

# SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL



WOOLCOMBE HOUSE  
WOOLCOMBE LANE  
SIDMOUTH  
DEVON  
EX10 9BB

Telephone: 01395 512424

Email: [enquiries@sidmouth.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@sidmouth.gov.uk)

Website: [www.sidmouth.gov.uk](http://www.sidmouth.gov.uk)

Tourism Website: [www.visitsidmouth.co.uk](http://www.visitsidmouth.co.uk)

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## **Minutes of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting**

**6th September 2016 7.30- 10.00pm**

**Venue STC Offices**

### **1. Present**

Graham Cooper, Jeremy Woodward, Deirdre Hounsom, Louise Cole, Michael Earthey, Ian McKenzie-Edwards, Daniel Turner, Claire Russell, Peter Murphy, Jonathan Davey, Tim Salt. Jeff Turner (Chairman Sidmouth Town Council), though not a member of the steering group, attended in a public capacity.

### **2. Apologies**

Natalie Bentall, Richard Thurlow, Andrea Miles.

GC said he had spoken to Michael Brittain who wishes to step down from the Steering Group. DAH said that she would write to MB to thank him for his early support.

### **3. Welcome to new member of the Steering Group, Jonathan Davey**

The group introduced themselves to JD.

### **4. Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

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

### **5. Discussion regarding the Terms of Reference of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Due to lack of time this wasn't discussed and will be carried over to the next SG meeting.

### **6. Subject Matter Themes**

TS and DAH explained the rationale for the original 7 themes suggested by RT, GC and TS which was to align major subject areas in the NP to policy areas in the East Devon Local Plan. This is important as the themes and the issues that fall under them will form the framework for all subsequent surveys, focus groups and analysis that the group undertakes. Correctly identifying the themes which reflect areas of concern/interest reported by residents helps to ensure community input into the NP process.

GC subsequently submitted a further document on Basecamp which provided a greater degree of detail and nuance to the original themes and included reference to culture and arts development which reflects points raised in the First Residents Questionnaire and links to the economic development of the town.

While a number of the revised themes/sub-themes do not strictly fall within the scope of the NP, LC explained that it was important for us to find a way to capture and reflect these issues as reported to us by residents. These additional areas help to explain the nature and uniqueness of the Sidmouth and the Sid Valley and may also be have the potential for community action projects beyond the local plan.

After discussing the various elements included within the themes there was general agreement that the original 7 should be expanded but GC agreed that there was scope to incorporate some of his ideas into the original headings. It was agreed that he would do a further review and work with TS to provide a further draft to be shared on Basecamp for SG comment.

LC said that the themes would also be shared with specialist planning and design consultants at a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September to seek their input and that future Focus Groups will be used to test their suitability/completeness.

**Action: GC to review themes and liaise with TS to provide a further draft for SG input/comment**

## **7. Sid Valley Business & Community Groups Questionnaire**

PM explained that he has been working on the development of a questionnaire to get the opinions of businesses and community groups in the Sid Valley. This new survey provides the opportunity to obtain an entrepreneurial perspective, visions and ideas which will add to the evidence we have from the first householder survey. The evidence base that the group builds from many different sources will also be a valuable resource available to STC/EDDC and the community for the next 15 years.

The decision was taken early in the development of the questionnaire to use the first survey as the basis for the questions but adapted to come at it from a business/community group perspective. They will however also be asked to comment on significant issues raised by residents in the earlier questionnaire.

PM has developed the business questionnaire over 6 iterations using feedback from DAH, LC and TS and the latest version is on Basecamp for SG input/comment. Some of the SG had been unable to view the draft on tablets and phones. TS will print copies off that can be picked up from STC. Louise Turley has started work on developing the version for Survey Monkey with a view to going live within the next 2 weeks. It will be hosted on the STC website and publicised by direct email to 800 businesses and sole traders in the Sid Valley, plus input from Chamber of Commerce and Sidmouth Business café members. Before it goes live it will be tested by a selection of businesses and the SG will also have an early opportunity to view and test it. The survey will be open for 6 weeks.

In the discussion that followed there was general agreement to the process. Jeff Turner was pleased to learn that the questions had been designed to elicit constructive views. There was a suggestion that the design should feature a different colour scheme to set it apart from the first survey which was supported by the majority. LC said that she thought the title of the questionnaire may need to be adapted to clear reflect the target audience.

DT raised the possibility that business owners may have commercial objectives that are contrary to the views of the residents and others wondered if national businesses should be excluded from

the survey. LC said that all evidence was valid and nothing is taken in isolation. Our processes/methodology will show that we have been transparent in collecting and analysing evidence and the questionnaire will identify the type of business/organisation surveyed. JW wondered if business owners will consult with their wider staff/organisation before completing the survey and PM will look at the wording in the introduction to see if a steer can be given.

**Action: Steering Group to review the latest draft of the questionnaire and feedback to PM by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September. Hard copies to be made available at STC to support those with difficulty accessing the draft.**

## **8. Focus Groups**

DAH said that we will start running Focus Groups over the coming months. The aim being to test aspects of evidence we already have, to seek opinions on specific issues eg Chamber of Commerce – parking/traffic, Sailing Club/Fish Shop/Lifeboat – Port Royal, and to gather further evidence as the NP develops. PM suggested that using the core topics and supporting themes would provide a framework. LC said a process template is needed which outlines how the groups should be run. It's envisaged that each group will need a couple of people to facilitate.

**Action: Steering Group to consider how best to run focus groups, ideas for subjects, process, target groups etc and report back**

## **9. Young Persons' Questionnaire**

LC said that the initial focus group was with students aged 7-17 in May at the Business Café. That group is to meet again at Sidmouth College on 26<sup>th</sup> September. They will use the analysis from the first survey to start to develop the Young Persons' questionnaire. There are also plans for a social event and discussions are taking place with Sidmouth College to see if politics students can be involved in using data from the first survey as a real project for them to develop, helping with analysis and giving them the opportunity to make a presentation. The aim being, with all of these activities, to demonstrate a fully integrated approach to the design of the survey.

## **10. Planning for 2<sup>nd</sup> Household Survey**

Due to lack of time this wasn't discussed and will be carried over to the next SG meeting.

## **11. AOB**

DAH asked for an honest discussion about how things were going within the Steering Group. A couple of members reported feeling that progress and plans seemed to be rushed and without input from everyone on the group, leaving some feeling excluded. LC said that all plans and progress were updated on Basecamp but appreciated that some found it easier to navigate than others. She also identified that monthly meetings potentially weren't sufficient but she was also conscious that people also had busy lives and would find additional meetings difficult, and so it was a difficult balancing act. Everyone agreed that tonight's meeting had been useful in bringing people up to speed.

Between meetings Basecamp is the forum to communicate within the group, although some found the application difficult to navigate. Chief concerns voiced were:

- Threads diverting from the original topic.
- Long winded threads
- Copying everyone into a thread

- Too many notifications
- Potential issues for ipad/iphone users when trying to view powerpoint documents. LC suggested there should always be a PDF alternative posted in addition to powerpoint

Many of the issues that people reported could be resolved by personalising alerts, so users aren't bombarded with notifications, and by reminding ourselves how the various tools in Basecamp should be used. LC proposed a short presentation at the start of the next Steering Group meeting.

**Action: TS/DAH to ensure a Basecamp presentation is on next meeting agenda.**

Jeff Turner suggested that members of the Steering Group might like to attend a few STC Planning Meetings in order to better understand local planning issues which, though small in scale eg changing front gardens into hard standing for cars, erecting fences on open plan estates and replacing hedges with close panel fencing, actually has a huge impact on the visual appearance of Sidmouth and the Sid Valley and should be something that NP considers.