

Warminster Neighbourhood Plan

Approved Minutes- Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday 13th December 2023
Warminster Civic Centre, 2pm (hybrid meeting)

1. **Attendance:** Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio), Len Turner, (online). Harriet James, Tom Dommett, Cllr Keeble, Jeremy Stadward, (in person).

Apologies: Clare Collier, Jon Ellis, Nick Parker, Cllr Allensby, Cllr Robbins, Cllr Fraser.

2. **Declarations of interest**

None.

3. **Approval of minutes from last meeting** - the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th October 2023 were approved.

4. **Neighbourhood Plan working draft**

- update on content – editing is almost complete. Will Bradley (Communications Officer) has been through it twice for plain English check.
- climate change statement – Tom is preparing this using an example provided by Place Studio.
- content of topic papers – Katie has looked at some of these but hasn't had time to go through them all. SG members were invited to forward comments on the topic papers.
ACTION – Tom to circulate topic papers as people are having difficulty accessing SharePoint.
- summary document – Will Bradley will put together a summary document, drawing on best practice from elsewhere.

5. **Local Green Space (LGS) designation**

- Potential LGS around St Denys' Church. A meeting with developers has been held where they outlined their proposal of 60 dwellings in-line with community needs e.g. bungalows for downsizing or houses for first time buyers. They have undertaken extensive work on issues such as drainage, biodiversity impact, etc. The developers have submitted a diagram of the site to the Town Clerk and emphasised the benefit of LGS with public access.

It was agreed that the land should still be considered as a potential LGS, at least until the results of the Regulation 14 consultation are known.

- Potential LGS at Damask Way. The public consultation has been 95% in favour of the site being designated as a LGS. The private landowners have made clear their opposition to the site being designated (no response was received from Backhouse Housing). Given the planning history of the site, it may be difficult to convince an inspector it should be LGS. It was noted that if a planning application is submitted before LGS designation is in place, draft designation provides very limited protection. A site is either designated or not.

It was agreed that the land met the criteria for inclusion and should therefore be included as a potential LGS at least until the results of the Regulation 14 Consultation are known.

6. HRA/SEA screening update

The SEA consultants will be producing the draft document w/c 8th January 2024; Warminster Town Council will have 2 weeks to provide any comments.

7. Heritage Assets listing

A discussion was held on whether Brook Street land should still be included as a locally valued non-designated heritage asset as the site has been identified in the draft Local Plan as a proposed wetlands area. The Environment Agency are also proposing that the site is used for flood mitigation/phosphate mitigation.

Action: It was agreed the Steering Group need to wait for further information and dialogue with Wiltshire Council to enable an informed response. This should be done before Regulation 14.

8. Housing Allocation

The Steering Group discussed whether 'Housing Allocation' should be reconsidered for inclusion in the WNP (Warminster Neighbourhood Plan) review.

Place Studio commented that since the publication of the draft Local Plan, there is now a better understanding of a housing figure for the WNP: circa 80-90 dwellings between now and 2038. Because of the need to get phosphate mitigation measures in place, the Local Plan seeks to allocate housing for Warminster in a few years' time, at a point when phosphates issues are resolved. Place Studio suggested there were three options:

a) Carry on as is and leave it to Wiltshire Council to choose housing allocation sites.

b) Decide to 'bolt-on' housing allocation onto the current Neighbourhood Plan (NP) process – if this option is taken, this is the quickest way to obtain an allocation and have a figure to use as a target, although not 100% set. The disadvantage of this option is that the NP might allocate sites which turn out not to be suitable because they don't comply with phosphate mitigation. Another issue with this option is that no more grant funding will be available. Site allocation would take six months to a year and cost approx. £10,000.

c) Proceed with getting the WNP made. As soon as the WNP has been made, undertake an immediate review focused entirely on site allocations. By which point, the Local Plan may be adopted, and there may be a phosphate solution and WTC can apply for another grant.

Option b or c will require SEA screening to be undertaken again.

Len Turner expressed opposition to option c as it would put public through the NP process again.

If Warminster has a made NP with enough housing allocated, it will have protection from speculative development for 5 years. (Paragraph 14 protection – 5 years if site allocation.)

If Warminster has a made NP without housing allocated, it will have protection from speculative development for 2 years.

However, it is rumoured that Michael Gove may increase protection for all neighbourhood plans from 2 to 5 years, to be announced next week.

Place Studio advised the housing number put forward by Wiltshire Council for Warminster is a draft/guidance so don't let it dictate what the NP might allocate.

Place Studio stated that the housing needed to be strategically planned for Warminster is 40 but the Wiltshire Council figure of 80 is based on 10% of the outstanding allocation. Windfall/infill type development doesn't count towards the housing allocation.

There is a paper going to Wiltshire Council regarding phosphate mitigation in January. The detail of its content is unknown.

It was agreed to have another discussion on whether to allocate housing after the Wiltshire Council Phosphate Paper and the Michael Gove announcement have been published.

9. Update on WNP project plan (including outstanding actions)

There was no real update to give – it will depend very much on whether housing allocation is agreed as the way forward.

10. AOB - None

11. Date of next meeting - TBC

Meeting Closed 15.45