



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Working Group Meeting

PUBLIC MEETING (*HELD IN PERSON*)

At Melksham Assembly Hall

Date: Thursday 27th May 2021

Start: 6pm

Present

Steering Group Members

Councillor Richard Wood (MWPC) (Chair)

Councillor John Glover (MWPC)

Councillor Simon Crundell (MTC)

Rolf Brindle (Transport rep)

Colin Harrison (Business rep)

Chris Holden (MCAP rep)

Shirley Mearns (Environment rep)

Officers

Teresa Strange, (MWPC Clerk)

Linda Roberts (MTC Clerk)

David McKnight (MTC Ec Dev Mngr)

David Way (Wilts Council Link Officer)

Councillor David Pafford (MWPC) as observer

NOTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Saffi Rabey due to illness and Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford; with Mike Sankey (not present).

Following the May elections, introductions to all were made and the new town council representatives welcomed.

2. Steering Group Chair & Vice Chair for 2021/22

MWPC Councillor Richard Wood was appointed Chair for 2021/22, with MTC Councillor Simon Crundell appointed as Vice Chair.

3. Declarations of Interests & Register of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

The MWPC Clerk advised that all members of the steering group are required to fill out a Register of Interests form. For new town council members, it was noted that this was different to their council one as covers the whole Plan area (Town and Without).

4. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

5. Minutes of the last Steering Group meeting, 3rd March 2021

The minutes of the last Steering Group meeting held on 3rd March 2021 were approved as an accurate record; there were no matters arising.

6. Terms of Reference

The members noted the content of the Terms of Reference and noted that the Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council had both approved the revised version at their respective meetings on 1 March 2021.

7. Latest Decisions/Documentation on the Plan

The members noted the Examiner's Report, the Wiltshire Council Decision Notice to proceed to Referendum on 1st July and the revised Referendum version of the Plan. It was agreed that the Examiner had been very thorough, and that there were no changes to policies, just some slight modifications to wording. The Referendum version of the Plan had been uploaded to the dedicated Plan website www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org to which thanks were given to Colin Harrison for doing free of charge; and to the town and parish council's websites. Members were asked to let officers know if they wished to have a hard copy of the Plan for their reference.

Councillor Glover asked what the implications were of the Examiner's request to change the date of the Plan from 2020-2030 to 2020-2026. David Way advised that the Plan would have 2 year's protection against a lack of 5-year land supply, and so the end date of the Plan period did not have any implication in this regard. It was to bring it into line with the Core Strategy which has an end date of 2026, as the point was made that it could not comply to a Plan with a date past 2026 as the Local Plan Review was not yet that advanced.

8. Statutory Guidance on how to promote a Referendum

Members noted the statutory guidance. David Way expanded on the guidance provided; that there can be no encouragement by the Steering Group for a "yes" or "no" vote, just to encourage people to vote. You can promote the Plan, and the benefits of what will happen if there is a "yes" vote, but no promotional material that

promotes a “yes” or “no” vote. Examples of the benefits of the Plan were that it had already started to influence planning decisions, and that if adopted would be part of the Wiltshire Development Plan, and carry as much weight as the Core Strategy.

9. Referendum Promotional material

The members reviewed promotional material that had been prepared by Place Studio, namely a page advert for the Melksham News with an accompanying “mini guide” to the Plan designed as an A5 colour leaflet. A public meeting was discussed to give information to any residents with queries before the Referendum and to raise the profile/promote the Referendum and allow residents to pick up a hard copy of the Plan. It was agreed that this was difficult under the current Covid restrictions and so a compromise was agreed, with a drop-in session to be held in the large, airy Assembly Hall on Thursday 24th June during the afternoon and evening. It was to be made clear that the drop in session was for additional information or clarification; the Plan can have no changes made at this late stage.

Agreed:

- a. The text for the page advert was approved and to be run in the Melksham News issues on 10th and 24th June at a cost of £495 excluding VAT per issue. With additional text in the 10th June version advertising the drop-in session on the 24th June.
- b. The text for the mini guide A5 8-page colour leaflet was approved and the officers to seek best value for printing.

Post meeting note: For Nettl to print the leaflets at a cost of £749 excluding VAT for 15,000 copies including batching into bundles of 100 and delivery to the Melksham News distribution depot in Broughton Gifford. 1,500 to be held back for distribution by hand by volunteers. (Alternative quotes were sought).

- c. Volunteers agreed to deliver the leaflet to parts of the Plan area that do not receive the Melksham News:

Bowood View (new Bellway development)	Councillor Richard Wood
Pathfinder Place (new Taylor Wimpey development)	Councillor John Glover
Redstocks	Councillor David Pafford
Hunters Wood/The Acorns (new Bloor development)	Councillor Simon Crundell
Beanacre	Linda Roberts

- d. The leaflets to be delivered by the Melksham News with their newspaper issue Thurs 24th June at an estimated cost of £476 excluding VAT based on £34 per 1000 for 13,500 papers.
- e. A price of £300 had been agreed with Place Studio and officers for the production of the text for both the advert and the leaflet.

10. Seend Neighbourhood Plan

Members noted that the Seend NHP is to be adopted following a successful Referendum on Thursday 6th May with a Yes vote of 421 and a No vote of 47 which was a 53.79% turnout. It was noted that neighbouring Seend had also used Place Studio as their consultants; and that the high turnout was probably due to the local elections being held on the same day.

11. Locality “Community Engagement Toolkit”

It was noted that Locality had produced a Community Engagement Toolkit which included the Melksham NHP as an example of best practice in its toolkit titled “Engaging your community in a meaningful way”.

12. Local Plan Review

David Way ran through the latest update and timescales on the Local Plan Review (LPR) and how it fits in with the work on the Melksham NHP.

3,500 responses had been received to the LPR consultation that ended in March, which Officers were now going through. There would be a draft Plan by the end of 2021, which would go out to consultation in early 2022. The Plan period will be from 2016-2036 (although there may be a change to the start date).

The aim of the Melksham NHP is to start an immediate review, and there is a lot of work to be done for it to conform to the emerging LPR. The NHP#2 will have to review housing and employment numbers.

Government guidance is changing at present, and the latest change is that Local Plans have to be reviewed every 5 years – and they take about 4 years to put together!

The MWPC Clerk asked what progress there was on the “Statement of Common Ground” between Wiltshire Council and MTC/MWPC/Melksham NHP and David advised that this has now be superseded by the LPR’s Topic Paper for Melksham, “Place Shaping Priorities”, with the previous work undertaken for the “Statement” forming the basis for this Topic Paper.

Members stressed that they want Wiltshire Council’s LPR to be worked on **with** them and not **to** them; and David assured members that he would be keeping in touch and that the LPR would be consulted on several times, and that the route to bringing things forward was through the Melksham NHP#2.

13. Review Process

Members noted a Locality toolkit document “How to implement, monitor and review your made Neighbourhood Plan” and discussed the timescale for the review of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (described for ease as NHP#1).

David Way explained that at the end of the first 2 year’s protection period of the NHP that if there was no 5-year land supply in place, that the policies are considered “out of date” but that doesn’t mean that they are not given weight, its all about the “balance”. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) 2021¹ refers.

In terms of timescale, there is no immediate need for the review to start immediately, in July for example straight after the Referendum, the Steering Group could meet later in the year.

14. Topics for NHP#2

Members noted that the topics for NHP#2 following the Review were already agreed in the revised Terms of Reference, but for ease of reference are noted here:

NHP#1	NHP#2
Building a strong competitive economy	Local Green Space
Promoting sustainable transport	Housing/Site Allocations
Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes	Implications of the Bypass
Promoting healthy communities	Town Centre Master Plan
Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding	Environmental Issues
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Implications of the Melksham Canal Link
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	

15. Steering Group membership

Members agreed that they wished to keep the “status quo” for the Steering Group moving forward, and noted the updated Terms of Reference which agreed the membership of the Steering Group in terms of representatives. For those new members that are interested in applying (to be mentioned in the advert in the paper

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

on the 10th & 24th June) then they will be asked to apply in writing in the first instance.

Members also felt it was imperative that Place Studio are engaged for the review of the NHP#1 and production of NHP#2; for continuation of service etc. As this was not an agenda item at this meeting, it was agreed that Officers would put on the agenda for the next meeting and state why this was an exception allowed under Financial Regulations of the two councils as professional services were exempt; but the reasons for this would need to be documented.

16. Invoices

The following invoices had been approved under delegated powers (*Min.7 3rd March 21*) since the last meeting (by Councillor Richard Wood (MWPC) and Councillor Adrienne Westbrook (MTC); and paid.

Place Studio Inv 5914 28/04/21 £567.15 excluding VAT for attending Steering Group meetings in November and January, amendments to the NHP following the Examination to produce Referendum version and Expenses to purchase site map of Allocation Site (policy 7).

Place Studio Inv 5921 16/3/21 £500 excluding VAT for Examination Stage query response, and Steering Group meeting

17. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on **Wednesday 29th September** at **Melksham Town Hall** to facilitate a hybrid meeting. Members encouraged to attend in person, with zoom for Place Studio and other stakeholders. To commence at **6pm**.

Meeting finished at 7.40 pm

Signed