

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL



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Minutes of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

26th September 2016 7.30- 9.30pm

Venue STC Offices

1. Present

Graham Cooper, Jeremy Woodward, Deirdre Hounsom, Louise Cole, Michael Earthey, Daniel Turner, Peter Murphy, Tim Salt, Andie Miles, Richard Thurlow. Consultants John Slater BA DMS MRTPI (johnslaterplanning.com) and Julie Tanner (<http://creatingexcellence.net>) were present until the end of item 8.

2. Apologies

Natalie Bentall, Clare Russell, Ian McKenzie-Edwards, Jonathan Davey

3. Minutes of 6th September 2016

Minutes were agreed and are on the NP page of the STC website.

4. Welcome & Update of SG Activities

DAH welcomed John Slater and Julie Tanner to the meeting and then provided an update on activities since the last meeting:

- Business and Special Interest Groups survey was launched on 19th September and will run until 31st October. A link to the survey had been emailed to 380 local organisations and further work is being done by the steering group to identify others. Aim is to achieve 20% completion.
- 500 A4 flyers will be distributed to shops and other organisations.
- A banner is being printed and permission has been obtained to hang it over Fore Street during October – thanks to DT for work on design.
- DAH is investigating online apps to auto send tweets etc.
- The Herald is being approached to include a 1-page article about the survey.
- LC and DAH led a successful young persons' event at Sidmouth College on 23rd September which involved pupils from the college, St John's and Sidmouth Primary School. Working in groups they developed ideas which LC has taken away to develop into a first draft YP questionnaire. This will be further developed by the students, including some from Sidbury Primary school, at the next meeting. Sidmouth College have said that they will

embed completion of the YP questionnaire in PHSE activity slots and it's likely that other schools will do the same.

- DAH/TS are doing focus groups at the Health Forum meeting this week and the Chamber of Commerce in October. CR is currently working on a cycling focus group.

5. John Slater - Presentation

JS had a lifetime career in local government planning and his last public role was Head of Planning in Portsmouth until 2012 when he left and set up his own consultancy business. 90% of the work that he now does is NP related, supporting and giving advice to NP groups who are in the process of working on their own NPs. In addition, he is an Independent Examiner of NPs – 13 completed, 3 in progress.

Every group is different and he can tailor the services he provides to suit what the group wants. This can vary from being totally hands on and doing much of the writing to groups where he is much less hands on but there as a "critical friend". This would see him providing support in areas such as:

- Guidance around the writing of policies, helping to create realistic timelines and project plans to create objectives and an evidence base that lead to the formation of policies and help groups avoid using their energies on activities that are outside the NP scope.
- Stakeholder management and advice would see him mediating difficult relationships and at the submission stage he can advise with document submission, identifying examiners and ensuring that the submission has clarity, is robust and without ambiguity and is capable of being used by planning departments in the future.
- An early activity could be to work with the group in a training/briefing capacity in order to bring everyone to the same part of the process in terms of NP understanding, and support the group in a health-check of current progress and activities to ensure its on track.

6. Julie Tanner - Presentation.

JS has a background in planning since university and has a mission to bring quality and sustainability to development. She is an associate with Creating Excellence (CE), an architecture centre based in Exeter. CE could offer a range of services to the group including:

- Ensuring development is in the right place through interaction and consultation with residents – bringing the community together to harness views and capture ideas. The aim being to create a plan which would promote a distinctive locality which manages growth and sustainability effectively.
- Bringing a multidisciplinary approach to planning through a team of 4 professionals that is equipped with a range of skills, experience and expertise
- Evidence capture of the Sid Valley and supporting the group with high quality visuals which will add value and clarity to the NP submission.
- Running and/or advising on focus groups and large scale community consultation.
- CE and JS bring different but complementary skills to the process.

7. Q&A - SG members to consultants.

- **What is the charging structure?** JS – charges an hourly rate and the group budget accordingly, depending on what they require. JT – would carry out a needs assessment and then charge for discreet pieces of work.
- **How does the work that CE does translate to NP?** JT – through scoping and local consultation CE can help the NP identify other areas for development, translating what

the community has to say into language and evidence which can be used in a NP format. JW endorsed this approach, having seen it in action with the Drill Hall Hub and recognised the benefits it brings to the process.

- **To what extent can NP address planning that's already included in the Local Plan?** JS said that it's too late to get bogged down in fighting individual planning applications now and instead concentrate on developing a robust evidence base which will enable the NP to identify locations, specify styles etc. Don't get involved in the market or who is interested in running a commercial development post completion. It is outside the scope of NP.
- **How would you approach focus groups?** JT – by understanding the ultimate vision and where we are now, it will be possible to identify gaps in current evidence. That may be to seek local input on what is special about Sid Valley, what it is that the NP wants to protect.

JT and JS left the meeting following the Q&A session and the group had a general discussion about how best to use the services of the consultants and the respective merits that each consultant brings. There was general agreement that JS could provide an immediate input in providing a health check on current activity, progress to date and future activities. A date of 22nd October was suggested, where JS would workshop these aspects with those members of the SG who were available to attend. The group thought that JT would bring another, valuable perspective to the process that may be best suited to activity later in the process.

DT stated that perhaps we look at other companies so that we are open to different offers for the services provided. He mentioned that the local plan has not allocated any additional sites and that we need to work closely with the community and landowners to come up with viable solutions.

8. Basecamp

There was a general discussion about best use of Basecamp, particularly the need to manage notifications and avoid including everyone in discussions if that wasn't appropriate. The group were urged to review DT's written Basecamp guidance which had been provided. TS also offered to provide tailored advice if required by SG members.

9. AOB

RT – said we need to ensure that we have a searchable archive of documents, possibly using an excel database. **Action – TS to investigate**

Date of next meeting Tuesday 18th October 2016