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Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
Tel: (01225) 704187

Town Clerk and RFO Linda Roberts BA(Hons) PGCAP, FHEA,
FLSCC

To: Councillor J Hubbard (Chair)
Councillor G Cooke (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Aves
Councillor S Crundell
Councillor C Goodhind
Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor S Rabey

3 November 2021

Dear Councillors

In accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) you are invited to attend the **Economic Development and Planning Committee** meeting of Melksham Town Council. The meeting will be held at Melksham Town Hall on **Monday 8th November 2021** commencing at **7.00 pm**.

A period of public participation will take place in accordance with Standing Order 3(e) prior to the formal opening of the meeting. The Press and Public are welcome to attend this meeting.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L A Roberts BA(Hons), PGCAP, FHEA, FSLCC
Town Clerk and RFO

Melksham Town Council
Economic Development and Planning Committee

Public Participation – To receive questions from members of the public.

In the exercise of Council functions. Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivery services under the public sector Equality Duty and Equality 2010.

AGENDA

7. Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive the notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 29 September 2021 and the draft notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 27 October 2021. (To follow).



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Date: Weds 27 October 2021
Start: 6.30pm

Present

Steering Group Members

Cllr Richard Wood (MWPC)*
Cllr David Pafford (MWPC)
Cllr John Glover (MWPC)
Cllr Saffi Rabey (MTC) (Chair)
Cllr Mike Sankey (WC)*
Shirley McCarthy (Environment)*
Rolf Brindle (Transport)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)
Lorraine McRandle (MWPC)
Linda Roberts (MTC)
Patsy Clover (MTC)

* attended remotely via Zoom

Consultants

Vaughan Thompson (Place Studio)

NOTES

As Councillor Wood was attending via Zoom and the Vice Chair Councillor Simon Crundell was not present, a Chair was sought.

Councillor Saffi Rabey was nominated as Chair.

It was noted there were 3 representatives present from Melksham Without Parish Council. In accordance with the terms of reference only two voting members from each council are permitted to vote. It was therefore agreed that Councillor Pafford would be the second voting member for Melksham Without Parish Council for the meeting.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Holden and David Way.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk to Melksham Without Parish Council circulated Register of Interest forms previously completed by Steering Group Members and asked that members checked these were up to date, as well as provided forms for those Members who had not completed one as yet.

3. Public Participation

No members of public were present.

4. To agree Notes of Meeting held on 29 September 2021

Councillor Glover queried point 6 in the minutes as it referenced costs would be split 50/50 in the heading and in the minutes stated the split would be 70/30.

It was suggested the minute should read as follows:

It was noted that the costs were actually borne between Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council at a 70/30 split, which was a new arrangement for NDP#2 moving forward from 1 April 2021.

The notes of the meeting held on 29 September, having previously been circulated, were approved, with the above amendment as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. To review and approve the quotation and scope of works for the Review of the NHP#1 and new version NHP#2 (Approach & Stage 1 proposal)

Vaughan, Place Studios went through the quotation to undertake the review work:

Stage 1: Scoping and Review Options

Total (6.5 person days @ £550): £3575 + VAT

Optional additions:

Stage 1: 'Light Touch' stakeholder and community engagement (run by the Steering Group)

Content and process advice (0.5 person days): £275 + VAT

Vaughan explained there were two stages involved in the review of the made NDP#1. Stage 1 as follows:

Stage 1: Scoping, Process and Project Planning

Stage 1(a): Context; changes to background legislation and National and Wiltshire Policy and Strategy

Vaughan explained since the NDP#1 was 'made' in July, there had been changes to planning policy and strategy nationally and locally for example, policies to address climate change. Changes to local and national policy must be considered when reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

Priority for People is not part of national or local planning legislation however any policies which are made from the exercise would form policies in the NDP#2.

Stage 1(b): Made Plan Performance, Desktop Review and Dialogue

Review the NDP's performance, as this would inform where it might be beneficial to refine or correct existing policy, text or graphic information and assess how user friendly it has been.

The Clerk of Melksham Without explained the NDP had been quoted recently in refusal of a planning application for 4 dwellings in Whitley.

Stage 1(c): New Local Priorities and setting the Review Scope; Steering Group Workshop

To hold a workshop to:

- Consider reports from Place after undertaking Stage 1(a) & (b).
- Record priority review topics that were deliberately reserved from NDP#1, such as local green spaces etc.
- Record new local priorities that might be addressed within the review.
- Discuss and agree priorities that could be included in an NDP policy or project actions and those that would need to be addressed outside the NDP.

The outcome of the workshop would produce a scoping document which would form the basis of the plan review and highlight the significance of the review. It may be appropriate to invite stakeholders to the workshop.

Stage 1(d): Resolving the Review Route and Programming; Steering Group Meeting

The Steering Group will then need to determine how the review will progress. And, following advice from the consultants, consider whether there would be a requirement for an examination and referendum on NDP#2. If a full examination and referendum are required, the procurement and resourcing requirements necessary would also need to be agreed.

Optional Stage 1: Community Communication and/or Consultation

Vaughan felt it was important to communicate with the community during Stage 1 on what was happening with the NDP, and it's review and to undertake community engagement on what was important. Community Engagement would

also take place at Stage 2, but it was useful to undertake at Stage 1 in order to inform the process and Place were happy to assist with this.

Rolf Brindle felt it was important to consider the timeframe, particularly if an examination and referendum are required.

It was agreed to proceed with the proposal from Place Studio on reviewing NDP#1 at a cost of £3575 + VAT and to include 'Light Touch' stakeholder and community engagement input as proposed at a cost of £275 + VAT.

6. To approve the submission of a Grant Application to Locality

The Clerk to Melksham Without reminded the Steering Group that any grant funding received in this financial year (2021-2022) would have to be spent before the end of March 2022. Equally Place would not undertake any Stage 1 work until a grant successful and had been received. The Steering Group were advised that a further grant application could be made to support Stage 2 work.

Rolf Brindle asked whether the group were eligible to apply for a grant from the National Lottery and how much.

Regarding the National Lottery funding, the Clerk of Melksham Without explained the eligibility had not been investigated as yet, but this could be looked into as an additional funding stream and suggested it would be worth applying for grant funding to undertake community engagement, either via Locality or the National Lottery.

It was agreed to delegate to both Clerks to make the necessary applications for grant funding to undertake Stage 1 of the review of NDP#1.

7. To receive update on Melksham Link Canal Project

Following the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust recently meeting with both the town and parish council on their proposals for the Melksham link, both Clerks felt it was important to make the group aware that 850-900 new homes were being proposed as enabling development for the scheme, which would have an impact on NDP#2.

The Clerk to Melksham Without explained the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust were undertaking community engagement in Berryfield to ascertain their views on the scheme and a preferred route. However, in their literature, it was not made clear what level of enabling development was required, rather the leaflet focused on what community benefits would be included in the scheme, such as a new school, doctors' surgery etc which was felt a little misleading.

Councillor Rabey informed the meeting members of the Steering Group had been invited to attend the open day in November and to ask any questions of the scheme.

Rolf Brindle expressed concern that residents of Berryfield may not be aware of the level of housing required to enable the scheme. From what is proposed it could change the character of the village. Particularly as the village had recently seen significant development take place.

Councillor Wood explained that whilst he was in favour of the canal link, he expressed concern at the level of enabling development proposed which had come as a surprise. He also expressed concern that it had been suggested the proposed route through the village was the preferred route by residents of the village, which was not necessarily the case.

8. Priority for People. To note update following Workshop held on Thursday 7 October

Councillor Pafford, both Clerks, Vaughan and Georgina from Place had attended the workshop.

The Clerk to Melksham Town Council explained it had been an action packed day, with lots of information shared. Suggesting that Action groups may be set up to examine the main themes and issues including, public realm, transport, safe access to the town from villages etc. Adding that this would then lead to a Plan of Action for the future and policies supporting the work for inclusion in NDP#2. Gerald would be providing a full report of the Workshop in due course.

9. To agree Date and Venue of Next Meeting of the Steering Group

The Clerk of Melksham Without Parish Council sought a steer from Vaughan on when the next meeting should take place and explained there were no other agenda items other than reviewing any work undertaken by Place. There was however an outstanding action from a previous meeting which was to contact the Rail User Group, Health Watch, Historical Association, Air Training Corps and Melksham Oak to see if they wished to have a representative on the group.

Vaughan explained that once appointed, following the outcome of the grant funding applications, he envisaged Stage 1(a) & (b) would be done before Christmas and could be discussed at the workshop and suggested that in the interim they could discuss the community engagement options.

Councillor Glover expressed concern the timeframe of the review could potentially take longer than 2 years. Vaughan explained the reviewed plan would be in place before the Paragraph 14¹ protection ran out.

¹ In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided all of the following apply: a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision is made; b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement; c) the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 74);

With regard to the Design Codes pilot scheme, the Clerk to Melksham Town Council explained that she had received an email from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities to apologise for the delay in responding to the application submitted, advising they had been caught up in more pressing matters but hoped to be in touch soon.

Rolf Brindle expressed concern any design codes the group included would not be considered by the Examiner, especially if they were too ambitious and constrained developers, and queried who would undertake the work which would be required to create the design codes. Councillor Glover welcomed the possibility of design codes for inclusion in the plan.

The Clerk to Melksham Town Council confirmed if the Steering Group were successful in their application, professional help would be provided to assist in the creation of design codes for the NDP#2 . Design codes were also referred to in the NPPF and therefore would carry more weight in planning law.

It was agreed Place would look at a suitable date in January to hold the evening workshop/meeting and liaise with the Clerks.

and d) the local planning authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years.