



Minutes of a meeting of CNPSG held on Tuesday 30th January 2024 in the Council Chamber

Present: Pat Lunt (PL), Diane Butler (DB), Jan Nathan (JN).

In attendance: Katharine Sheehan (KS) (Town Clerk), Stuart Todd (ST, Planning Consultant via Zoom).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kathy Head (KH), Gail Coleshill (GC) and Simon Woodland (SW).

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2023 and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were AGREED without change.

Matters arising were either all dealt with or listed on the agenda.

4. To receive an update on:

a. Application for Housing Needs Assessment technical support funding.

b. Application for Design Code technical support funding.

KS reported that following a government announcement that the deadline for technical support funding applications was being moved forward to the 26th January, she had completed two applications for funding for a Design Code and Housing Needs Assessment. These pieces of work had been identified as necessary by the Steering Group. Following the submission of the application, KS and PL had attended an online interview with Aecom consultants to provide additional local details to the applications. The outcome of the application was not yet known, with Locality reporting an additional two weeks to waiting times due to the shortened timescales resulting in an increased volume of applications.

Some discussion took place about the different styles of housing across different parts of the town and how this could be reflected in the Design Code.

5. To review updated Discussion paper: Developing policy intents and example policies

PL reported that ST, PL and KS had met with Jo Wilkins from the Somerset Council planning team. Jo had provided informal feedback on the developing policies. Members of the Steering Group were asked to review Jo's comments and let ST have any further input by the end of the following week. Following this, ST would be adjusting the policies to reflect Jo's input and put together a skeleton plan document. The detail would be added at a later stage with supporting evidence base.

A query was raised over mapping software for producing the high quality maps which Somerset Council had confirmed they were unable to provide. ST would be able to provide them for a fee. It was noted that the inclusion of local green spaces in the plan would require supporting



maps. Members were encouraged to look at South Petherton's Neighbourhood Plan as an example of a 'Views and Vistas' document – lots of good examples are available which could be used as a starting point/pro forma.

In terms of timescales, members discussed how far the Plan could potentially develop over the course of 2024. It was hoped that referendum stage could be reached by the end of the year, but it was recognised that many other factors could influence this and cause delays. Consideration was given to a slower period over the summer when people would like be away or less likely to engage in the consultation process.

Discussion took place around communication while the group was still able to actively promote the project. It was noted that it was important to keep the developing plan in peoples' minds so they are aware of the process come referendum time. Steady release of social media posts and regular reminders on how to get in touch were thought to be a good idea, and making sure the website was kept updated. In the late spring, media releases heralding the imminent arrival of a draft plan would be required. It was suggested that members read the chapter in the National Planning Policy Guidance on the Regulation 14 stage. Events and exhibitions would be organised while the consultation remained live.

6. Written evidence base: to collate written evidence to support policy development/ to review topic papers written by members of the Steering Group.

PL emphasised that this needed to be the main emphasis moving forward. It was noted that either NALC or CPRE had produced a good template illustrating how to designate green spaces.

7. Items for the next meeting

Evidence base.

Skeleton plan.

Funding update.

8. Date of the next meeting - TBC.