

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

NDP Working Party, Monday 10 December 2018

1 Present:

Councillors Eakin, Howells, Morris and Shields (chair). Residents: Nicola Forde, Beverley Kinnaird, Paul Kinnaird, Maria Mackness, John Vickerman. Mel ab Owain (temporary clerk) and Christine Tustin (minute taker).

Apologies received from Cllr Harvey, Ian James and Gwythian Prins

Councillor Shields welcomed Sam Banks, Neighbourhood Planning Manager, Herefordshire Council.

2 Notes of the NDP working party meeting held on 21 November 2018

had been circulated and all present were reminded that any questions should be raised now as these minutes will go forward to the next EDP meeting as a standing item. There were no comments and they were approved.

Cllr Shields reported the success of the Referendum vote and thanked all those who had helped.

3 Updating a Neighbourhood Development

Cllr Shields asked Sam Banks to take the meeting through what is needed to be done in order to update the plan. The following are the key points that were discussed.

Background:

- Following the successful vote the Plan is now being adopted. The process takes about a month and then an Adoption Notice is issued by HC. Then there follows a six week period during which the Plan can be challenged. The Plan itself has full weight within the planning process from midnight of the day of the vote.
- The Plan can be reviewed at any time, but Sam Banks advised bearing in mind that the Core Strategy is due for review in the second half of 2019 and this is expected to start in July/August. This will extend the Core Strategy to 2041. The most likely areas for review were thought to be housing numbers and spatial distribution. This would not become clear until after the elections in May.
- The options for Ledbury were to do a quick revision of the Plan or a wholesale review, bearing in mind the Core Strategy. It was also possible to do a two stage review i.e. a short term amendment with another review in line with the Core Strategy.
- With regard to the settlement boundary, this could be done as part of a short term review, and then it could be reviewed again in the longer term, in line with the Core Strategy.
- Any review would have to go through the whole process again i.e. Reg 14 onwards with all the appropriate consultation, for example using a Planning for Real event.
- A lot of the policies contained within the Plan were fine but no evidence had been presented to show the basis for them. Sam Banks suggested the one of the first actions be to review the policies that had been removed and assess the amount of work needed to evidence them appropriately.

- The Settlement Boundary is the policy which is most often challenged. Before resubmitting this Ledbury would need to gather robust evidence. There is a guidance not on this on the HC website. It would be useful to reference this in the Plan.
- There will be no real guidance on the Core Strategy until after the May elections. After that there is scope to link with the team working on the Core Strategy to share ideas.
- The general feeling was that the Settlement Boundary is the priority. This needs to take into account new developments and current planning permissions.
- If we want to do a formal consultation on anything, in order to avoid the Purdah related to elections, this would have to start on 28th Jan to allow for the six weeks. Purdah will run from 12th March to 2nd May. The process for Reg 14 is 6 weeks consultation followed by 4 weeks of review then 6 weeks for Reg 16 consultation, which cannot be conducted through the Purdah period. Then the average wait for examination is 2 months, with the examination itself taking 2 to 4 months.
- We could start with informal consultations.
- It was noted that the National Planning Framework is not that different to the former version and still looks to growth.

Way forward:

- Review deleted policies and assess evidence needed/work involved. (Policies adopted in the Plan do not need to be reviewed.)
- Review examiners report and identify the 'gaps' – report gives useful advice.
- Possible scope of update could be: Settlement Boundary; including the Design Code as a policy in the main body of the Plan; incorporating Green Open Spaces alongside the Settlement Boundary (again need to demonstrate the evidence).
- Involve Sam Banks and her team on an ongoing basis.

Use of Consultants:

- This would depend on funding. However the best Plans are written by the community – who know the town best - and reviewed by consultants. We could ask fellow Clerks about their experiences where they have used consultants. Sam Banks will provide a list of Councils who have used consultants. She advised that in considering this, we should look at the actual plans and the examiners' reports.

Funding:

- No money has been specifically allocated in the coming year's budget.
- Grant funding may be available via mycommunityrights.com or possibly Awards for All although this may restrict other projects for which the Council might wish to apply for grants. Dave Tristram, HC Grants Officer, is able to advise on where to seek grants.
- Nick Morris suggested the Tesco bag scheme. Sam Banks advised that HC would be happy with funding from a commercial organisation as long as they do not have any vested interest.

Thoughts on Settlement Boundary:

- This is key.
- It needs to take into account current developments and planning applications.
- The line needs to follow natural boundaries such as roads or hedges.
- We have to be able to demonstrate/ evidence consultation.

- We could start with some informal consultation on the Settlement Boundary – a mini Planning for Real event with maps which people can comment on.
- General feeling that it would be better to have ideas on a Settlement Boundary in advance of a Core Strategy review if we want to influence the way forward.
- SB bear in mind purdah period 12/3 to 2/5 – no consultations.

Various:

- Need to consider who will lead on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, what administrative support is available, work involved and regularity/structure of meetings.
- Sam Banks advised that we should not underestimate the time needed or the difficulty of issues. She advised that it was important not to get into a race with developers – they always win. We should take our time doing the Settlement Boundary thoroughly rather than trying to beat the next planning application.
- HC has Landscape Impact Awareness/Landscape Character Assessment already available, and an Urban Fringe Analysis. She will send links to our Clerk.
- Employment land can be identified via the Core Strategy and then drawn according to field boundaries, roads etc.
- Availability of land – the ‘delivery’ of land is now more important and we would need some written confirmation from the landowner that the land would become available in whatever timescale. Housing is still the preferred use because of the higher value.
- The shortage of land for sports facilities and health care facilities was noted. With regard to sports facilities we could use the evidence of the Sports Federation on the per capita amount of land available for sports – Ledbury is lower than the national average
- We could consider using ‘General criteria policies’.
- Overall need to develop dialogue with town on planning.
- Need to consider that the bypass has been breached. Ledbury reached its ‘natural’ maximum point with the New Mills estate, but the breach of the bypass changes the thinking
- The Gladman application has not yet been determined so it will be done taking into account the new NDP.
- Roland Close is leaving HC and in the interim Ledbury will come under Kelly Gibbons. Given Roland’s extensive knowledge of Ledbury it might be useful to have a conversation with him before he leaves about all the planning issues for Ledbury. Phillip Howells agreed to make contact.

The meeting thanked Sam Banks for all her help and advice.

4 Plan of action was postponed until the next meeting.

Action All: Read the examiner’s report to identify ‘gaps’ and the advice being offered; and consider what aspects each would feel able to work on.

5 Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Tuesday 22 January at 7.30pm. Apologies were given by Ms Forde and Mr Vickerman.