



**Date: Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Start: 6.30pm**

**Present:**

**Steering Group Members Present**

Councillor David Pafford Chair (MWPC)

Councillor Graham Ellis (MTC)

Councillor Pat Aves (MTC)

Councillor Alan Baines, substitute for Councillor John Glover

Mark Blackham (Bowerhill Residents Action Group)

John Hamley (MTUG)

Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Chris Holden (Melksham Community Area Partnership)

**Officers**

Teresa Strange (MWPC)

Andrew Meacham (MTC)

**Task Group Members**

Councillor Mark Harris

**Planning Consultants**

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)  
online

**MTC Melksham Town Council**

**MWPC Melksham Without Parish Council**

**WC Wiltshire Council**

**MTUG Melksham Transport User Group**

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome & Housekeeping**

Councillor Pafford welcomed everyone. The Housekeeping message was not required to be read out as there was no one new present.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor John Glover (MWPC), who was substituted by Councillor Alan Baines, and from Councillor Mike Sankey (WC).

### 3. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

### 4. **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

### 5. **Items to be considered in closed session as confidential**

**Resolved:** For item 10 to be held in closed session.

### 6. **Minutes and Notes**

It was proposed by Mark Blackham, seconded by John Hamley and

**RESOLVED** to approve, and for the Chair to sign, the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

### 7. **Current Planning Policy context (recent changes to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and Wiltshire Council's current Land Supply figure**

Vaughan gave an update.

There was a new method for calculating housing under the new NPPF (Dec 2024) which was mandatory. The Local Plan would still be examined under the old NPPF criteria and if adopted, planning would be on that basis for about 5 years.

Wiltshire Council would fall under the housing requirement for a 20% buffer to be applied to the 5 year land supply requirement meaning an effective need to demonstrate a 6 years housing supply from July 2026.

The amended NPPF is already in force but the new Wiltshire local plan is not adopted. WC can only currently demonstrate a two year housing supply.

Teresa confirmed that the Local Plan and JMNP2 are to be considered against the old NPPF as they have been submitted before 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025, as part of transitional arrangements.

### 8. **Appointment of Examiner and proposed Referendum**

Reg16 consultation finished Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Examiner started Monday 27 January. Two weeks to comment on Reg 16. Referendum proposed for 1<sup>st</sup> May.

Members were concerned about speculative planning applications. Teresa advised that policies that have gone through Reg 16 and not received negative comments carry significant weight. All policies will carry more weight once through examination. Members were asked to remember that JMNP1 also remains in force.

Work may be needed to bring plan into line with Local Plan and new national requirements but it was noted that JMNP2 already allocates more housing than was required by the old rules. Reasonable to expect that NP would have to supply 10% of overall requirement but not worth speculating on that yet.

## 9. Regulation 16 consultation

27 submissions made in Reg 16 consultation. Detailed submission from Wiltshire Council.

Vaughan ran through the submissions. Overall nothing new. Some challenges to site allocations and designations. Some positive comments on allocation of sites which strengthen the approach taken by JMNP2. Comments from WC and statutory bodies and some landowners generally constructive.

Proposed response reflects and welcomes positive feedback.

The meeting moved in closed session.

## 10. Regulation 16 consultation comments

### Details recorded in Confidential Note

It was proposed by Chris Holden, seconded by Shirley McCarthy and unanimously resolved to approve the proposed response. It was noted that the Qualifying Bodies will need to approve the comments before sending on to the Examiner via Wiltshire Council.

The Steering Group reconvened.

Teresa asked about keeping the mailing list informed and queried how much information to include. After discussion she suggested something on the lines of "Regulation 16 finished last week. Thank you very much for your comments. The plan started examination on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January. We will update you as we know more."

It was proposed by David Pafford, seconded by Pat Aves and **unanimously resolved** to take the approach suggested by Teresa.

## 11. Invoices approved under delegated powers

July - £1512.50 from Place for desktop publishing, consultation and new content in draft plan.

August - £1140.00 to Place for work on addendum to SEA.

September – £2565.00 to Place for work on Sea and finishing documents

November - £6225.00 and £1725.00 to Antony Keown for capacity work#

As of now for financial year to end of March total of £29,070.96. Additional costs will be incurred in this financial year for further technical support from Place and probable changes to plan. For next financial year, for advertising referendum and training for councillors on using the JMNP.

Second Reg 14 consultation, new government and changes to NPPF have contributed to budget overspend. MWPC looking to use some funding from CIL money.

Mark Harris wished to put on record that Place have done work that they have not charged for.

Teresa advised that adopted plans increase the percentage of CIL money from 15% to 25% without a cap. Estimated that £50-£60k of technical support has been supplied. Unable to say if a fresh grant would be available from central government.

Shirley McCarthy asked if there was a possibility that MTC would not provide further funds. David Pafford felt MTC has been content, if not always happy, with the joint approach. Will be up to the new council to decide on its approach. MWPC will push for a joint approach.

It was agreed that David Pafford would attend the next meeting on MTC in his role as chair of the Steering Group.

**12. Date and venue of Next Steering Group Meeting**

Not set. Dependent on examiner's timetable and comments.

The meeting closed at 7:45pm. signed.....  
Chair,