



Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

01305 239839 – [office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

**NOTES OF MEETING**

**Meeting:** Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

**Date & Time:** Monday 13th March at 7.00pm

**Place:** Council Chamber, The New Town Hall, Commercial Road

**PRESENT:**

**Chair:** Cllr David Northam

**Steering Group Members:** Cllr Ann Weaving, Cllr Colin Huckle, Michael Bevan, Paul Weston, Penny Quilter, Phil Watts, Rob Cheeseman, Colin Marsh.

**Project Support:** Jane Biscombe, Ben Heath

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	BY WHOM
1.	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Apologies:</b></p> <p>David Northam welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lara Wood, Sandie Wilson and Michele Williams.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Minutes &amp; Matters Arising:</b></p> <p>All actions complete from previous minutes. Minutes from last meeting were approved. One follow up action for David Northam and council officers is to write to ECA regarding the Character Assessment.</p>	Write to ECA	DN / BH /MW
3.	<p><b>Feedback on Response to Complaint:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane has sent the reply to the complaint letter and currently there has been no further response.</li> <li>• David said that we would look at how we can allow more response per device for future surveys/engagement.</li> <li>• There were a number of things quoted in the complaint letter that have been investigated and no evidence has been found to substantiate the claims to these items.</li> <li>• Jane logged the Code of Conduct complaint and to date has had no response. Jane will chase this up.</li> </ul>	Chase Code of Conduct response.	JB
4.	<p><b>Analysis &amp; Interpretation and Implications on Neighbourhood Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group agreed that the DCF report and data received was an accurate record of the Focus Group sessions.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul added that there were several bullet points where he was unsure if it was one person or a whole consensus on an item, but he had liaised with DCF.</li> <li>• Paul stated that he was only working on the Land use data, but there was a lot of additional information.</li> <li>• Colin M said that this information is still very valuable and would propose a Aspiration Section of the plan that picks these things up – It would be for the Steering Group to decide if this was appropriate to take forward or not.</li> <li>• Colin M also said that this additional information also has lots of cross cutting links to other council areas e.g. CEE agenda and working group.</li> <li>• Penny raised a question/concern about has the plan development to date whether it has had a fair representation from the whole community as she feels that this probably hasn't happened and there are sections that have not had an input.</li> <li>• David said that this is something we are aware of and that we have tried to make engagement as accessible as we can so far. We will keep looking at this issue and try and do everything we can to engage as many people as possible from all sections of the community. We can only control creating the opportunity to respond and make it as accessible as possible.</li> <li>• Paul added that when the draft plan becomes public, he would anticipate an big increase in the amount of people that comment.</li> <li>• Michael raised if there was an issue with the DC engaging with us over possible housing sites. Although response has been slow from DC David was chasing up with officers and felt this was the correct way to proceed. Jane has a meeting with Matt Prosser and will bring this up.</li> <li>• Rob suggested that we couch our concerns in terms of risks and issues relevant to DC and which are defined on our Risk / Issue register.</li> <li>• Paul raised a challenge regarding 2nd homes from his report and said that this could be put forward with a primary-residence only policy. The group was not certain that this would be a good thing to promote. Paul will draft a policy statement that he feels would work and the group can discuss and decide whether to take this forward or not.</li> </ul>	<p>Speak to Matt Prosser re: DC sites</p>	<p>JB</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Feedback on Pathfinder Design Code Review:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David attended the latest session in London which was a very long day.</li> <li>• One of the other groups have withdrawn from the process, no reason was given but David felt this was because it was too soon for them, and they were too small. 2 other groups were being very ambitious with what they were trying to achieve with the code, an example Finsbury Park are trying to apply it for 5 tower blocks.</li> <li>• All groups were concerned about, affordable homes, CEE agenda and local green spaces.</li> <li>• Feedback showed that £30K funding does not buy a lot of design code and the process is long and laborious.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David will set up a session specifically to look at the design code with the steering group after the next steering group meeting.</li> <li>• Our design code test workshop went well and was interesting but the two test cases looked at were rejected by the groups.</li> <li>• For an application to pass through the design code it has to have a 'yes' to all the questions asked, the group felt that one code for Weymouth would not work as the area is so big and covers many different styles and situations. A focussed design code for specific areas would be the only way to approach this.</li> <li>• The group discussed the potential for aspects of the final Design Code to be applied to other character / community areas of Weymouth if suitable.</li> <li>• The group felt that the design code still needed lots of work and stages to work for Weymouth and that it wasn't going to be ready for 31/3/23.</li> <li>• Paul said he would welcome a Design Code as an addition to the neighbourhood plan as long as it has been approved by the steer group and council.</li> </ul>	Set up a Design Code mtg for steering group	DN
6.	<p><b>Steps to Producing the Draft Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft plan will be ready before 31/03/2023.</li> <li>• 24/3/23 – Paul will send draft to theme group leads to organise a response on behalf of their group.</li> <li>• Steering Group are asked to comment well ahead of the meeting on 11/4/23.</li> <li>• 11/4/23 – Steering Group meeting – approve draft plan.</li> <li>• 19/4/23 – Special Full Council meeting – single agenda item – approve draft plan. Assuming the draft NP is agreed at the meeting it will also initiate the SEA by AECOM</li> <li>• David expressed that it would add a lot of weight to the information being presented to full council on 19/4/23 if the whole steering group were present and, if they are happy to, a number of the steering group present against specific sections. Everyone was happy with this, and a plan will be drawn up at the steering group meeting on 11/4.</li> <li>• The week before the council meeting the papers will be publicly available and therefore there will be an opportunity for the public to attend the meeting and speak to the draft plan.</li> <li>• SEA / HRA follow.</li> <li>• DC comments on draft.</li> <li>• August 2023 draft will be ready for consultation but will be made available in September for Reg14, this is to miss the summer holiday period which could affect the response rate.</li> <li>• January 2024 – Revised plan ready for Reg16.</li> <li>• Paul is unable to attend on 19/4 but will either write a statement to be read or create a video to be played.</li> </ul>		

<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Promoting the Neighbourhood Plan between April and September 2023:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David has spoken to Nick Cardinal at DC about what can be done in this period.</li> <li>• The suggestion is to issue a number of short papers showing how and why we have got to the position we have. This will highlight specific things in the plan and allow people to be in a more informed position ahead of the draft plan being available in September. We should be looking to promote a balanced plan.</li> <li>• This will be important to inform the public that the plan has been based on evidence from the public and from a number of trusted sources.</li> <li>• Paul asked what happens if the draft plan isn't approved on 11/4 or 19/4. David responded to say that we would defer it to allow us to work out what the issue is and put that right to allow it to be approved.</li> <li>• David suggested that as part of the September engagement there should be a series of public meetings and a roadshow on the draft plan. This will require additional resource and David will apply to Locality for more funding. Although we only have £600 left on our funding allocation, but David is going to say that we deserve more funding as we have a very large area/population to cover.</li> <li>• David has approached Nick Cardinal to ask if there is a possibility of having a space in the DC newsletter that goes out that can promote the plan. Dates tbc.</li> <li>• Rob suggested that we should assess the greenness of the plan. The group agreed and Paul said there would be chance to do this. This relates to the CSE guidance on assessing Neighbourhood Plans called 'How Green is my Plan' (<a href="https://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/reports-and-publications/policy/community-energy/planning/renewables/how-green-is-my-plan-urban-suburban.pdf">https://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/reports-and-publications/policy/community-energy/planning/renewables/how-green-is-my-plan-urban-suburban.pdf</a>).</li> </ul>		
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Project Meeting Group:</b></p> <p><b>Finance</b>  £30K spent on ECA for Design Code.  £10k spent on Locality to date.  £9K spent on Paul to date.  £11,600 spent on DCF to date.  £1300 on other general things like printing etc.  £71K agreed from CIL funding and if there was a small overspend then this would be covered by additional CIL funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David said that there are some internal costs for project support from officers that needs adding as this has not been included to date.</li> <li>• All this information will be valuable to make the case to Locality for additional funding.</li> <li>• Paul has quoted to October but we know we will go past this, David is working this out with him and will confirm this shortly. Paul is committed to helping us get to the end of the plan.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further technical support will be needed with things like mapping.</li> </ul>		
9.	<p><b>Risk Register:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colin explained that this needs to be made more visible to everyone. This will be updated at a future project group meeting and circulated.</li> <li>Key things highlighted were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of engagement – needs referring to.</li> <li>Under representation – theat.</li> <li>The size of the population is a challenge – one of the largest plans in the country.</li> <li>Time pressures – don't rush as this could throw away all the good work achieved.</li> <li>Plan scope – not just focusing on housing/building a much wider scope, this is a real positive and has reduced this risk.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Update Risk Register & circulate	Project Group
10.	<p><b>Any Other Business:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group wanted to express their appreciation to Paul, Sandie and Lucy for their valued work and effort to get the plan to this stage. Without their drive and input the plan would not be where it is today.</li> <li>The group also wanted to minute the excellent support that has been provided by DCF.</li> <li>Consultation Statement – Colin M had looked at the statement on file and stated that nothing has been added since December. This was an officer action to add to the statement tracking all consultation and engagement to build a strong picture and demonstrate this has been well delivered. Officers will pick this up and update and then circulate. Colin M offered to help if needed.</li> <li>Phil added that we should get a formal update on the delayed local plan.</li> <li>Phil also said that David Northam should be thanked for his excellent response on behalf of the steering group for the NPPF work he has done (even though Phil abstained from this for professional reasons). The whole group agreed with this statement and thanked David.</li> </ul>	Update consultation statement	MW Sarah Hudspith
11.	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b> Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023  <b>Time:</b> 7pm  <b>Venue:</b> Council Chamber</p>		

Meeting ended at 9pm.