



Northam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting **Monday 14 May 2018, 7pm**

Present

Cllr Chris Leather (Chair), Graham Ash, Phil Hodson (PHo), Josie Crosbee, Angie Whitaker, Rev. Derek Arnold, Maria Bailey, Jo Johnson

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Cllr Peter Hames (PHa), Roger Levick, Cllr Ken Davies, Peter Sawyer, Peter Jeffrey, Jane Mills (Town Clerk)

3. Minutes

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

All members agreed at the last meeting that contact email of all on the Steering Group could be shared amongst the group.

4. Final Agreements on Aims and Objectives

It was suggested that the Vision should have a 'why' element to give it more substance. The example given and agreed by those present, that the Vision should read:

'To maintain and enhance individual characteristics of Northam, Orchard Hill, Appledore and Westward Ho! to achieve an unsurpassed quality of life for residents, business and visitors'.

Discussions took place surrounding the Objectives. The outcomes are included in the next item. It was agreed that there should be 3 sections:

- Housing and Development
- Green Spaces and Heritage
- Tourism, Business and Infrastructure

It was noted and discussed that the main areas of concern received from the consultations were roads, transport and healthcare. Because these are covered and maintained by other national bodies, they can be addressed within an appendix of the Neighbourhood Plan and evidence received can be shared with interested parties.

It was also noted, that many areas will have themes that cross over between the sub-groups. This is recommended as it gives a more rounded and fuller consideration to differing factors.

5. Setting up of Sub-groups based on data received

MB suggested that for the items that are outside of the Neighbourhood Plan remit, the Steering Group could consider forming a 'Futures Group'. Great Torrington have set up a similar group, where they are taking forward and working on smaller local projects within the town outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

It is the aim of the Steering Group to have a 1st draft of the plan by the end of Summer.

It was agreed that Councillors should have an active involvement in the groups. CL agreed to contact Councillors who haven't yet been involved.

It is expected that the Local Plan will be adopted in July at the earliest.

Whilst considering the objectives, the Sub-groups were asked to focus on the what policies would be needed to deliver the objective. In some cases, groups may have objectives that don't have a policy covering them. In this instance, that objective will be moved to an appendix of the Plan.

It was agreed that a Terms of Reference should be drawn up for each sub-group detailing the parameters of the group. It was also agreed that contact details should be shared within the groups.

It was agreed that the sub-groups would have their initial meeting and feedback at the next Steering Group, scheduled for 4 June 2018.

Housing and Development

- Ensure that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people; providing affordable properties to both buy and rent
- Affordable, social specific, design, size
- Ensure that new housing developments are designed to be in keeping with the existing characters of the area to create a strong sense of place.
- Restriction of new build holiday homes (St Ives model), to safeguard the sustainability of the settlements by restricting the development of new build holiday homes

This group to look at the policies used in the St Ives and Exmoor Neighbourhood Plans. It was confirmed that Central Government have just finished consulting on an amended NPPF that widens the definition of 'affordable' and impacts on new builds for holiday homes etc.

Whilst the plan can't focus on roads and transport or healthcare directly, it can suggest types of pathways and cycle tracks within any future housing developments, which nod to both areas.

Discussions took place about recent planning decisions on local sites including Knapp House, Wooda Road and the planning system in general. It was confirmed that there was a new policy within the emerging Local Plan that will protect specific areas of the coastline and estuary from development. The plans showing these boundaries will be available when the Plan has been adopted.

It was suggested that the Policies need to be kept simple and succinct, looking to protect our area, whilst still acknowledging the need for growth, both for housing and business. At some point in the process, the Steering Group will have to advertise for potential development sites. From previous experience, after the 1st round of consultation, potential sites have been

brought forward by land owners. The Neighbourhood Plans that have already been adopted have a balance of both areas to be developed and areas of protection.

A view that was strongly held was that of local people being able to have access to affordable, low cost housing.

Cllr Chris Leather (LEAD), Cllr Ken Davies, Graham Ash

Green Spaces and Heritage

- Implementation of trees and footpaths, specific to each area
- Protection of green spaces and heritage areas that aren't listed
- To protect and maintain existing green spaces of value to the community
- To protect and enhance buildings and spaces of heritage value, ensuring that Northam remains a culturally rich place to live and visit
- Maintain green space between the settlements
- Protection to shipyard, possible use of the redundant areas within the shipyard
- Protecting and utilisation of Richmond Dock

To protect heritage areas, the plan needs to provide evidence, adding value to the asset.

To protect green spaces, sites need to be identified, justified as to why they should remain and checked with the Local Plan. If sites aren't included as sites of development, they can be included within our Neighbourhood Plan as areas to protect.

Cllr Peter Hames (LEAD), Rev Derek Arnold, Angie Whittaker (or other Appledore rep), Cllr Nick Arnold

Tourism, Business and Employment

- Encourage smaller retail businesses
- Cycle routes from Bideford to Westward Ho! along the old Tarka Line
- Business development sites (currently there are none in Northam Ward)

After much discussion, it was decided to merge Infrastructure and Tourism together and to incorporate it with a business aspect.

Roger Levick (LEAD), Phil Hodgson, Pete Sawyer, Josie Emberton (or other Appledore rep), Cllr Nick Laws

6. Any Other Business

Library of documents

It was agreed that a library of documents should be available at Northam Town Council. These to include

- Design Guide to Westward Ho! 2008
- NPPF
- Local Plan
- Green infrastructure Strategy, Torridge and North Devon

- Supporting Planning Documents – Area Design Statement
- Northam Town Council – Results, Housing Needs Survey
- Copies of existing Neighbourhood Plans

7. Next Meeting

The next Steering Group Meeting will take place on 4 June 2018.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm