

Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Minutes of meeting held on
Tuesday 20th December 2011
Council Chamber, 1 Clayport Street, Alnwick
at 6.30pm

Present

Cllr. Alan Symmonds (Mayor), Chairman (AS)
Cllr. John Taylor, NCC and Denwick Parish Council (JT)
Rachael Roberts, Alnwick Friends of the Earth/Transition Alnwick (RR)
David Lovie, Alnwick Civic Society (DL)
Susan Patience, Gallery Youth (SP)
Richard Green Chair of Denwick Parish Council (RG)

In Attendance

Peter Biggers, Project Coordinator (PB)
Bill Batey, Alnwick Town Council (BB)
Charlotte Colver, Planning Officer, NCC (CC)
John Cooper, Locality Development Officer, NCC (JC)
Rachel Cooper, Student Planner, NCC (RC)

Apologies for absence

Clive Mattison, Freemen of Alnwick
Bruce Hewison Alnwick Tourism Association
Colin Barnes, Northumberland Estates
Peter Halliwell, North Country Leisure
David English, NCC
Jack Butcher, NCC

1.0 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Steering Group agreed that the minutes from the last meeting held on 15th November were a true record.

2.0 Matters arising not on the agenda

2.1 No matters were raised.

3.0 Neighbourhood Planning Process Update.

3.1 Susan Patience, Peter Biggers and Cllr. John Taylor had all attended neighbourhood planning events. All for different purposes and aimed at different audiences.

3.2 PB gave a report on the [RTPI](#) event he had attended on [13/12/11](#) in [Newcastle](#). He confirmed that the regulation requiring a referendum at the end of the planning process was still intact.

3.3 It was confirmed that the regulations would require qualifying bodies to make a formal application to the local planning authority to have the neighbourhood area confirmed as an appropriate area for neighbourhood planning purposes. It was suggested this should be done in advance of April in order to get NCC to formally endorse the neighbourhood area which should allow progress made so far to be valid under the new regulations. Confirmation will be sought from DCLG on this matter.

17/1/12 12:39

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17/1/12 12:39

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17/1/12 12:39

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Action:

CC to seek confirmation from DCLG that Front Runners should apply to the local planning authority for formal designation of the neighbourhood plan area before Regulations come into force

- 3.4 One of the issues raised at the event was the suggestion of an agreement between the County Council and the qualifying body regarding timescales and input expected from the County.
- 3.5 It was suggested the Steering Group make a formal response to the regulations. PB offered to do a first draft and circulate for input.

Action:

PB to draft a response to regulations and circulate for comments.

- 3.6 SP then outlined the outcomes of the event held in London [on 28/11/11](#) for local community representatives involved in neighbourhood planning. SP had taken along a young person (Freya Stone) from the community who got the impression that CLG weren't very engaged with young people.
- 3.7 SP outlined two frontrunner case studies which were presented at the event and highlighted some of the main issues. For example, different questionnaire response rates in different areas and reluctance from businesses to get involved.
- 3.8 The issue of funding the referendum was raised but it wasn't made clear who would be responsible for paying for it at this stage. The Prince's Foundation, NALC and RTPPI had all been awarded money from CLG to help deliver workshops and SP confirmed people were willing to hold free workshops in Alnwick. PB had had a similar response from Planning Aid. It was noted that Planning Aid would target their support towards deprived, urban areas.
- 3.9 It was discussed what the target audience should be for the workshops. It was decided that people who choose the option to be "actively involved" in the questionnaire might be involved.
- 3.10 SP felt the overall feeling from the event was confusion and scepticism in terms of resourcing and workload.
- 3.11 It was suggested that it may be a good idea to invite two people to represent youth organisation to join the Steering Group. The group agreed that this was a very good idea.

Resolved:

The group agreed to invite Freya Stone and another young person to join the Steering Group

Action:

PB/ BB to write to Freya Stone with formal invitation to join the Steering Group as a local youth representative

- 3.12 JT then outlined some of the information given at a [Planning Advisory Service](#) event held in London. The event outlined the introduction of the Community

17/1/12 12:40

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Infrastructure Levy, a mechanism for charging and collecting developer contributions towards the cost of infrastructure needed to support development. The event also gave some clarification regarding new rules on predetermination by elected members; and covered matters concerning local communities being given opportunities to grant permission for certain types of community based developments in designated neighbourhood areas (neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders).

Action:

PB to scan and circulate the document from JT with the option for further discussion at the next Steering Group meeting.

3.13 PB clarified that section 106 agreements will remain available for use and will still be needed for non-infrastructure related matters (mainly affordable housing). The Community Infrastructure Levy will generally only cover off-site infrastructure matters.

4.0 Project Plan Timetable

4.1 It was highlighted that in the previous meeting there was a strong feeling that the plan should at least be ready for submission before the May 2013 elections, taking into account the purdah period. Using this as an end point, PB had drawn up a project plan timetable. The timetable was designed to get the Issues and Options stage of the plan ready for consultation by June/July 2012. PB suggested that if the timetable does slip, it would be good to at least get a draft plan signed off by the Town Council by the end of April 2013.

4.2 It was suggested the Steering Group should make a formal response to the county council's Core Strategy consultation documents when these are published.

17/1/12 12:41

Deleted: the timetable period.

Resolved:

All agreed to the timetable provided by PB

5.0 Engagement Strategy and Update on Proposals

5.1 The group were informed that a stall had been booked at the Farmers' Market on 23/12/11. The stall would be used for promoting the questionnaire and the neighbourhood plan in general. There would also be an opportunity to create a logo. It was noted that people were needed to help man the stall over the course of the day. There were offers to help and BB would contact those who were not at the meeting to ask if they could.

5.2 The main purpose of the stall was outlined as an opportunity to get an early start for the questionnaire and begin to engage with the community. The group were also hoping to sign up for the Farmers Market again in January.

5.3 It was suggested that the Engagement Sub Group would be looking to undertake some further engagement activities in January and perhaps could do some engagement in Denwick to give Denwick a further feeling of involvement.

- 5.4 The group were informed that 3,500 questionnaires were to be circulated in the Alnwick Cryer. Certain areas of Alnwick are not delivered to so these areas would be targeted with engagement events or finding people who would be willing to deliver to these areas.

Action:

SP to check if the Cryer is circulated to businesses and agree means of contact to areas not covered through the Engagement sub-group.

- 5.5 JC had formatted the questionnaire to be compatible with SNAP (analysing software). However, NCC's scanning license had expired so the data would need to be inputted manually. JC suggested an apprentice from NCC could do it but some recognition would be required. BB would liaise with JC about this offer.
- 5.6 CC had provided an Access database for the Steering Group to use for logging consultation activity.
- 5.7 It was hoped that the Town Council website could host an online version of the questionnaire. However it was agreed it would be hosted on NCC website with a link from the Town Council's website.

Action:

JC to arrange for questionnaire to be hosted on NCC website

- 5.8 The issue was raised about whether the format of the questionnaire would really identify people's priorities or not. However it was noted that the questionnaire is just one part of what the engagement group is hoping to do. The engagement sub group were also aiming to hold some events in conjunction with the questionnaire.

6.0 Issues and Options Stage.

- 6.1 The group had talked in previous meetings about sharing the work around for the preparation of the issues and options stage and identifying leads for each topic. PB circulated a report with a completed list of topic leaders. PB was to take the lead on housing with support from John Turnbull, an NCC housing enabler. It was identified that it may be appropriate to have a housing sub-group.
- 6.2 It was made clear that, in practice, topics would not be as separated and isolated as they appear on paper. Topic leads would have to draw on information and evidence available from other related topic areas.
- 6.3 The issue of Steering Group attendance was raised again. Concerns were raised that certain sectors may not be engaged if they don't have representation at meetings. It was agreed that the next agenda should highlight the importance of attendance and it was hoped that identifying topic leads would give people more of a role in the Steering Group and encourage attendance.
- 6.4 Appendix 1 of the report was a draft briefing paper for the issues and options report. PB requested everyone take it away and discuss at the next meeting.

Action:

All to look at appendix 1 and discuss at next meeting.

6.5 One initial issue was that it seemed to give a lot of responsibility to topic leads who may need support and training. A step-by-step approach was suggested to guide leads through preparing a report.

7.0 Any Other Business

7.1 Identify someone to do press releases – BB offered to do this.

7.2 CC informed the group of the Living Streets charity. A representative from the charity had offered to come to a Steering Group meeting for free to talk further about what Living Streets does though he would charge for any further involvement or services. The group agreed that they would want to invite the speaker from Living Streets to a meeting and agreed that February may be the best time to invite the speaker along.

Action:

CC to direct Richard Smith from Living Streets to BB so a visit can be arranged.

8.0 Date of next meeting

8.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting is to take place on Tuesday, 17th January, 2012 at 6:30pm in the Alnwick Council Chamber, Clayport Street. Subsequent meetings will take place on Tuesday 21st February 2012, Tuesday 20th March 2012 and April 17th 2012, continuing on the third Tuesday of every month.

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm