



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
2 FEB 2017

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of

Ladbury Town Council

held on Wednesday, 18th January 2017

Present: Councillors: The Town Mayor, Councillor D Baker, Chairman
R Barnes A Crowe
M Eager M Eakin
E Fieldhouse K Francis
A Harrison E Harvey
A Manns N Morris
N Shields J Simpson
A Warmington H Wilce

In attendance: Mrs K Mitchell - Clerk to the Council
Mrs B Stump, Clerical Officer
Mrs S Tagg, Foxley Tagg Consultants
31 Members of the Public and Press

C.1 - 01.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors A Bradford, J Roberts and N Roberts.

C.2 - 01.17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wilce declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as his family own land on the Bromyard Road which has in the past been offered for future development.

C.3 - 01.17 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

1. To receive an update from Planning Consultants, Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd

Mrs Sally Tagg showed a Powerpoint presentation which updated Councillors on the progress and current status of the NDP. Vision, objectives and policies have been drafted and a rough draft plan is formed.

2. To receive additional comments from the Working Group

Mr Phillip Howells spoke about his experience of being part of the group. He has been dismayed with comments on social media which he felt at times were inaccurate and misleading. He thinks the consultants are essential and invaluable, providing technical, professional advice. The group works constructively and is open to anyone interested in coming along and helping. Mr Howells gave statistics for consultation responses for NDPs of other towns: Woodcote in Oxon, with a population of 2,600 had 200 responses

to their now approved plan. Newton Abbot in Devon, with a population of 24,000, nearly 2.5 times that of Ledbury, also has an approved plan and they quote as having received a combination of 190 online and paper questionnaire responses. Ledbury received 80 responses to the first consultation, 120 to the second, and 115 to the most recent, plus having 120 residents at events. For the most recent consultation alone, there were 1,500 views during the consultation period, with 669 on the peak day, which means that up to 1 in 3 households and up to 1 in 6 residents could have seen it, even if they did not respond. He said it is known that responses are always very low, as proven in past cases, including when information on the Herefordshire Core Strategy was sent out.

Regarding the budget, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guideline figures quotes the average cost of a NDP for a Town Council like Ledbury as being anything from £20,000 - £86,000, depending on the complexity of the plan.

Ledbury's is a complex plan with historical heritage. Eardisley's plan cost £17,000 for a population of 909: Ledbury is spending four times that sum for more than ten times the population. Large cities can spend £200,000 or more on plans.

Of a budget of £65,000, Ledbury's expenditure is at £60,000. Of that sum £24,000 has been received in the form of grant money: Ledbury expects to pay £40,000 for its NDP. Presently, nearly £39,000 has been spent, of which £20,000 by the former Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. £18,000 has so far been spent by the present working group.

3. To receive comments from Ledbury Town Councillors

Cllr Harvey thanked the consultant for the project's update. In thanking Mr Howells for his presentation she told him she didn't agree with much of what he had said and was "concerned that as a recent member of the working group he had obtained that view". Cllr Harvey went on to tell the meeting she had raised a number of points with former Mayor, Annette Crowe and present Mayor, Debbie Baker without satisfactory response. She is dissatisfied with the frequency of the updates about the NDP to Council and particularly expressed her concern about:-

- (a) the Call for Sites in the spring of 2016 and questioned if it had been necessary;
- (b) the breadth and number of returns of the consultation events;
- (c) the level of detail required in producing the plan and queried why, when the cricket club land had been earmarked for 100 new homes, it had been included in a green spaces consultation as being desirable for protection;
- (d) communication between Ledbury residents, the working group and Herefordshire Council.
- (e) Cllr Harvey told the meeting that due to Herefordshire Council's failure to identify a five year housing supply for

Ledbury, the town is at risk of another site, like the Gladman development south of Leaden Way.

- (f) Cllr Harvey would like to be confident that the decisions that have been made are sound and will stand up to scrutiny later.
- (g) Regarding the football ground land, Cllr Harvey questioned why the site had not been included in the consultation for potential housing development.

Deputy Mayor Elaine Fieldhouse explained that the Call for Sites had been a requirement. Lisa Turner explained that it was also to identify land for community use, housing and employment and that as a result, other useful sites had come forward. Cllr Fieldhouse added that regarding consultations, many groups in Ledbury had been visited and consulted using the NP "ambassadors" – e.g. schools, residents of care homes, fruit pickers, allotment holders, travellers and more.

Cllr Nina Shields was concerned with communication generally and her perception of residents' lack of awareness about the plan. She mentioned particularly the harder to reach groups and asked about the communication strategy and how the project was matching up against it. Cllr Fieldhouse explained the areas where publicity for the consultations had been placed: Community Centre, Age UK, Library, newsagents, the Focus, Ledbury Noticeboard, Ledbury Reporter, etc.

Cllr Andrew Warmington commented that some residents were unsure of the difference between the Town and Neighbourhood Plans and requested greater communication, and wished Ward Cllrs to be copied on all the Group's communications with Herefordshire planners. He was also concerned about Bovis Homes unsuccessfully seeking engagement with the working group. Cllr Fieldhouse explained that developers should approach the Council, as in the recent case with Barratt & Bloor Homes, and not the working group. Cllr Nick Morris wanted to know if the officer for Neighbourhood Planning at Herefordshire Council was being consulted. Mrs Tagg reassured Cllr Morris that she had regular communications with Sam Banks in Herefordshire Council who is aware of the plan's progress and processes. Cllr Andrew Harrison asked if Councillors could have a monthly financial and project report and a Bridging Officer for the project, in much the same way as Mr Griff Holliday did for the Town Plan. Cllr Harvey also questioned whether the group was acting in line with its terms of reference in respect of sanctioning consultation events.

Cllr Harvey sought a response to why the options stage in the process had not been taken. The consultant, Mrs Tagg, would like to research thoroughly before responding. Cllr Harvey was requested to put her questions in writing and forwarded to the Mayor to be answered at the next meeting of Full Council on 2nd February 2017.

C.4 - 01.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A local resident asked if the consultant was aware of a Freedom of Information request he had made in 2016 regarding the Foxley Tagg contract, deliverables and project plan. Mrs Tagg explained that she complies with a professional code of conduct and that the information requested was commercially sensitive. The resident said that he had not been made aware of this response to his FOI request.

A local resident asked if members were aware that examination would require evidence that consultations had been carried out and effort made to engage as many members of the community as possible. He continued that because of the Core Strategy, he would not like to see the plan fail at referendum because of residents' concerns about the infrastructure and employment issues in Ledbury.

A question was asked about lines of communication with Herefordshire Council, leading on to when residents could expect a draft plan. Mrs Tagg explained the many stages yet to go through and more consultations, and without knowing what these would produce, hoped that it would be in June, but with the caveat that it is difficult to predict an exact date.

A resident asked if the NDP would be ready in time to influence the development at the Viaduct site, in terms of the quality of what is built there. Mrs Tagg responded that the Town Council will be a consultee on a future planning application. Furthermore, even if the NDP has not been formally adopted, Herefordshire planners would be aware of its development and content and take this into consideration.

A resident asked about supporting infrastructure which would not be included in an application for the Viaduct site, and its effects on the High Street, Knapp Lane etc and schools and health facilities. Mrs Tagg said that a planning application would be supported by a transport statement and other technical data which would have to demonstrate that they can achieve access to the site, but that there are other infrastructure concerns and how the site will function. However, a NDP is to benefit the residents and not to deal with the planning application process. Benefit to the community would be through the schedule of Section 106 monies and the Community Infrastructure Levy which, when a NDP is ratified, increases from 15% to 25%.

C.5 - 01.17 REPORTS

Members considered the Report of the NDP Management Report meeting of 15 November 2016, copies having been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the Report from the Management Team Meeting held on 15th November 2016 be received and adopted.

VOTING: For 13
Abstentions 2

Members considered the Reports of the Workshop Meetings of 21st and 30th November and 6th December 2016, copies having been circulated. Cllr Harvey noted that the Chair of the Working Group had changed over time, and queried whether this was in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The Mayor noted Cllr Harvey's concern.

RESOLVED: That the Reports from the Workshop Meetings of 21st and 30th November and 6th December 2016 be received and adopted.

VOTING: For 13
Abstentions 2

The Mayor thanked Mrs Tagg, members of the NDP working group and the public for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Chairman..... Date: