



**Marlborough Neighbourhood Plan
Steering Group Meeting -
Thursday, 25th February 2016 at 1.30**

pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall,

Marlborough

Present: Cllr Mervyn Hall (MTC and Chair) **[MH]**, Cllr Justin Cook (MTC and Vice-Chair) **[JC]**, Cllr Stewart Dobson (Unitary Councillor) **[SD]**, Susanne Harris **[SH]**, Ian Mellor **[IM]**, Dr Sam Page (DSP), Shelley Parker (Town Clerk) **[SP]**, Bill Roe **[BR]** and Tracy Smith (Link Officer, WC).

Glossary of Terms: **DCLG** – Department of Communities and Local Government – **HNA** – Housing Needs Assessment - **MTC** – Marlborough Town Council – **NA** - Neighbourhood Area - **NP** – Neighbourhood Plan - **NPSG** – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group - **PC** – Parish Council – **SEA** – Strategic Environmental Assessment - **ToR** – Terms of Reference - **TM** - Transition Marlborough - **WCS** – Wiltshire Core Strategy – **WC** – Wiltshire Council - **WP** – Working Party

1. Welcome/Apologies/Matters Arising

[MH] welcomed all to the meeting. There were apologies from Noel Barrett-Morton, Peter Cairns, Mike Jones, Andrew Smith and Guy Singleton (Savernake Parish Council) and Sir Nigel Thompson (Mildenhall Parish Council). (*Matters arising around mapping are dealt with at para. 5 below*)

2. Designation of Neighbourhood Area

[MH] confirmed that consultation around the application to designate the Neighbourhood Area had finished on Wednesday, 24th February. **[TS]** said that she expected that there would be a 2 week period when a report would be written taking into account representations from the consultation and then a delegated decision would be reached (so, circa. 9th March). It was likely that the Marlborough town boundary would be agreed but, it might be that with the large areas involved, the boundaries involving the 3 parishes could be slightly altered.

3. Housing Needs Working Party

[MH] summarised the outcome of two recent Working Party meetings. A draft specification had been drawn up for consultants as well as a descriptive brief towards the Housing Needs Assessment work. A short list of consultants had also been agreed. Further work on this awaited the outcome of the Neighbourhood Area designation application. Main points of discussion included:

- Whether the scope of the HNA drafted by the HNA WP needed to go as far as proposed and that much of the information was available in the Core Strategy (with the exception of the 3 parishes where figures were not available). It was concluded that fresh information was needed and the scope would be adjusted in discussion with the consultants and had to be within the limits of our affordability.
- There was little that could be done to alter the affordable housing policy set out in the Core Strategy – 40%. This would not change regardless of the outcome of the HNA
- It was key that information was opinion and evidence based, bringing together up to date figures for the town and parishes at the same point in time
- The average small house price in Marlborough was £308,000, requiring a £47,000 deposit and a salary of £90k to get a mortgage. Private houses in the town are getting well beyond the affordability of many of the people who work in the town, on whom local businesses depend.
- Findings of a more extensive report might also inform and define design build and property size

- A fuller assessment would help to drill down to possible employment opportunities linked to housing and demographics. Market forces dictated the local economy (i.e. older population encourages more opticians, chemists, etc). A major problem in Marlborough was that workers in Care Homes attracted low wages and a shortage of affordable homes bringing in workers from further afield without adequate parking to accommodate them. Evidence of this was needed.

4. Communications Working Party

JC outlined the outcome of the most recent Communications WP and confirmed that the grant funded website was about to go live and that a Facebook page was already up and running. He had prepared a Communications Strategy (circulated to all). All agreed that this was a good document and formed the basis of taking community engagement forward. It now needed to be highlighted within the project planning document to include communications work at each of the key stages

A V5 of the promotional, awareness raising leaflet had been finalised. As soon as the NA designation had been agreed, a promotional campaign with a multi media approach could begin in line with the strategy.

A logo was also being designed.

It was suggested by the WP that the NPSG may like to consider filming meetings to ensure further transparency in the process. This was easy and inexpensive with footage available to view on YouTube. It was agreed that could be done on a trial basis. It was worth all members viewing footage from other NP Steering Groups.

Another approach would be audio descriptions of the process, especially important for an elderly population rather like audio books. Marlborough College already provided talking newspapers.

ACTION: MH and JC to update the Project Plan to include the implications of the Communications Strategy. BR to investigate how to take forward audio information about the NP. ALL to view footage of Neighbourhood Plan meetings and information on YouTube

5. Environmental Working Party

No WP meetings had taken place since the previous NPSG. WP Membership needed to be reviewed since the original Chairman had stepped down. It was hoped that TM would put forward a new member. Currently the WP was small (IM, SNT, BR). Membership should be expanded to ensure input from all relevant groups. It would be important to have input on this from AONB, a statutory consultee for planning applications. The Wessex AONB had already expressed an interest in coming along to a NPSG meeting. TS would also welcome WP involvement.

Though early in the process for major work to be undertaken on the SEA (WC would provide advice on this), work towards identifying consultants could begin.

Mapping – Thanks were given to TS for providing 4 parish maps showing constraints plus key as requested. It would be useful to have separate maps of the whole NA showing flood areas, source protection zones, air quality, ecology, SSIs, nature reserves, built heritage, conservation, historical and landscape assets. This would provide baseline information. These could be added or taken off as layers. A map was already available of the NA (though this was subject to change depending on the outcome of the application)

ACTION: **TS** to provide further maps. **SP** to invite representative from AONB to future NPSG meeting. **SP** to circulate meeting date for next Environmental WP to include **JC**. **DSP** to seek member from TM

6. Project Planning

MH talked through the most recent Project Plan confirming that it would be again updated to reflect the Communications Strategy. It was a plan that needed to reflect some complex issues where deadlines had to fit in with a wide reaching process. It was clear that a Scoping exercise needed to begin soon. The public needed to be clear what the Plan could cover and what it could not (though this was already set out in the promotional leaflet). At this early stage, headlines could be drawn up as part of an initial scoping exercise. It was all closely linked with the Communications Strategy where feedback from community engagement would shape the Plan itself based on those scoping headlines.

ACTION: **MH** to update project plan.

7. Finance

SP outlined current balances. No expenditure had been made since the previous meeting. An application for a grant for up to £8,000 had been successful and £2,306 was being drawn down for the design of the website. Technical assistance was also available (worth £6,000) but, this could not be allocated until the designation of the NA had been confirmed.

MH commented that, at this stage it was envisaged that the 2 main surveys – the HNA and the SEA would cost £20,000 each.

8. AOB/Next Meeting

MH updated members on how Wiltshire Council had been served with an application to the High Court under section 113 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to quash the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan (DANP). The application had been made on behalf of MacTaggart & Mickel Homes Ltd., the developers seeking permission for residential development on land at Coate Bridge, Devizes. The main grounds of the challenge was, essentially, that the adoption of the DANP prejudices the current Housing Site Allocation process. A public inquiry will be held on 5 April at Braeside Education and Conference Centre in Devizes.

SP confirmed that Cllr Simon Killane from Malmesbury had confirmed that he would be happy to attend an NPSG meeting and dates were currently being considered.

Next Meeting – To avoid the Easter week, it was agreed that the next meeting should take place on Thursday, 7th April at 1.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Town Clerk

26th February 2016