

**Wells Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**  
**7pm Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 by Zoom**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** Graham Barrow, Helen Ellison, Ian Humphreys, Adrian l'Anson, Jenny Linsdell, Tessa Munt, Rosemary Naish, Simon Nash, Jenny Rust, Stuart Todd, Laura Waters & Chris Winter

**1. Welcome and introduction**

**2. Apologies for absence:** Ben Castell, Jessica Cooke, Pam Crummay, Rachel Humphries & Tina Speake.

**3. AECOM Design Packages 1 & 2**

Ben Castell reported good progress on these.

A pdf of the presentation made by Giuseppe & Simona (from AECOM) to a 'meeting' with Ben Castell and CW & AIA, had been circulated. This is a first draft of the design guide for the three allocated sites. It was agreed that links to multi-use paths in and out and around the sites should be included.

**4. AECOM Housing Need Assessment**

Jessica Cooke reports that a first draft can be expected at the end of the week.

**5. Planning for the Future – White paper**

AIA thought this was encouraging and ST added that it intimates that Neighbourhood Plans will continue, but 'the devil is in the detail' – which is as yet unclear. Design Guidance will have a greater role but in terms of Development Management policies a 'one size fits all' approach is not helpful.

Responses to the consultation should use the opportunity to express the needs of communities, within the 'further substantiation' of the yes/no answers.

As well as responses from organisations, (co-ordinated) responses from individuals will help to strengthen the points made. These should have clear bullet points and be consistent.

JL commented that the WP did not address issues around working towards carbon neutral practices.

LW considered that the Government was actually looking for direction and this is an opportunity not to be missed. She would ask Tracy Aarons to speak to the group.

IH agreed to circulate the response drafted by St Cuthbert's Out.

AIA, ST, IH & TM agreed to co-ordinate a number of points which might be used in local responses. Personal email addresses could be used for added impact.

There was discussion about housing numbers – how they are arrived at and the fact that they are only likely to go *up* in the future.

**6. Natural Environment section**

SN joined the meeting and his second draft report on biodiversity, which had been circulated, was discussed. Whilst national data on key indicator species and pollinators is available, local data is harder to find, but SN is working with a number of sources and plans to use maps to assemble and present evidence to support the policies and project in the Plan.

Tom Ronan would be contacted for his expertise; as would Joss Jury regarding 'dark skies' (ie: light pollution) which, amongst other things, impacts on bats and moths. IH is looking at the use of street lighting in St Cuthbert's Out. TM reported that she has been working with a group in Wedmore on this

issue and will facilitate a link. IH added that the Local Plan indicates that ...*developers must show that street lighting is essential before they include it...*

It is important to link this section to the housing and transport sections, for an integrated approach when it comes to planting and gardens and land management, including verges, play areas, school grounds, areas around shops etc.

The NPPF references the 25-year plan for the natural environment, which will be helpful.

LW emphasised that councillors need strong, specific policies (with evidence) in order to challenge developers and to strengthen their defence, empowering the planning authority. TM added that there should be consistency of the conditions attached to all proposals.

## 7. Any Other Business

- i. AIA considered the Plan prepared for Shaftesbury could have a number of similarities with Wells and planned to organise a trip to speak to those involved, if anyone would like to join him.
- ii. The timetable for the Plan was clarified:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| end September    | AECOM & other reports completed                                |
| October/November | redraft Plan using reports and evidence                        |
| December         | community consultation (door-to-door and online questionnaire) |
| January          | analysis and amendments  |
| February/March   | draft to MDC & amendments                                      |
| March/April      | Examination*   |
| May              | Referendum** (which could coincide with elections)             |

\*RN commented that the steering group would be offered the choice of three inspectors; it would be worth checking the *waiting list* before making a decision.

\*\*ST added that the Plan carries as much weight after the inspection, prior to the referendum, as it does when it is 'made'.

With local authority re-structuring imminent, it was agreed that we should aim for completion as soon as is feasible.

## 8. Next meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> October at 7 pm by Zoom