

Minutes of a remote meeting of CNPSG held on Tuesday 11th January 2022 sat 18.00

Present: Cllr Robin Pailthorpe (CTC), Cllr Rob Cottle (CTC), Cllr Mike Best (CTC), Pat Lunt (Space4Crewkerne), Gail Coleshill (ABCD), Diane Butler (Crewkerne LIC), and Leighton Ballantine (Crewkerne Business Group).

In attendance: Katharine Sheehan (Town Clerk), Jo Wilkins (SSDC), Tessa Saunders (SSDC), Howard Ellard (Wincanton NP Steering Group), Graham House (Castle Cary NP Steering Group).

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Introduction to guest attendees.

Cllr Pailthorpe introduced the guest speakers and thanked them for giving up their time to speak to the group about their various experiences with Neighbourhood Plans.

4. Experiences and lessons learned

Discussion took place surrounding the Castle Cary and Ansford, and Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan processes. Members of the Steering Group heard from Mr Ellard and Mr House that:

- Although the plans had been adopted, they were in need of revisiting and possible updating;
- This process is a big commitment and the Steering Group should think about what is special about Crewkerne that isn't covered in the Local Plan;
- This may be a difficult time as will inevitably be affected by the transition to a unitary authority for Somerset;
- Professional input is critical as the document must get through the legal process, and can be complicated, however the Group should get some clarity of purpose before employing a consultant;
- In Wincanton the process took four years, with elections part way through. Some people on the group did change, but a core group was maintained throughout. The Wincanton group reported back to the Town Council when there was progress to report. The Wincanton plan had been criticised for being 'light weight' but its primary purpose was to access the enhanced CIL levels.

Crewkerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

- Both Howard and Graham commented that the policies would take a long time to trickle down and would only influence the next tranche of future developments. Neither group had seen any concrete benefits realised from the NP yet.

SSDC officers outlined the support that they could offer:

- The District Council can advise and assist but not draft or produce the plan;
- They can answer questions but are limited by being a small team;
- SSDC organise and payment the IEP and Referendum stages.
- They noted that in nearly every NP produced in the District, a professional planning consultant has been employed;
- Policies in the NP should be consistent with those in the Strategic Plan;
- Strategic support would continue to be offered by the new unitary authority as it is a statutory requirement;
- Most of the cost of planning consultants were covered by the grant funding obtained.

Councillor Pailthorpe thanked Howard, Graham, Jo and Tessa for their time at which point they all left the meeting.

5. Next steps

Members of the Steering Group discussed key areas that they would like to focus on. It was decided that any part of the existing Local Plan should be revisited in the first instance. The following areas of work were identified:

- Housing
- Recreation and wellbeing
- Transport
- Commercial

Actions:

RP, RC and MB to go through the Local Plan and identify areas relevant to Crewkerne.

GC and DB to look at Recreation/Wellbeing areas and identify ideas.

LB to look at how the Steering Group can build in a commercial aspect to support the business community in town.

PL to look at Transport areas and oversee actions/co-ordination of ideas.

KS to obtain quotations for an NP website to apply for initial funding, ideally prior to the end of March when the current funding period expires.

6. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15th February 2022, 6.30pm, via Zoom.