

Warminster

Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Steering Group Meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2023 Warminster Civic Centre, 2pm (hybrid meeting)

1. Attendance – In person: Len Turner, Harriet James, Cllr Brett, Nick Parker, Jon Ellis, Tom Dommett, Clare Collier. Online: Cllr Phil Keeble, Jeremy Stadward, Katie Lea (Place Studio).
Apologies - Cllr Robbins, Cllr Jones, Cllr Fraser.
2. Declarations of interest – Harriet has campaigned against the Damask Way development. Jon has recently been elected Chair of the Athenaeum Trust.
3. Approval of minutes from last meeting – the minutes of the last meeting held in July were approved.
4. Neighbourhood Plan working draft
A discussion was held about the content structure and concerns over the length of the document. The document is to go before the examiner and therefore must contain all the relevant evidence. As previously discussed, it was agreed that a non-technical summary document would need to be produced which the community would be able to easily understand. Chippenham and Melksham have produced summary documents which could be a template/guidance for the Warminster version. There were concerns about having to align Warminster’s policies directly with WC policies. Katie reminded the Steering Group that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) can include issues that aren’t related to planning policies and can be highlighted as projects.
Jon confirmed that due to other commitments he would be unable to complete the first draft of the plan. It was decided that the town council’s communication officer, with support, would assist with the editing of the NP to ensure it is in plain English and of a consistent style throughout.

Action: Place Studio to check maps that have been produced by James. Clare to produce list of maps needed to be included.

Action: Comms officer to produce a first draft summary leaflet for Regulation 14.

5. Local Green Space (LGS) designation
 - a) Land Around St Denys Church – The town council held a meeting with the developers (see notes from meeting below). Harriet thought that the site may be included in the Local Plan as a reserve site. The developers are considering building some affordable housing and will allocate part of the site as LGS. Feedback from the public informal consultation on the designation proposal has been positive. The Steering Group discussed whether the site should still be put forward as a potential LGS. It was agreed that the site met the LGS designation criteria and therefore should be taken to Regulation 14. Tom reported that the developers have indicated that they will bring forward proposals that they hope will influence the community feedback in the formal consultation.

Action: Katie to carry out further research about the status of the site in the LP - this will potentially affect the designation.

- b) Damask Way – Harriet reported that initially the site couldn’t be considered a potential LGS as it had outline planning, this has now lapsed, and the applicant has withdrawn the reserve matters application. Due to this change in circumstance, the site can now be considered for LGS designation, and this was agreed by The Steering Group. Katie advised that the landowners and

public should be consulted in a similar way as with other potential LGS sites before it is taken to Regulation 14. Katie raised the issue that the potential designation of this site together with neighbouring sites of the Woods North or Damask, the Lake Pleasure Grounds and Smallbrook Nature Reserve would create a large tract of land which doesn't meet National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria. Damask Way and Woods North of Damask Way could potentially be joined as one LGS. Katie suggested that the town park (including the nature reserve) isn't taken forward as a LGS but identified in the NP as an important area of community space. Landowner and public informal consultation will need to be undertaken so feedback can be taken into consideration when deciding on the way forward. The town council would need to formally dedicate the Lake Pleasure Grounds and Smallbrook Nature Reserve as public amenity space.

It was agreed to take the Town Park and Smallbrook Nature Reserve off the LGS list as they have sufficient other protection, and ensure that they are included in the Neighbourhood Plan in a different way. It was agreed to add the land at Damask Way on to the potential LGS list for consultation.

Action: Clare to liaise with Place Studio about how to contact landowners and consult with public on potential designation.

- c) Folly Lane Local Green Space (LGS) – It was reported that Mr Bond addressed Full Council at the public participation as a representative of a landowner of this LGS site. Tom confirmed that the council do not need to respond to public participation as the item wasn't on the agenda. Katie confirmed the site has legal status and a democratic mandate as it forms part of the 'Made' Warminster Neighbourhood Plan (NP) 2016. Therefore, the review of the designation of Folly Lane Rehobath as LGS should follow a process informed by Planning Practice Guidance, and it should also be progressed through the necessary stages of consultation in order to reach sound and evidenced approach to the review of this LGS site as part of the wider NP review. To date the evidence from the community consultation indicates that the space continues to meet the necessary National Planning Policy Criteria. As part of the formal consultation stage (Regulation 14) on the Neighbourhood Plan, a report on the process to date and evidence collected would be available for all, including landowners can respond at that stage.

6. Link office update

- a) SEA/HRA Screening – WC have received a response from the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) statutory consultees:

Historic England indicate that they do not anticipate the potential for any significant effects to the historic environment. Therefore, this SEA topic could be screened out at the SEA scoping stage to favour a more proportionate approach to the assessment.

The Environment Agency provide a useful steer in terms of relevant evidence base, including a couple of recommendations for policy enhancements which is ideal.

Natural England concur based on the need for HRA Appropriate Assessment, as expected.

Locality are processing the application for a Strategic Environmental Assessment. A consultant has been allocated, Melissa Kurihara. Clare to chase contact w/c 9 October. Clare has been chasing Sophie Davies (WC NP Link Officer) for a response to the Steering Group's questions.

- b) Local Plan (LP) – thanks went to members who had given feedback on the LP. The report had been approved by Full Council on 25th September.

Wiltshire Council will be holding a drop-in event at Warminster Sports Centre on Wednesday 18th October for members of the public to ask questions/provide feedback on the LP. The Steering Group decided not to have a WNP stand at the event.

Action: Tom to send copy of LP consultation response to Place Studio.

7. TCMP/ Design Guidance update.
The finalised documents are available on the WNP SharePoint.
8. Update on WNP project plan (including outstanding actions)
Until the consultants start the environmental screening process, we won't have a clearer idea of the timescales.
9. AOB
Tom reported that Place Studio have updated their fee quote which was estimated from the brief in April 2022. It reflects the changes over the last year as the NP has progressed. Overall, the estimated fee has increased by £3,300. Tom confirmed the total invoiced cost of the WNP is approximately £20,000 which has been funded by central government and via the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Harriet has been working on the Topic Papers and has incorporated the local context of the Local Plan policies.

Nick asked if a water assessment has been undertaken for the whole of the town. Len confirmed that the Environment Agency are currently undertaking a study focusing on Cannimore and Were Rivers. Little can be done with the Were as the cost benefit analysis would require so much expenditure and can't be justified. The study will help with assessing planning applications. He also reported that ground water isn't monitored as there isn't any infrastructure for it to be regularly monitored. Wessex Water are planning to install a water storage tank in Weymouth Street by March 2025.
10. Date of next meeting
To be held early in December during the day (5th or 13th). Details to be confirmed.

Notes from the meeting with Peter North and Chris Beaver, Friday 1st September, 11 am Cley Room.
RE Land by Minster Church.

Present – Tom Dommett, Cllr Keeble, Peter North, Chris Beaver.

Apologies – Cllr Jeffries

Peter North Peter@footstep.co.uk Chris Beaver Chris@planningsphere.co.uk

See <http://footstepliving.co.uk/>

“Footstep Living provide a better way for building truly affordable homes for sale. We are a private but socially motivated enterprise working in a transparent manner with Local Authorities and other stakeholders. We are committed to improving access to housing for all. We have therefore dedicated part of the company to supporting housing need and each home sold generates a financial contribution to this end. The houses we build are sold at a substantial discount to local market values with all future sales being at the same discount... forever.”

There was a not very good application a long time ago on this site from Redrow.

The people who own the land are members of a family. They approached Savills for advice, and result developers have an option on the site.

They have made high level pre application enquiries with Wiltshire Council.

Wiltshire Council Highways agree that suggested site access works would be acceptable.

They have had some discussions with the Church about the informal carpark and how this could be improved as part of the scheme and how perhaps a community building could be created.

This would probably change the access proposals.

They have looked into flood risk work and ecological surveys and dark skies requirements – e.g. for bats. They have worked hard on phosphate issue, blue green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain.

Footstep specialise in affordable discounted housing. (See their website). Initially they were looking at active living and specialist retirement bungalows but they engage with and are guided by the community.

The pro site case is to paraphrase – it is near the town centre, it is infilling and within the settle policy boundary, any proposals would be sympathetic to the Church, it would open the boundary and third field to the public – which they would support as Local Green Space. This could be done via a management company or by transfer to the Town Council.

The anti-site case is to paraphrase – the green oasis is even more valuable than ever, the bad experience of WU Extension Grovelands, makes the public wary of developers promises, the site links with Portway which is probably going to be used to improve biodiversity.

Tom outlined the Neighbourhood Plan process undertaken so far. It was suggested section 14 consultation was key. It was agreed that Tom would forward the Housing Needs Assessment. Footstep would consider their options and come back and make a presentation to the Planning Advisory Committee.