



**ALN WICK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP**  
**Minutes of meeting held on**  
**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2011 6.30 pm**  
**The Centre, 27 Fenkle Street, Alnwick**

**Present:**

Barry Spall	Northumberland Estates
Carys Thomas	Alnwick Community Development Trust (ACDT)
Cllr Geoff Watson	Alnwick Town Council
David Lovie	Alnwick Civic Society
Rachael Roberts	Alnwick area Friends of the Earth/Transition Alnwick
Sue Patience	Gallery Youth
Bill Batey	Alnwick Town Council

**In attendance:**

John Cooper	Northumberland County Council
David English	Northumberland County Council
Karen Ledger	Northumberland County Council
Charlotte Colver	Northumberland County Council
Peter Biggers	Argyle Planning Ltd

GW opened the meeting explaining that as Cllr Alan Symmonds had offered his apologies, GW would be chairing the meeting on this occasion and Anne Shilton (ACDT) would take the minutes.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Alan Symmonds, Colin Barnes, Peter Halliwell, Clive Mattison, Maurice Hall, Bruce Hewison and John Taylor.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting.**

These were agreed.

**3. Matters arising.**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Final Proposed Terms of Reference for the Group**

PB explained that the final ToR had been extended to include an elected member from Northumberland County Council (NCC). GW had made an informal request via Cllr John Taylor and was awaiting a reply. KL suggested a formal request should be made to NCC Democratic Services and she offered to follow this up which was accepted. PB also explained that the ToR had been changed to include responsibility for determining plan objectives. The ToR will be presented to Alnwick Town Council at their next meeting in September 2011 to agree the final draft.

DL enquired about including Denwick parish. BB had contacted them and the ToR could be presented at their next meeting, which is likely to be in October but as this was considered too late in the timeframe, they would be asked by letter for their acknowledgement and support.

*Action: GW and BB.*

## **5. DCLG Neighbourhood Planning Frontrunner Project Bid**

PB explained that following the previous meeting in June, an opportunity had arisen to apply for funding from the Frontrunner scheme. The application deadline was extremely tight (about 2 days) and a bid had been prepared and submitted. A response was awaited and was expected mid to end of August. KL and DE gave more information about how the funding would work, should the bid be successful. A sum of £20,000 would be allocated from DCLG to the NCC planning department to enable them to support local communities with their bids. Communities producing the plans would inevitably need the support from local authorities to gain information and statistics. The funding would allow for the costs of this to be covered along with funding the latter stages of the process in particular, the examination and referendum.

There had been some misunderstanding regarding the funding by the Group in that it had been thought to be available directly to the community group itself but with further clarification, it was understood that it was for NCC to provide support for the plan. As this is a pilot scheme, there are few guidelines for NCC which left the group with some queries about the processes and costs involved. CT was concerned that without prior knowledge of NCC costs, the funding could be used without leaving sufficient at the end, for a referendum for example, should it be required. KL responded that there would need to be continued dialogue and discussion between the group and NCC to avoid this sort of situation arising, should the funding bid be approved. An initial meeting had been planned for 9<sup>th</sup> August between KL, DE, GW and PB to start this process. KL also said that NCC support would not be withdrawn when the funding was exhausted but would continue after then.

KL also mentioned that as a pilot scheme, the DCLG would also be evaluating the process and expects feedback to inform any possible future funding for other neighbourhood planning projects. Evaluations would be required from both the group and from local authorities that would inform the process elsewhere. DE said that the nature and extent of the feedback had not yet been clarified by DCLG.

DL asked if the funding could be used as match funding for other funding bids elsewhere. KL thought it was unlikely given that the DCLG funding was not directly to the community but NCC would investigate. It was mentioned that other agencies and businesses are likely to want to become involved, particularly at this pilot stage. There could be an opportunity for example for university students to assist as part of their studies. RR urged caution and said that their assistance would need to fit closely with their course so that the assistance mutually beneficial.

SP expressed concern that the group had not been aware of the funding bid submission. GW replied that as the timescale had been very tight (and indeed had been extended by two days for Alnwick), there had not been the opportunity to discuss this with the group though the possibility had been briefly mentioned at the last meeting. PB said that in circumstances where it is unlikely that funding would be available from other sources, it would have been unwise to ignore the opportunity. RR requested clarification that PB had written the bid. This was confirmed.

BB said that the town council would probably wish to know the likely costs involved with the project at their next meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September, whether or not the bid was successful. DE said that DCLG

would also want to know if the costs of the plan are likely to prevent similar neighbourhood planning projects in other locations so feedback from Alnwick would be appreciated.

## **6. Scoping Report for Plan – draft for consideration**

PB introduced the draft report (previously circulated) and its contents were discussed. It was noted that the document remained as work in progress.

There was some discussion regarding the boundary of the area to be included; whether Denwick, and/or Denwick Detached would be included or only part of those parishes. RR said that if the precept was to be used to fund the plan that included other parishes, support from other parish councils would need to be agreed. DE said that the area covered would not need to follow existing parish boundaries but BB reported that there was some concern expressed by Denwick Parish that as a result of the plan, a case may be made to change the parish boundaries in the future. An extension of the boundary into that part of Denwick Detached most closely related to Alnwick would leave only approximately four farms in the rest of Denwick Detached. CC said that she had estimated the proposed plan area to be approximately 30 km<sup>2</sup>. BS enquired if the area to the north of the town should also be included so that the historic landscape was considered and also the northern A1 junction at Denwick.

It was agreed that PB should work up 2 or 3 optional plan areas for discussion at the next steering group meeting.

*Action: PB*

CC queried the population figure in 2.4, which related to 2009 and agreed that it should be stated as approximately 8,500 currently.

BS and SP enquired if there were specialists who would assist with researching the issues in section 7. PB explained that these had not yet been allocated. SP suggested a skills audit to allocate the tasks, which was agreed. DE said that Newcastle University had approached him with offers of assistance should they be required.

DE suggested that clarification was needed for section 3.2 about the group deferring to the town council to sign off decisions. This would be particularly pertinent if Denwick parish council were involved as they meet less frequently than Alnwick Town Council and could potentially delay any action required. It was agreed the town council would specifically consider this point at its September meeting.

*Action: BB*

DE indicated concern about the intention in respect of community engagement in the first paragraph of section 9.0. PB agreed this should be clarified to avoid misunderstanding. The group questioned how information was being communicated via the website. GW explained that the information was on both the town council and ACDT websites for the time being. DE suggested that one point of information might be easier for the general public. It was agreed the town council would specifically consider this point at its September meeting.

*Action: BB*

BS asked if the Gazette were involved. GW explained that the editor, Paul Larkin, was on the membership list of the Community Partnership and was supportive of the plan.

The amendments that were required to the draft would be taken on board and a revised draft would be circulated with the minutes.

*Action: PB*

**7. Project Plan – draft for consideration**

PB presented a draft project plan to manage the progress on the plan, which will be developed over time and was adaptable. There was some discussion regarding point 1.7, raising awareness and the consultation. RR expressed concern that there needs to be considerable thought put into consultation before this can be carried out and this would need to be discussed further at the next meeting. CT was concerned about the short timescale available for this and the date for the next meeting was discussed. It was decided that the initial awareness raising about the plan in the media should go ahead immediately following the town council's resolution to proceed in September and that a sub-group be established to focus upon the form and content of the consultation in the autumn. The group would consist of SP (Chair), JC, RR, PB and GW. Paul Larkin (editor of the Gazette) and Cllr Bill Gridale could also be invited to attend. The group would report back to the next steering group on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 with its proposals.

*Action: BB/GW/PB – press release September*

*Action: GW to convene sub group meeting of SP/JC/RR/GW/PL/BG and PB*

**8. Agreeing Actions to be completed for next meeting**

It was decided to keep the date of the next meeting at 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011, as previously agreed.

Actions agreed, as above.

04/08/11