

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
held in the Community Hall, Lawnside Road, Ledbury
on Thursday 23 August 2018**

PRESENT: Councillors D Baker, M Eakin, L Harvey, P Howells, J Hopkins, D Knight, V Low, N Morris, N Shields (chairman), D Vesma, A Warmington, D Whattler.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mab Owain (Acting Clerk) and C Tustin (Minute Taker); and approximately six members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed all to this extraordinary meeting of the Full Council which had been organised specifically to bring councillors up to date on the position of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

C126-08.18 APOLOGIES

Received from Councillors Francis, Mann and Roberts.

C127-08.18 INTERESTS

None declared.

C128-08.18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to comment.

C129-08.18 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT POSITION OF THE NDP

It was decided to work through the whole document section by section.

Section 1 – About Ledbury

No comments made

Section 2 – About Neighbourhood Planning

In response to a query about the visually prominent area on page 11, it was explained that this is concerned with the AONB and views looking in as well as out of Ledbury. However the emphasis on the south rather than the north was noted as it might well enable Bovis to challenge why that particular area had been highlighted when others had not. Although this was the result of analysis by professional advisers, Foxley Tagg, it was felt that there was inconsistency in the wording; Cllr Howells confirmed that evidence of this advice was available.

With regard to the core strategy map on page 13 it was questioned as to whether further work had been done on the suggestions to improve connectivity.

It was RESOLVED that the NDP working party be asked to look at this to ensure that enough detail has been considered to enable any questions to be answered if they arise.

As a point of information Cllr Harvey noted that CIL, referred to on page 15 is no longer available.

Section 3 – The Vision

No comments made

Section 4 – Introduction to objectives and policies

Cllr Harvey pointed out that there was a step in the process whereby visions objectives might be achieved in policy terms and this does not appear to have been covered. Although this is not a mandatory requirement other plans have stumbled when the inspector asked why this had not been done.

It was RESOLVED that the working party be asked to take a view on this, with reference to the guidance notes.

Section 5 -Sustainable Development

No comments made

Section 6 – Housing

No comments made

Section 7 – Employment and Economy

No comments made

Section 8 – Built Environment

Cllr Harvey raised the lack of land allocations in relation to employment – to ensure that it doesn't get used for something else at a later date. With only three hectares on the viaduct site, neither the core strategy nor this document have identified further land for future employment use.

The Chairman agreed that it is the job of the NDP to identify land that may not be available now but provide protection should it become available.

It was RESOLVED that the working party be asked to consider more fully.

There was discussion on the subject of secondary shopping creep in that the plan has extended this beyond the retail core in the core strategy.

It was RESOLVED that paperwork be provided to the working party to enable them to report back on this.

There was also discussion about the lack of mention of the Hereford/Gloucester canal (clear in the core strategy but not in the plan). With Ledbury being the only centre of population in Herefordshire through which the canal passes it was suggested that its possible long term economic impact, in particular implications for tourism, should not be ignored.

It was RESOLVED that the working party should prepare a predetermined response, possibly in discussion with the canal trust, should questions be raised by the examiner.

Section 9 – Natural Environment

Although the corridor from the Full Pitcher to the Gloucester roundabout has been defended by planning authorities over many years as a wildlife buffer, there was concern that the rest of the riverside has not been recognised as protected green space. Cllr Howells responded that this was not the advice given.

It was RESOLVED that the working party track down the evidence base and re-assess advice.

It was raised that we are now proposing changes to what the public have been consulted on, but it was accepted that we need to strengthen our defence against possible challenges and produce a robust list of things we might wish to change after it is adopted.

An anomaly was identified in that the old cricket ground was marked on map 18 as protected green space whereas in fact planning permission has now been granted. It was concluded that we need to be clear on the reasons for this inconsistency. Since Bovis has picked up on this we need to be clear as to sustainability and accessibility issues concerning the adjacent Gladman site in relation to Bovis.

It was RESOLVED to ask the working party to investigate the timing of this document.

Cllr Warmington left at 8.50.

C130-08.18 LEDBURY NDP'S CURRENT STAGE IN THE PROCESS

Cllr Howells reported that we are currently at approximately Reg 17 of 20. Reg 17 is appointment of examiner, due by the end of August. 18 covers consideration of feedback and 19 is the referendum.

C131-08.18 INSPECTION OF LEDBURY'S NDP

With regard to the plan's compliance with mandatory requirements Cllr Howells was not aware what stage the inspector had reached.

Cllr Vesma commented that we are not looking to change the report, but that we acknowledge its shortcomings; he asked if we would have the opportunity to add this narrative before examination.

It was queried as to whether we had been formally advised of approved inspector. Cllr Howells responded that three candidates had been put forward and our preferred advice (Mr McGirt) was given: There was some confusion as to whether this information had been circulated and one councillor at least had been unable to open the email.

C132-08.18 REGULATION 16 COMMENTS

There appeared to have been no response to Sam Banks' email of 23 June in which she had asked for comments to the HC NDP. Although there had been no obligation to do so it was agreed that this should be followed up as soon as possible.

It was RESOLVED that we ask the working party to look at Reg 16 comments and provide an overview of where we need to rebut challenges

Christopher Johnson (Chairman, Ledbury Civic Society) was asked for his view of what the examiner would be looking for and he commented that Bovis have a leading QC who will be saying that the plan cannot be approved because it is not legally compliant with regard to the settlement boundary.

C133-08.18 EXPLANATION OF SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Cllr Hopkins understood that advice had been that this should be drawn as tightly as possible – why was this not followed? Cllr Harvey advised that this was for guidance only and did not need to be followed but we need to be able to defend what appears to be a very odd line.

Ian James (former chairman of the NDP) commented that in 2015 the triangle of land outside the bypass was not included as, according to Foxley Tagg, it was likely to gain planning permission.

Chris Johnson suggested that it is necessary to look at how the line is being attacked before deciding to defend it – the QC's report is on the website.

It was RESOLVED to ask the working party to look into why the line was drawn as it was.

C134-08.18 NDP WORKING PARTY

Clarification was needed of the participants on the previous working party; It was stressed that members of the public with specific knowledge be asked to join the new one.

C135.08.18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled Full Council meeting will be held on 27 September 2018.

The meeting closed at 9.30

CHAIRMAN DATE