



MINUTES OF MEETING

19:00 Thursday 9 April 2015

Attendees : John Lloyd (chair), Richard Bartle, Andrew Cannell, Olly Church, Vic Clements, David Jenkins, Frank Jones, Mike Ross, Chris Nixon, Lindsey Skelt, Susan Truesdale, Bjorn Watson, Jane Young

Visiting Attendees (Vale of the White Horse District Council) : David Potter, Clare Roberts

1. Apologies for absence

Sarah Day and Pam Berridge were unable to attend.

2. Introduction

This was the first meeting of the Steering Group, so members introduced themselves to one another.

David Potter and Clare Roberts will be acting as representatives of the District Council and providing external advice to the Steering Group during the creation of Shrivenham's NP. David has a local planning background, will be acting in an Independent Advisor capacity and has worked in that role on other NPs such as Lechlade's. Clare is a member of the VOWH Planning Team.

3. Local Plan Update

Clare summarized the current situation with the VOWH Local Plan. The Part 1 has been approved at District level and submitted for examination. The appointed Inspector is now reviewing the Plan. The tentative draft date for completing that examination is end June.

The Part 1 of the Plan is strategic in nature, dealing with general policies etc. Part 2 will contain smaller sites but its preparation will be dependent on final sign-off of Part 1. The VOWH's Five Year Housing Land Supply statement will also be updated and finalized prior to examination. Delivery of the Shrivenham NP will not be dependent on completion of the Local Plan Parts 1 and 2.

Clare explained how NPs, which usually take around 12 months to complete, carry increasing weight for Local Planning purposes as they progress through the preparation, drafting and submission process, and significant weight thereafter as a statutory document..

4. Neighbourhood Planning Officer Role

David explained that his role as independent advisor is about facilitation and coordination, and the provision of expert advice helping with areas such as skills gaps in the NP Team, Plan format and process. Although he is contracted by VOWH to act as a consultant in the delivery of NPs, he stressed the importance of his independence; his role should not be seen as an advocate for VOWH but he will be acting as an "honest broker" who sits between the local Planning Authority and the community producing a NP.

5. Objectives for the Plan and collection of evidence

David ran through the importance of identifying clear Objectives early in the NP process and ensuring that the resulting NP document is a true community document, rather than a reflection of the views of the Steering Group. The different Workstreams will need to come up with Objectives for their respective subject area and then use the frameworks provided in the general NP Toolkit material to identify what the community wants to achieve. Gaps in current facilities were suggested as a good place to start. The NP must follow a prescribed format, as it will eventually become part of the statutory Planning material.

The collection of evidence is really important, and the Steering Group must continuously check and challenge the information gathered (although David warned against the tendency to collect too much information for a NP).

Asked about the credibility of a local NP given that it's created against the backdrop of a changing environment at both the District Council and national levels, David indicated that it's important to stay in



constant touch with the Local District Council to make sure that the resulting NP remains aligned with Local Planning.

The current situation in Shrivenham was discussed: was there an element of “shutting the stable door..” in starting work on a NP at this point when the developers are moving forwards around us? How would a NP affect the proposed developments in Shrivenham? David said that it could be too late to stop the applications already approved and as such may be of limited value in the immediate short-term future, but the eventual NP will hold information about what the local community feels it can accommodate and its stated requirements. On publication it will be used to inform discussions with the VOWH and it will be influential when the Local Plan is next reviewed. It is also taken into account for financial payments, i.e. Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 payments.

David and Clare indicated that a ratified NP must be taken into account by developers in terms of the character and format of approved developments, and David explained that while a community cannot use Local District Planning to deliver specific requirements such as Assisted Housing Scheme Developments, the NP can indicate that the community would take a favourable view if a developer were to lodge a planning application proposal which incorporated requirements X,Y,Z.

Once the NP is ratified, it becomes a statutory document and the VOWH and developers must apply policies in areas such as Environment and Design set out in the community’s NP. So style of housing, for example, would have to reflect the NP. For this reason both Clare and David advised the Steering Group to express community requirements in precise terms.

Regarding CIL income, David and Clare advised that expansion of the Defence Academy wouldn’t necessarily generate increased CIL income for Shrivenham as Crown Estate is exempt. However it depends on the type of development associated with that expansion.

In response to a question about how the Five Year Housing Land Supply statement relates to the Local Plan Part 1, Clare said that once the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is adopted (which proposes 20,560 houses over the plan period) the Council will be in a better position to give weight to local policies, in particular housing policies, in determining planning applications as there will be an adopted and up to date Local Plan and Housing Requirement to consider. But Developers can submit applications as and when they prefer, regardless of whether the Council has or does not have a Five Year Housing Supply.

On the question of evidence for the NP, David said that this would comprise facts and figures, survey and focus group inputs, affidavits and strategies such as designation of official Green Spaces. The formal examination of the draft Plan will not test the integrity of the evidence presented but it is important to base the NP statements on solid evidence in the event that it might be challenged at a later date by developers.

David advised that a good starting point would be to look at the evidential information provided already in VOWH planning materials.

Regarding his own background in Highways, David explained that this will generally involve OCC which is outside his sphere of influence but that the Transport Workstream might eventually require an OCC officer to talk to the Workstream team about plans for significant Highway schemes, and their phased delivery.

6. Structuring workload and project planning

Since Shrivenham is aiming to complete its NP by end 2015, David encouraged the Steering Group to progress the NP with some project management and structured planning, with focus on Milestone Dates. John Lloyd indicated the proposed draft structure for the different Workstreams making up the Steering Group, and Jane Young is assigned to handle the general project management element in that scheme.

David didn’t think that Shrivenham is likely to need assistance from external consultants for planning, given the general expertise within the Steering Group, but there will be funding available to call in consultants. He estimated that it should take around three months to come back with the initial analysis of all the information collected across the different Workstreams

Clare reminded that the NP should be aligned with the VOWH Plan Part 1 adoption (scheduled for early 2016). As the drafting of a NP progresses, it can be used in draft state to influence developers – and



generally when developers know that a NP is being drawn up in a particular community, they will start to pay attention to it.

7. Finance

This was not discussed in detail, but a community drawing up a NP will have access to specified financial support and assistance. David reminded that the Parish Council will be the entity which applies for grants, not the NP Steering Group. This process can commence once the Area Designation application is approved by VOWH, probably by end of May/early June.

8. Logo

John Lloyd suggested adopting the logo devised by Bjorn Watson for Shrivenham's 2009 Village Plan and this was agreed.

9. Communications

In the proposed working structure scheme, the Communications Workstream is assigned to the Parish Council as it controls mechanisms (Monthly News, website, emails) for communicating out to the wider community, and has established links with the Western Vale Villages, VOWH and OCC. David suggested that it might be worth following up with the Oxfordshire Rural Council about community websites.

In terms of internal communication within the Steering Group, David will be working with all the individual Workstreams and the Workstream Lead. David indicated that he would prefer to work generally via a Single Point of Contact, so this needs to be added to the working structure schema.

10. AOB

John reminded everyone that Parish Council office facilities can be used for NP preparation. The office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

11. Next Meeting

Initially the Steering Group will try to meet at two week intervals, to get work on the NP up and running, but much less frequently when a project schedule had been agreed. The next meeting is set for **Thursday 23 April at 19:00**, location to be notified.

That meeting will take the form of a workshop looking at

- The proposed draft working structure, Workstream Leads and the creation of their respective teams;
- First Draft Milestones/Project Schedule;
- Preparation of Objectives.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

	Action	Who	By When	Status
1	Follow up on David's suggestion to contact Oxfordshire Rural Community Council about community websites & funding opportunities	John L.	Next Meeting	
2	Edit the draft Workstream diagram to accommodate a SPOC role which will handle communications with David, and assign the responsibility	John L.	Next Meeting	
3	Draw up a 1 st draft project schedule based on the VOWH model indicating Milestone Events etc. ready for discussion at next meeting	Jane Y	Next Meeting	