

Warminster Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting - Approved Minutes Thursday 27th July 2023 Warminster Civic Centre, 10am (hybrid meeting)

1. Attendance - Len Turner, Harriet James, Cllr Sue Fraser, Cllr Phil Keeble, Katie Lea (Place Studio), Nick Parker, Tom Dommett, Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio), Jon Ellis from 10.20am.

Apologies - Jeremy Stadward, Cllr Denis Brett, Clare Collier.

2. Declarations of interest – None.
3. Approval of minutes from last meeting – It was agreed that “Action: Tom Dommett to contact Nick Parker to confirm that the walls along Boreham Road will not be put forward at this stage as a potential HA nomination.” Should read “Action: Tom Dommett to contact Nick Parker to confirm that apart from the two sections identified by Mike Heaton, the walls along Boreham Road will not be put forward at this stage as a potential HA nomination.

4. Neighbourhood plan working draft
Update on content -
Katie advised that following the meetings of the topic groups, Place Studio have worked on policies and text.
From Place Studio’s point of view, draft policies are ready for the environment assessments that must now take place. Katie suggested it would also be good if the supporting text is reviewed and updated in September.

Jon and Nick agreed this would fit their timescales as Jon has other commitments in October.

Wiltshire Council have advised that the Neighbourhood Plan policies will be screened for environmental impacts.

HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment) screening will be carried out by Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire will be contacting statutory consultees and giving them 5 weeks to respond. The HRA triggers the need for a SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) which will follow a certain format (This is set out in caselaw).

SEA and HRA will recommend amendments, often as simple as inserting a line or paragraph as recommended by the SEA and HRA screening.

Katie suggested that the need to undertake SEA screening will extend the timescale of the project by approximately six months (but this will need to be confirmed by whoever undertakes this technical exercise which will not be Place Studio). Place Studio had been

engaging with other agencies making the case that full SEA / HRA might not be necessary but it is for Wiltshire Council, along with statutory agencies to determine this.

The SEA timescale will probably depend on who is doing it, but six months is fairly typical.

Harriet asked about the prominence of climate change in the draft plan.

Katie advised that members could look at the Melksham sections on climate change but also climate change is threaded throughout the policies e.g. travel, construction. It was thought that there should be a short statement at the start of the Neighbourhood Plan about overarching climate change policy and definition of sustainable development.

Actions:

- Tom to apply for grant funding, and technical support for SEA.
- Jon Ellis, Nick Parker and Jeremy Stadward to complete supporting text by end of September.
- The steering group and town council have the opportunity to respond to the Local Plan. Full Council have agreed that the steering group can focus on responding to Local Plan.
- Defining the core area - Phil and Tom have sketched a map of the core area (retail/services/leisure) and will produce a better quality map to share. It was agreed that the maps need to be clear and that they don't contradict each other as there were multiple boundary maps e.g. in the Local Plan, NP and TCMP.
- Jon Ellis to produce a map to illustrate the impact of boundaries, e.g. Salisbury Plain, dark skies, villages that look to Warminster, bats etc.

5. Link officer update

- SEA/HRA screening – Sophie had advised that Wiltshire Council ecologists are overwhelmed with work. Other councils have looked at the cost of undertaking independent SEA screening to speed-up the process – estimated costs circa £30k.

Action: Invite Iain Perkins to attend the meeting with Wiltshire Council.

- Local Plan - response to draft Local Plan and amends to WNP to reflect draft Local Plan to be discussed at steering group meeting in August. The Local Plan consultation is expected to commence in September and would last a minimum of 6 weeks.

The Local Plan pages 142-144 refers to site allocations. There are no site allocation proposals additional to the West Urban Extension at this stage for Warminster. The land at Brook Street is earmarked for environmental/biodiversity mitigation. Planning Applications will be judged against Chapter 5 of the Local Plan. Policy 58 references Warminster Market Town Place Shaping Priorities.

6. Local Green Space Designation update – Warminster Community Orchard/Yeates Field.

Katie has spoken with James Bradshaw at National Trust. The National Trust have thought long and hard about their response. The National Trust have no plans for development but when the land was donated it was with the wish that, if it was needed for development, it could be used. So, the National Trust oppose / do not support

designation as LGS. Katie talked through why the steering group felt the land met LGS criteria. If the land was not put forward for LGS, Katie suggested its value would still be referenced in Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed to continue to put forward the space to section consultation 14. The land met the criteria and would not be needed for development for the benefit of the town in the foreseeable future. LGS designation could be removed in the future but the original bequest was in 1966 and it seems unlikely.

7. TCMP/ Design Guidance update. Steering group members were reminded to submit their feedback by Monday 31st July.

Action: Clare to collate TCMP and Design Code comments on her return from leave.

TCMP is a resource for future projects and direction, particularly for working with Wiltshire Council. It must hook into policies, e.g. shop fronts.

8. Update on WNP project plan (including outstanding actions)
Community Land Trust – Trevor Cherrett has agreed to meet at the Civic Centre at 12 noon on Tuesday 22nd August to discuss with the steering group and others interested
Community Land Trusts – pitfalls and possibilities for up to 90 mins.

Place Studio advised issues with shop frontages can be referenced in both the town centre and heritage design policies. 'Shop frontage and signage should be in keeping with the design of the buildings' e.g. no neon signs on Cordons.

Action: Katie to revise project plan to reflect the estimated 6 months now needed for SEA / HRA. The Wiltshire Local Plan timeline could also be taken into consideration.

It was noted that the Local Plan consultation commencing in September is a good opportunity to highlight its link with the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

Katie suggested and it was agreed that the introductions to chapters could be put out as signed off and that things such as a Q&A on Neighbourhood Plan could be spread out over the next six months in the run up to Regulation 14 consultation. This would be awareness raising and building understanding. It should cover the Local Plan consultation also.

Action: Place Studio to prepare an outline communication approach note for the Town Council to work up and deliver.

9. AOB
 - Harriet asked about a specific allotment policy – Katie advised the best approach would be to include allotments in the community facilities list.
 - Jon will provide feedback to Katie on policy documents next week.
 - Place Studio will be closed for the w/c 7th August for 2 weeks.

10. Date of next meeting
TBC – Early September.
Meeting needed to discuss Local Plan. Clare to arrange meeting date.
11. Meeting closed at 11.30am.