

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting
Zoom meeting: Monday 22nd March 2020, 7pm.

Present

Clr Lucy Hamilton (LH)
Clr David Northam (DN)
Rosie Osborne, WTC Project Officer (RO)
Rachel Nokes, ECA Consultant (RN)
Colin Marsh (CM)
Phil Watts (PW)
Nick Spence (NS)
Robert Cheeseman (RC)
Lara Wood (LW)
Sandie Wilson (SW)
Clr Mark Tewkesbury (MT)

Apologies

Clr Ann Weaving
Clr Pete Barrow

1. Welcome and introductions (LH) Each member stated role and area.

2. Project Update

The update was provided by DN:

- a) Tech Support Housing Needs Assessment- used draft report in response to Dorset Local Plan
- b) Full Council briefing- strong backing. Approved 70K, hoping to secure 18K from locality, fund whole project until July 2023. 9K bridging fund to provide continuity.
- c) Character Area Assessment – ECA proceeding with work. A SWOT analysis will also be carried out for each character area. Draft should be completed next week for circulation and discussion. This will also be sent out for public consultation.
- d) Dorset Local Plan Consultation
Special WTC meeting held 09/03/21- members of the public were invited too.

CM commented public meetings and forums very important- especially face to face. We cannot use covid as a reason not to do any consultation. Important to see both sides- pros and cons of issues.

3. Vision and Consultation Report

The Steering Group and the wider Neighbourhood Forum have been sent the report with feedback requested. All comments will be collated and sent to RN.

RN talked through the report, focusing on:

- 8. The Process for Drafting Vision and Aims

- 9. Recommended Vision, Mission, Themes and Aims

Some rewording of the 'vision' suggested and removal of 'existing' residents. All agreed it needs to be punchy and inviting to make the public want to read on. It's a good starting point for wider consultation.

4. Discussion of Themed Working Groups

Some changes to the theme 'aims' were suggested:

JOBS

- SW felt there was a lot more in terms of employment in Weymouth. LH said that more bullet points under this heading could be added.
- LW commented that as a community we need to be selling Weymouth to businesses. Is there any way WTC can promote the town to companies? So many shops now closing but possibilities for Weymouth are endless. LH agreed, this is part of Dorset Council's role, but WTC also play a part.
- SW thinks a positive message in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan sends a strong message to businesses.
- CM explained that the Character Assessment will give an overall picture which will help in terms of these issues, e.g., demographic very important helps understand where we are at.
- RC asked is it so important that it goes in vision/mission or later on? Timespan is so long, what degree do we need to think about how working practices will change? How do we make it valid? RN answered that the Character Assessment will hopefully identify threats and possibilities.
- PW suggested that we look at training and apprenticeships along with jobs. Policies and land use for expansion of college. Employment land outside Weymouth boundaries. Should we be looking at part of the park and ride site for employment site? We need to investigate and have some tangible answers.
- DN said that the Housing Needs Assessment looks at average pay and it would be good to include something about better paid jobs - Ask for Weymouth to be an economic zone.

HOMES

- PW thought that we should be going big and bold with allocations- to ensure level of affordable homes is clearly viable by size of development site.
- SW suggested taking one of the statements from environment and one from Neighbourhood section as thought they would be better placed here. LH thought this was a great suggestion. CM agreed that this section needs broadening.
- LW felt that 'Highest design standards' needs to be more specific and 'Providing a broad mix' needs clarifying. RN said she was happy to change this to be more specific.
- DN would like to see social housing mentioned here.
- PW said repurposing of redundant retail spaces is important, but much is on a flood plain. DN explained that Dorset Council now have approved flood

prevention schemes such as raise harbour walls and further schemes to protect Weymouth.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

- SW wanted to know the difference between strategic and local. RN explained that strategic is more of an overarching policy that runs through the entire site whereas local ones are site specific. SW will rethink comments and send updated ones to RN. RN confirmed that everyone has a fortnight to send any further comments.
- RC suggested facilities within 5-minute walking- DN said the Town Council has passed the Ramblers Charter which incorporates the 5-minute idea.

GREENSPACES

- Conversation around 'halting' biodiversity loss rather than 'reversing'. SW thought not only could we reverse it but also encourage it. CM agreed that halting is not sufficient- we need to have policies to ensure environment/habitats are treated sensitively.
- SW asked if this was going to capture the harbour and beaches? Agreed that wording should be changed to 'Natural and Open Spaces'.

ENVIRONMENT

- RC was pleased with the whole biodiversity theme in this document, but 'resilience' is missing. Thought this word should be included in the vision and mission statement.
- SW thought that this section needs to be clear so people can understand what it is we are trying to achieve.
- PW thought it important to be allocating some car free sites especially in town centre.
- CM stated that in planning terms these two things get confused. All could be combined under blue and green infrastructure. They will be used by planners so need to be in their 'speak'.
- SW suggested that we go through each theme and ensure that aims are clear so that it can be easily communicated when engaging with the public.
- LH expected 'heritage' and 'built heritage' to be included.
- DN suggested removing 'inland waterways'.

ACTION

RO to send detailed points put forward to RN.

RN to incorporate feedback into Vision and Consultation Report.

5. Next steps

Steering Group

- Formalise Vision & Mission
- Agree Themes and Aims for Working Groups
- Agree how to form Working Groups.
- Consider website needs.

- Consider SG/F/WG inter-communication needs.
- Prepare agenda for next NP Forum 17th April.
- Comment on Character Area Assessment
- Appoint a Steering Group chair
- Plan for Public Engagement

ECA

- Update Vision & Consultation report
- Complete Draft Character Area Assessment report
- Prepare draft Grant Submission.
- Advise additional surveys and studies needed.

Project Group

- Extend contract support to end of June 2021.
- Prepare 'Call for Sites'.
- Request 'Site Allocation Tech Support'
- Request 'Further Grants'
- Organise on-line feedback to Character Area Assessment
- Submit Vision & Consultation Report to Council for endorsement
- Publish Vision & Consultation Report to Council for endorsement
- Update NP Website to reflect progress.

ACTION

RO to send consent form and table of suggested communication platforms for members to state preference.

RN to update Vision and Consultation Report and circulate.

RN to finalise the Character Assessment document and circulate.

6. AOB

Discussion around whether deputies to the Steering Group should attend. Members generally felt that this would be valuable.

RN requested that members send in 5 photos of local area to be included in the Character Assessment.

LH closed meeting at 20:57

Next meeting for the Neighbourhood Plan Forum will be Monday 19th April 2021 at 7pm via zoom

(and then 8 weekly i.e., 14th June 2021)

Next meeting for the Steering Group will be Monday 17th May 2021 at 7pm via zoom

(and then 8 weekly i.e., 12th July 2021)