

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL



WOOLCOMBE HOUSE
WOOLCOMBE LANE
SIDMOUTH
DEVON
EX10 9BB

Telephone: 01395 512424
Email: enquiries@sidmouth.gov.uk
Website: www.sidmouth.gov.uk
Tourism Website: www.visitsidmouth.co.uk
VAT Reg. No. 142 3103 24

Minutes of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

21st March 2017 7.30- 9.30pm

Venue STC Offices

1. Present

Graham Cooper, Deirdre Hounsom, Louise Cole, Tim Salt, Andie Miles, Ian McKenzie-Edwards, Jonathan Davey, Peter Murphy, Claire Russell, Richard Thurlow, Jeremy Woodward

2. Apologies

Jon Davey

3. Minutes of 7th March 2017

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

4. Update from the Chair

- The STC and Town Assembly is taking place on 3rd April at Sidbury Village Hall (not Sidford as mentioned at the meeting). NP will be making a presentation, probably using an abridged version of the one previously given to STC but with an emphasis on the benefits that a NP brings to the community. LC has been contacting Sidmouth College to see if a pupil representative can attend and potentially report back on the YP survey. It would be good if as many members of the steering group as possible could attend.
- The BSIG report has been signed off and published on the STC website.
- Jon Davey is building a SVNP website using Wordpress supported by LC, DAH and TS who have discussed and will be providing content. Once this content has been produced and incorporated the website will be available for SG to view and provide feedback before going live.
 - **Action: TS and LC to provide their content to JD by 15th April**
- Need to start planning for Q2, which after some discussion it was agreed would be based on the emerging objectives in the Theme Teams and designed to provide feedback which will allow for policies to be developed. It was agreed that Theme Teams should aim to have draft questions in place by 30th April with opportunities to review progress in the intervening period.
 - Theme teams should start developing policies based on the draft objectives but these will be modified or confirmed by the responses given in Q2.
 - CR suggested that the group should seek professional advice about the design of questions in the survey.

- Need to decide on the best method of delivering the survey to households – DAH is currently working on this and looking at options including the Post Office, One magazine and at PM's suggestion, fulfilment houses.
- Will need to agree supporting promotional activities around the time of Q2.
- Budget – a copy of the latest report was distributed.
 - CR wondered if there is an existing surplus that can be used for professional Q2 survey design. TS said that there was no specific surplus at this point in the project.
 - DAH said that she and AM had reviewed many published NPs to identify exemplars of questionnaires and question structure and urged teams to look at these when preparing questions for Q2.
 - As part of the ongoing review of the project timeline TS/LC/DAH will look at known forthcoming expenditure and revise the budget projection accordingly.

5. Young People's Survey – Report

RT has been reviewing the analysis provided by Theme Teams to decide the best approach to take for the report. He currently thinks that it may make more sense to provide a narrative that analyses the responses to the specific questions rather than themes. LC said that if this is the case as Q1 and BSIG reports were theme based it will be important to make the link between the thematic approach of the earlier surveys and the analysis described in the YP report, possibly within the executive summary.

RT said his analysis was nearly complete and aimed to send a draft report to LC by the end of the week after which he thought it should be available to publish in 2-3 weeks. LC pointed out that if the report isn't ready in time for the Council Assembly on 3rd April it will be necessary to brief the young people from the college who may attend to present the main findings. She would also like to incorporate images and infographics.

PM said he thought there were important messages from the survey which will be useful to Sidmouth Town Council.

6. Core Objectives & Policies

Built Environment

RT introduced the work so far which has led to 7 key areas to develop into objectives and then policies. Built Environment provides a valley-wide understanding of how things are, or should be, built and design parameters. This starts to overlap with Housing and protection of the Natural Environment. In a similar way an objective about improving the public realm – e.g. width of footways and traffic, aligns more sensibly with aspirations in Transport. Which means that although objectives are being developed within themes at the moment, those themes could change or merge as the process continues.

On the subject of aspirations, RT said that having looked at more NPs from other areas he is aware that many have included aspirational objectives which in the past he would have argued weren't appropriate to NPs – so more clarity/advice is needed.

Community & Culture

AM/DAH introduced the work they had been doing which was at an advanced stage and particularly embraced wellbeing, sports and leisure and the need to protect assets of community value. There was a general discussion about the visionary nature of many of the policies and objectives and the problem of how you would enforce many of them. The discussion also echoed RT's earlier points about objectives

which strayed into other themes, suggesting the need for some themes to be merged later in the process and the fact that other NPs include aspirational or non-land planning specific policies.

Housing

ME said that work on developing objectives and questions for Q2 was well advanced but effectively stalled at the moment because the Housing Needs Assessment Report doesn't provide the information that is required or expected i.e. any kind of projection of housing need, including affordable homes, over the next 15 years. What the report does do is underline the current imbalance in demographics and how the housing allocated in the Local Plan makes this worse rather than better, but without an estimate of housing need it's impossible to arrive at a figure for the NP based on evidence.

As far as affordable housing is concerned there is also the problem that it will never satisfy the needs of the local population – and we don't know what that need is – if people from outside the valley are able to buy and anyone on the EDDC waiting list can apply for a house that comes available in Sidmouth. Plus, the nature (price) of affordable housing is determined by location – which in the context of Sidmouth is unlikely to be affordable to young people. In which case for the Sid Valley perhaps "affordable" should be redefined for the SVNP to something that reflects our own community rather than relying on a national guideline which is meaningless in the context of the Sid Valley.

Also, the Housing Needs Report requires a paragraph by paragraph review and feedback given to Chris Broughton before it can be signed off.

Action: RT/ME will review the report and provide feedback to LC/DAH. DAH to send a holding email to Chris Broughton.

Transport

CR/PM introduced the work so far which provided context and vision, clear objectives, draft policies and community aspirations. The discussion in the group echoed earlier comments about aspirational objectives and policies but the meeting was in agreement that the structure that had been used was clear, concise and could serve as a blueprint or template for other Theme Teams.

Natural Environment

IMcE read out a narrative following analysis by the team of all the evidence so far and while there were no clear objectives coming through from this now, it was clear there was a good start and it now just needed some work to put it into a format similar to the one used by Transport. Everyone was struck by a statement early in the narrative about the need for every Sidmouth resident to be a conservationist, a principle and potentially useful strapline, which resonates across the SVNP.

Eastern Town

RT said the team had developed 11 points for inclusion in this area and as with Built Environment thought that areas of this theme may end up within other theme areas – principally Built Environment and Housing. LC, picking up on the fact that this had been mentioned by a number of people, said that we need to identify a fluid approach to this – perhaps moving away from Themes and towards Character Areas.

RT said that it may be useful to have a specialist survey to identify sightlines.

Action: RT to get an estimate of likely cost of sightline survey.

Economic Resilience

PM introduced the work of the team which had been principally about identifying land issues from all the evidence accumulated so far and was looking to take a similar approach to St Ives. He is aiming to have completed this task by the end of March.

Many of the early objectives so far identified relate to community actions/aspirations which he was afraid would just disappear and be forgotten about. His suggestion, which received general agreement, was that to ensure this doesn't happen community actions should only appear in the NP if they have endorsements, owners or sponsors.

LC said that we need to decide if we separate policies from community actions or keep them together.

Summary

LC/DAH said it was clear that a huge amount of work had been done and good progress made. There was a discussion about the time needed to get this stage completed and it was agreed that each team should be able to provide a drafted context & objectives document by the first week in April. This document may also include draft Q2 questions in relation to those objectives.

Action: Teams to send to TS the document outlined above by 7th April 2017.

7. AOB

Date of next meeting – Monday 10th April 2017