



Date: Wednesday 7th June 2023

Start: 6.30pm

Present:

Steering Group Members Present

Councillor David Pafford Chair (MWPC)

Councillor John Glover (MWPC)

Councillor Graham Ellis (MTC)

Councillor Mike Sankey (WC)

Councillor Pat Aves (MTC)

John Hamley (MTUG)

Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Mark Blackham (Bowerhill Residents Action Group)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)

Linda Roberts (MTC)

Task Group Members

Councillor Mark Harris

Councillor Alan Baines

Planning Consultants

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)

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 to the meeting and that the meeting was being recorded and published on YouTube until the minutes were approved.

2. To note apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Holden.

3. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **Public Participation**

One member of the public was present virtually who wished to listen but not participate.

5. **To approve agenda item 7a)ii) to be held in closed session due to confidentiality (still draft plans/thoughts)**

Due to the confidential nature of business to be transacted, it was asked if item 7a)ii) regarding site selection could be held in closed session.

Resolved: For item 7a)ii) to be held in closed session and that members of the Housing Task Group present remain for this part of the meeting.

6. **To agree Minutes of Meeting held on 3rd May 2023**

Proposed by Councillor Glover, seconded by John Hamley, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to approve, and for the Chair to sign, the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 3rd May 2023.

7. **Programme Update**

ai) **Confirmed dates for Local Plan Review**

The Local Plan is going to WC cabinet for ratification on 11th July 2023.

a ii) **Ongoing Site Assessment work**

In closed session.

b) **Progress against Programme**

Vaughan gave an update on progress against the programme. Overarching progress has been made. Target for Regulation 14 is beginning of September and this is obtainable. First iteration of NP2 is before the committee. Reg 14 plan by end June or early July. Approval by MTC and MWPC needs to be woven in before Reg 14 consultation. Vaughan suggested late July.

Some critical external influences to get to Reg 14. In hands of WC. Essential to see Reg 19 plan. When selecting housing sites need crystalised target and site strategy. Important WC hits target of 11 July cabinet.

Need to talk to owners of sites to confirm availability for when we get to recommended suite of allocation.

SEA underway. Once site allocation work finished final piece of SEA can be undertaken. AECOM can undertake work within 3-4 weeks.

Habitat Regulation Assessment. To ensure plan has considered environmental effect on nationally significant environments like Bat Pathways or European Protected Environments like parts of the river Avon. Assessment done previously with no effects. Needs to be rerun where there have been material changes. Done by WC and could take 3-4 months. Vaughan of the opinion can be started but does not need to be completed before Reg 14. If anything comes up would need to be dealt with in NP2 but is low risk.

In short, on schedule to allow Reg 14 process in September, save for the HRA.

8. Plan Drafting:

Draft plugged into Desktop published version of plan. Changes made to bits of text that relate to NP1 or refer to things that NP2 intends to do. Some policies have crystallised. eg sustainability and green gap. Some more subtle, eg heritage assets and heritage policy.

Vaughan requested feedback on “significant factual stuff”. New policy cannot be added at this point. Mistakes in spelling, typos and mis-named locations would be helpful. Submit via the portal or email to Teresa, who has already added some suggestions made by email.

Priority Statements being driven by other organisations Teresa has done work obtaining views on bypass and canal. Some revisions have been corrected.

Page 71 Councillor Pafford pointed out paragraph about Campus should be removed as it is out of date Campus now open.

Page 32, Policy 1. Sustainable Design. “For major applications, applicants are encouraged to use appropriate sustainability” Chris Holden asks can the words major applications be removed.

Approved as requested.

Priority Statement 1. Proposed bypass. Comments made by Mark Blackham. Steve Wilson has confirmed statement does not conflict with WC policy. Mark Blackham felt the bypass was used to support the argument for housing and housing to support the argument for the bypass. Councillor Pafford stated figures for housing came from Government to WC and were not affected by the bypass. Shirley McCarthy and Mark Blackham commented on the narrow support from MTC and MWPC. Councillor Pafford stated both councils passed resolutions which became policy but councils not committed to supporting main proposal. Housing Needs Assessment shows housing is necessary.

Priority Statement 3. Wilts & Berks Canal Restoration. Paul Lenaerts suggested the first paragraph should read. “The Town and Parish Council continue to support the safeguarding of the future route for the restoration of the Wilts & Berks canal and its connection to the Kennet & Avon canal and the national canal network. The opening of a fully restored waterway will provide significant economic, environmental and social benefits to Melksham”

Approved as requested.

Priority Statement 2. Levels of Growth and Infrastructure. After discussion on employment, GP surgeries and the letter from local GP’s regarding capacity, and inward and outward commuting. Teresa suggested that a new sentence be inserted replacing the words “primary and secondary school places” with wording about employment.

It was proposed by Councillor Glover, seconded by Councillor Sankey, and **RESOLVED** that a sentence be added about employment with the final wording to be decided by Vaughan, Teresa and Linda.

Local Green Spaces and Heritage Assets.

Additional sites added. The committee noted the updates on green spaces and heritage assets.

9. Evidence documents

a) Town Centre Masterplan.

Councillor Pafford noted there were still some typos in the Town Centre Master Plan. Teresa confirmed it can go back to AECOM on this.

Proposed by Councillor Glover, seconded by Councillor Aves and **RESOLVED** to approve adoption of Town Centre Master Plan to enable AECOM to send to Locality for sign off.

Linda confirmed the Town Centre Masterplan would go to Melksham Town Council Economic Development and Planning Committee for approval on 20 June 2023.

b) Design Code

Proposed by Councillor Pafford, seconded by Councillor Glover and **RESOLVED** to use generic photographs of good and not so good practice.

The following points were raised about the Design Code.

DP – notes a reference to figure 23 and the next page the photograph is figure 75 and that this occurs throughout the text.

SM – Reservations about Point 2.7 advocating speed cushions or bumps which are shown to increase pollution. Queried what raised tables were. JG gave an explanation.

SM – Not as much as should be about retrofit cycle storage.

SM – Hedgehog gaps in fencing and walls should be mentioned.

SM – Inconsistent in reference to PV and solar thermal.

SM – No explanation that best solution for cooling is to design building to allow through draft.

SM – Pg 193. Omit reference to biomass as a contentious issue.

SM – Pg 193. “Opportunities for the use of the same technologies in existing buildings, when undergoing refurbishment, will also be expected”. Too passive and low key. Should emphasize that it is a really good idea.

SM – Pg 193. No reference to water source heat pumps.

MB – Pg 193. PV and solar panels are the same thing. Should be PV and Solar Thermal.

JG – There will always be something new coming along. Should refer to emerging technology.

SM – Reference to say most air source heat pumps can be used in reverse. Most installations in England, air source heat pumps that can be reversed in this way are not capable of doing it yet. AECOM to be asked to check.

SM – Pg 187. Re-use of water obtained by SuDs. An idea that needs “bigging up”

SM to supply full list to Teresa to be typed and circulated for approval by email.

SM – Overall, needs stronger wording about what we don't want to see in the future, such as 60's type development.

DP - Wording is sufficient in the code to allow counsel to say such development would not meet criteria.

SM – Does the code provide a barrier to another massive corrugated warehouse and is there a desire to stop such a development.

DP – Trying to push positive design and build attributes. If an application is made that does not meet the criteria council can respond accordingly.

LR – On way back from Cambridgeshire, warehouses in shades of blue and white to blend in. This was discussed and generally considered a good idea.

Pg 238 – Correspondence from AECON regarding what requested changes had and hadn't been made, and the reasons why was noted.

Proposed by Councillor Pafford, seconded by Shirley McCarthy and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Design Code once amendments discussed have been made.

10. Finance:

a) Teresa gave an explanation of the invoice and asked the committee to note that there would be a budget overspend.

It was proposed by Councillor Pafford, seconded by Councillor Glover and **RESOLVED** to approve the invoice for work by Place.

b) Teresa explained the application for further Site Assessment Technical Support for 2023/24 which was noted.

11. To approve the revised *Terms of Reference* as approved by both qualifying bodies

Item deferred.

12. Next Meeting of Steering Group

Next meeting on Wednesday 26 July at 6pm.

There was discussion after the last scheduled agenda item regarding advertising for Reg 14 consultation. It was agreed that Councillor Pafford, Councillor. Councillor Ellis, Teresa Strange and Linda Roberts meet to work on advertising material to be approved at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm

signed.....
Chair, 26 July 2023