07.08.2023