**Minutes of a meeting of Newbury’s Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group**

**Held via Zoom**

**13/01/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00**

**Present:**

**Newbury’s NDP Steering Group:**

1. Newbury Town Council (NTC): Councillors Nigel Foot (Chairperson), Gary Norman (Deputy-Chairperson), David Marsh, Martha Vickers, Martin Colston, and Vaughan Miller (Joint Project Manager)
2. Members of the public: Anthony Pick, Ian Blake, John Brownell, Louise Sturgess, Kim Whysall-Hammond (Joint Project Manager), and Paul Millard

**Other Attendees:**

Umrah Mahadik (Senior Planning Officer, West Berkshire Council), Bryan Little (Planning Policy Manager, West Berkshire Council), Laila Bassett (Principal Planning Officer, West Berkshire Council), Jeremy Flawn (Bluestone Planning), Sharon Brentnall (Bluestone Planning), Darius Zarazel (NDP Secretary and Democratic Services Officer, Newbury Town Council), and Hugh Peacocke (Chief Executive Officer, Newbury Town Council)

**9. Apologies**

There were none.

**10. Minutes**

**Proposed:** Anthony Pick

**Seconded:** CouncillorMartin Colston

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the NDP Steering Group held on 20/12/2021, be approved.

**11. To Receive a Presentation from WBC about NDPs**

The Steering Group received a presentation from WBC Officers about NDPs. Key information included:

* A NDP is a community opportunity to guide future development
* A NDP cannot stop development, but can help determine the type of development that can take place
* A NDP must meet ‘basic conditions’, one of which is that it is in conformity with the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
* The NDP needs to pass at referendum to come into force
* The next stage for the Steering Group is to develop objectives, priorities, and vision
* WBC will provide advice and guidance to the Steering Group, review the NDP, and help the Steering Group liaise with relevant WBC Officers

WBC to circulate the full presentation to the Steering Group.

**12. To Participate in a Question-and-Answer Session with WBC Officers**

The Steering Group participated in a Q&A with WBC Officers. Key points were:

Q: On the public referendum, does the NDP need 50% of all voters to vote for it in order for it to be approved, or 50% of the people who vote on the day. Also, what turnout can be expected at the referendum?

A: The NDP needs 50% of people on the day to approve it for it to come into force. Turnout is generally low in these referendums but there are exceptions as some have reached a turnout of around 60%. It is for this reason why community engagement and support throughout the NDP process is essential.

Q: Do NDP have to increase development?

A: When NDPs were introduced, the intention was that they increase development. However, NDP do not need to allocate land in excess of the Local Plan.

Q: On the Local Plan Review, the NDP will be developed alongside this Local Plan and so what would happen if the Local Plan and NDP clashed. How do we avoid this? What sort of information about the Local Plan will the Steering Group receive?

A: Clashes between the Local Plan and the NDP can be avoided via close cooperation between the Steering Group and the Local Planning Authority (WBC). WBC will also provide the result of the Town Centre Masterplan (estimated release in February) for use by the Steering Group. There has been no substantial change in the Emerging Local Plan relating to Newbury.

Q: Can the NDP contribute to the Local Plan?

A: Some evidence from the NDP can be used, however this is unlikely.

Q: On community engagement, Newbury is a large town and so this process of engagement is more difficult, what scope do we have to engage with young people who cannot vote in the referendum, can we include them?

A: Use of existing parish social media, setting up a NDP website, and in person methods can be used to engage with the community. WBC would recommend speaking to similar size town for more information. Although young people not on the electoral register cannot vote, engagement with them would be very helpful.

Q: Following on from the ‘no-surprises’ relationships between WBC and the Steering Group, before submission, would it be possible to have WBC look over the Draft NDP so that if there are any large issues they can be avoided before the final submission. Are WBC willing to do this?

A: Yes, WBC now have the resources to consider this and would look favourably upon it.

Q: On the Parish boundary, Newbury has no large Greenfield sites but does have brownfield sites. In the NDP, can there be a strategy for redevelopment of these brownfields?

A: Yes, the NDP can do this. However, one issue is that the level of evidence needed for this is substantial. Brownfield sites are by nature contaminated land and there are many policies to go through.

The Steering Group thanked the WBC Officers for their time.

**13. Project Plan**

The next stage for the Steering Group is to discuss the topics the Group wants to explore with the community and can be included in an NDP – the NDPs Vision and Objectives.

After this, drafting a questionnaire that can be provided to all members of the community, and asks for their input and feedback, on the Vision and Objectives will be undertaken.

**14.** **Forward Work Programme**

The following items were agreed to be added to the FWP and be included on the agenda for the next meeting:

- To elect a Deputy-Chairperson for the Steering Group from the non-Councillor members of the Steering Group

- To outline completion dates for all sections of the project plan

- To discuss the Vision and Objectives

- To agree on the future dates for Steering Group meetings

The Steering Group members are to consider what they like about Newbury and what they think can be improved.

The NDP Secretary to circulate the Local Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan to the Steering Group, for their information.

**15.** **To fix the Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was agreed to be held on 27/01/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00 via Zoom.

**There being no other business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 21:11 hrs.**