

# Warminster Neighbourhood Plan

Draft Minutes - Steering Group Meeting  
7<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
Warminster Civic Centre, 2pm (ONLINE ONLY).

## 1. Attendance:

Sophie Davies, Wiltshire Council (WC) Senior Planning Officer & Warminster Neighbourhood Plan Link Officer	Cllr. Keeble (Chair) Harriet James Jon Ellis
Emma Fisher, Wiltshire Council Senior Ecologist	Jeremy Stadward
Naomi Harvey, Wiltshire Council Ecologist	Len Turner
Katie Lea, Place Studio	Nick Parker
Vaughan Thompson, Place Studio	Iain Perkins
Tom Dommett	Clare Collier

## Apologies:

Cllr. Allensby, Cllr. Brett and Cllr. Jones

## 2. Declaration of Interest

Jon Ellis (JE) confirmed that he would not be commenting on housing matters as he currently has a planning application submitted.

## 3. Update from Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Council (WC) Officers had been invited to attend the meeting to give the Steering Group (SG) members an update on:

- the draft Local Plan (LP) and Nutrient Neutrality Strategy and how these could impact on a Site Allocation (SA) being undertaken for Warminster.
- the recent queries raised regarding the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Rachael Jones from WC, who leads on phosphate mitigation, unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting. Sophie Davies (SD) and Naomi Harvey (NH) hoped to cover any questions in her absence.

SD confirmed that WC went out to LP consultation last year. WC are currently working through the representations. It is planned that the LP will be submitted to the examiner later this year.

A revised Nutrient Neutrality Strategy (NNS) Paper<sup>1</sup> was approved by WC Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Going forward, the new strategy will detail that unless a development has been planned or permitted then it will not fall within scope of the WC NNS. £9.8M is available in funding to help with phosphorus mitigation for planned developments. Currently WC are unable to confirm what mitigation will be introduced as a review is presently being undertaken. WC are also waiting on Wessex Water to submit details about the upgrade of sewage treatment works by 1 April 2024. WC hoped that Warminster's sewage works will be upgraded. The NNS is still to be fully rewritten. Until it is known whether the sewage works will be upgraded, its difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> [WC Nutrient Neutrality Cabinet Paper 6/2/24](#)

outline what additional mitigation might be needed. WC still want developers to undertake reasonable phosphate mitigation on site. If a development doesn't fall with the scope of the WC strategy, that development will need to bring forward its own mitigation plans.

SD confirmed that development that doesn't come through the LP and Neighbourhood Plan (NP) will not qualify for WC mitigation e.g. the recent Westbury Road application. Developments that don't qualify for the WC mitigation scheme will need put in a nutrient budget calculator and put forward their own bespoke mitigation strategy which in turn will undergo an HRA.

Len raised his concerns about the phosphate mitigation situation and the fact that it needs to be reviewed as soon as possible so that developers and the community can move on. Jon Ellis felt that a timeline outlining when mitigation plans will be confirmed was needed. Cllr Keeble reported that the revised planning application for Phase 2 of the Warminster West Urban Extension is to introduce reed beds.

WC stated that they need to gain a holistic view on the sewage works and mitigation strategies before any decisions can be made. Unfortunately, this is a time-consuming process and is also reliant on third party involvement.

WC agreed that they would provide relevant updates to the SG as and when they become available.

Naomi Harvey (NH) gave an overview as to why the recreational impacts on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) had been screened out of the HRA. The core roost is located within a private dwelling and therefore won't be exposed to recreational impacts. It was also confirmed that beavers would not be screened as they are not a qualifying species.

Harriet James (HJ) questioned whether the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) will be removed as part of the LP review. SD confirmed that the intention is to replace SLAs with the new character area approach and landscape strategy. HJ also asked how the land at Brook Street has been identified for phosphate mitigation in the LP when there is no sewage outfall. Wiltshire Council agreed to come back with information to this question.

SD stated that if any changes are made to the draft plan, then it will need to be screened again. SD expressed that she would advocate an SA being undertaken for Warminster as this offers protection. SA will also be a way to direct speculative development. Cllr Keeble felt the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) review in December 2023 reaffirms that a SA will give 5-year protection.

SG members were asked to forward any outstanding questions to Wiltshire Council, this included the query raised about the WC Parking Policy/EV Strategy.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting (13/12/23)**

The draft minutes from the last meeting were approved.

#### **5. Site Allocation**

SG members discussed at length the merits and drawbacks of undertaking a Site Allocation (SA). Place Studio estimated that an SA would take a minimum of 9 months to complete. Due to the recent NPPF review, it was confirmed that an NP with an SA will have 5-year protection. A NP without a SA will need to refer to the LP. As the LP is at the Regulation 19 stage, the NPPF review

also introduced for plans at this stage with a 4-year housing plan will have protection from speculative development for two years from December 2023. Technical support and funding will be available to undertake a SA. Additional work will need to be carried out on the HRA/SEA. Place Studio felt that a call for sites specifically for Warminster would identify smaller and brownfield sites, these would need their own assessment.

A two-stage vote was undertaken:

**1) Should a Site Allocation be undertaken?**

*Two members voted for a SA to be undertaken, two members voted against and one member abstained. The Chair had the casting vote as it was a tie, he voted in favour of undertaking an SA.*

**2) If a Site Allocation is undertaken, should this be undertaken as part of the current WNP review?**

*Two members voted for a SA to be undertaken, two members voted against and one member abstained. The Chair had the casting vote as it was a tie, he voted in favour of undertaking an SA as part of the current WNP review.*

Nick Parker had posted a comment online before he left the meeting, stating that he would vote against an SA being undertaken. This vote was not taken into account as standard council procedures do not allow a person to vote if they are not present at the time of voting.

As the meeting overran, it was agreed that a further meeting would need to be arranged to cover the outstanding agenda items.

**Meeting to Discuss Outstanding Agenda Items held on  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, at Warminster Civic Centre**

**Present:**

Cllr Phil Keeble (PK)	Tom Dommett (TD)
Harriet James (HJ)	Clare Collier (CC)
Len Turner (LT)	

**Apologies:**

Jon Ellis (JE)	Nick Parker (NP)
Jeremy Stadward (JS)	Cllr Jones
Cllr Allensby	

N.B. Place Studio not required to attend.

**6. Update on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The draft policies have been updated to reflect the SEA Consultant's (LUC) recommendations. Objective amendments are to be forwarded to LUC by 22/3/24. The finalised document will be used as the core document as a further SEA will need to be undertaken to incorporate the Site Allocation impact at a late date.

**7. Neighbourhood Plan (NP) working draft**

Place Studio have included the recent National Planning Policy Framework update in the draft NP. TD to add climate statement. The draft document has been proofread but content is still changing so additional proof reading will be required. Supporting documents still to be collated. Topic papers to be presented in uniform format. Limited paper copies of the final document will need to be

produced. The formatting of the draft NP will be completed after the Site Allocation work has been carried out. Although work can be carried out on drafting the summary document, the final version will also need to be put on hold until the Site Allocation work has been completed.

**Action: LT to forward updated Business Survey to CC week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> April.**

**Action: CC to chase JE for 'Getting Around' evidence data work.**

The decision to undertake a Site Allocation is to be ratified at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024. TD confirmed that the Site Allocation work is not dependent on funding and work can commence on the first stage, Call for Sites. LT suggested that the definitive figure for the number of housing units and a breakdown of the allocation up to the year 2038 needs to be clarified.

**Action: TD to contact Wiltshire Council to request housing figure and how it has been calculated.**

## **8. Community Projects to be included in WNP**

Suggested projects should be sustainable and can access Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

a) Projects currently in the draft WNP:

- Town centre shopfront design guide.
- Community Land Trust.
- Warminster Plan Bee.

b) Other projects to be considered for inclusion:

- Options for additional allotment sites.
- Ongoing support of Incredible Edible Community Garden.
- Air quality monitoring in town centre.
- Rainfall, groundwater and river flow monitoring.
- Collation of flood data.
- Monitoring of invertebrates by Friends of Warminster Rivers.
- Continued support of the community orchard.
- Identify trees to be put forward for tree preservation orders.
- Identifying buildings to be listed and those at risk.
- Support of local wildlife protection projects e.g. toad patrol, water voles.
- Implement whole town approach to stop dog fouling.
- Monitoring the effects of the NP e.g. percentage of new homes built against the advice of Environment Agency. This could be led by a civic organisation.
- New and improved footpaths and cycling paths/storage.

HJ commented that the Lake Pleasure Gardens and Smallbrook Nature Reserve could be considered for an English Heritage listing (Historic Parks and Gardens) as the Green Amenity Area designation doesn't provide any planning protection. The grounds at Bishopstrow Hotel could also be listed.

**Action: CC to check with Place Studio remit of community projects to be included.**

**Action: LT and HJ to provide brief description of suggested community projects.**

**Action: CC to ask absent steering group members to forward other community project suggestions**

## **9. AOB**

- **Land at Brook Street** – It was confirmed that the land at Brook Street can remain in the potential non-designated heritage asset list.
- **Site Allocation** –. On the assumption that the Site Allocation is ratified at council, the first stage will be to undertake a Call for Sites. Once this has been completed an application for

technical support can be submitted to Locality. A designated meeting is to be arranged to decide upon the Call for Sites parameters such as smaller sites, brownfield sites and sites for affordable housing, minimum site size etc. Do the Steering Group want to try and recruit new members to be involved with this new phase of the WNP?

**10. Date of next meeting**

Site Allocation meeting to be arranged for April. Place Studio to be invited to attend.